

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY TO EQUIP LEADERS FOR CHURCH GROWTH AT ILAKAKA, IN THE SOUTH WEST CONFERENCE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, MADAGASCAR

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It is a known fact that leadership is needed for the church. A great challenge for the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the lack of growth. Several reasons attribute to the lack of growth: a) diversity of communities, b) different levels of knowledge, c) different attitudes, d) different cultures, and the influence of other religious groups, such as Muslims.

However, the main reason is the lack of spirituality. Leaders neglect to set aside time to communicate with God, and this has an impact on the members, and consequently prevents the church from growing. People are so busy trying to survive that they hardly have time to be with Jesus. There was a need to develop a strategic plan to deal with this lack of spirituality in order for the Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church to grow.

This study examined the theological foundations for leadership and church growth. Leadership and church growth are closely related. The paper analyzed

different leadership styles and principles in the Old Testament and New Testament.

This project explained also the Biblical concepts on church growth, both from the Old Testament and the New Testament, and Ellen White's writings.

Taking into account the theological basis of leadership and church growth, as well as the relationship between methods, the behavior of the leaders and the growth of the church, this study should help and equip Ilakaka leaders to apply some strategies to experience church growth. It is hoped that when this strategy is implemented, Ilakaka Church, and other churches in the Conference may attain their potential growth.

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A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

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Dedicated to my family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	3
Delimitation of the Study	4
Definitions of Terms.....	4
Methodology and Procedure.....	4
2. THEORETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION.....	5
Leadership in the Bible.....	5
Leadership and Its Relationship with Church Growth in the Bible.....	6
Prophets	6
Teacher-learner Relationship	8
Disciple-making	9
Coaching.....	9
An Example of Coaching in the Bible	9
Mentoring	9
Shepherd-leader.....	10
Leadership in the Old Testament.....	10
Patriarchal Leadership.....	11
King's Leadership	12
Priest's Leadership	13
Servant Leadership	13
An Example of Leadership: Moses	14
Leadership in the New Testament	15
Dictatorial Leadership:	15
Preferential Leadership	16
Servant Leadership	16
The Example of Jesus' Leadership.....	17
Others Concepts of Leadership	18
Theories of Leadership in the Bible	18
Situational Leadership Theory	18
Participative Theories.....	19
Relationship Theory	19

Leadership in the Bible.....	20
Autocratic Leadership	20
Visionary Leadership Style	20
Pacesetter Leadership Style.....	21
Church Growth	21
Church Growth in the Old Testament	22
Church Growth in the New Testament.....	23
Responsibility of Leader.....	25
God’s Plan for Church.....	26
Conception by Ellen G. White.....	27
Leadership	27
Church Growth.....	28
3. DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING CHURCH OF ILAKAKA	29
Description of Ilakaka	29
Backgroud of Ilakaka	29
Economic Activities	29
The Traditional Culture.....	31
Leadership for Church Growth at Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church...31	
Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church.....	31
The Different Leadership in Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church	33
Leadership problem in Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church.....	33
Summary.....	35
4. STRATEGY FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM	37
Biblical Guidance on Solving the Leadership Problem	37
Counsel from the Old Testament	37
Guidance from the New Testament.....	38
Design of Program.....	39
Step One: Solving the Lack of Spirituality among the Leaders	39
Step Two: Training of the Leaders concerning Leadership and Church Growth.....	43
Step Three: Study of the <i>Church Manual</i> on the Role of Leaders	49
Program and Assessment	52
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION.....	53
Summary.....	53
Conclusion.....	53
Recommendation	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	55
VITA.....	60

LIST OF TABLES

1. Announcement for the Elders and Others Leaders	40
2. Strategic Plan	41
3. Announcement for the Elders Only	43
4. Announcement for All Members	44
5. Leadership for Local Church	46
6. Factors in the Church's Development.....	47
7. Announcement for the Church.....	49
8. <i>Church Manual</i> on the Role of Leader	50

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The theory of leadership taught by leadership gurus gives us simple types or styles of leadership that every pastor should adopt to manage the church. But many times, these leadership styles cannot easily be adapted to different situations, and it is difficult for some churches to follow them. Furthermore, the pastor of a district encounters problems at the level of each church, and those situations hinder its growth.

When I served as pastor of a district of 12 churches, which had an average of 50-100 members, I wondered if it was possible with these leadership styles to induce progress in the church. I have concluded that it is not necessary to blindly apply different styles of leadership to help the church grow. Thus, in some churches I applied the participative style, and in others the consultative style, and I have noted that it worked.

Our church has a mission handbook, as written in Matthew 28:19,20, which says: "Go, make all the nations of the followers, baptizing them in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of Saint Esprit, and teach them to observe all that I prescribed to you. And well, I am with you every day, up to the end of the world." In this evangelistic mandate which Jesus has imparted to us, He indicates to us how to grow the church. In the same way, Ellen G. White informs us that if we want our church to grow faster, we have to follow Christ's method. She said: «Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior

mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed his sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.”¹

The efficiency of a method depends on how close it is to Jesus’s method in order to make all members of the church into followers of Jesus. This study shows that the style of leadership has an impact on the growth of the local church in our region of the South West of Madagascar, as well as in other regions. If the pastor of a district wishes for his churches to grow evidently, he needs to know what style of leadership he has to apply.

Leadership is an interesting area of study for many people and the trend continues. Efficient leadership is required in all organizations. For any established congregation to thrive, it requires a leader to manage it. God chose Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. The story of Moses is concerned with the liberation of the children of Israel in slavery for 430 years according to (Exod 12:40, 41). When he was fleeing Pharaoh from Egypt because of a murderous act he did in Egypt, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob appeared to him to return to Egypt for the liberation of God's people. While he was guarding the flocks of Jethro. He told him in Exodus 3:10,² to go bring His people out of Egypt.

Statement of the Problem

Training and equipping leaders are needed for the church as it is for secular institutions as well. The lack of well-equipped and trained leaders may lead to the

¹ Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1925), 119.

² The biblical version used in this project is the *New American Standard Bible*, unless otherwise stated.

death of church. Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby predict that the church may die due to lack of leaders.³ We need leaders to manage God's church in order to restore the image of Christianity today. Because pastors have major roles to play in the growth of the church.

It is one of the first reasons for his calling.⁴ The problem is that not many pastors are equipped to take on the role of church growth. So the major question for this research project is: what is the strategy to equip church leaders to grow God's church as he intended it?

Purpose of the Study

The church of Ilakaka has not experienced growth. Yet it has a potential to grow. Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop a strategy to equip leaders to foster growth of that church, in the South West Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madagascar.

Significance of the Study

The intended strategy, when implemented, should impact church growth not only Ilakaka Church, but other churches as well. The presence of 18 ethnic groups in the area where the church of Ilakaka is established makes the task of the leaders difficult. Secondly, the social environment also causes problems for the leaders because of the miners who come from different places with their own way of life. All these need a solid strategy to equip the leaders to move the church forward.

³ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN: B and H Publishing Group, 2011), 15.

⁴ Skip Bell, *A Time to Serve* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource Cataloging Service, 2003), 5.

Delimitation of the Study

We use several styles to manage congregations. This study focuses specifically on the Ilakaka Church, one of the Seventh-day Adventist Churches, which has problems with church growth due to leadership problems. Nevertheless, the principles of leadership in this project can be applied in the other churches of the District and Conference, so that these churches can experience growth.

Definitions of Terms

“Church Growth is the technical term that involves the planned activity of bringing people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and fellowship and responsible church membership.”⁵

Methodology and Procedure

This project is to develop a strategy to experience the impact of leadership for church growth in the Ilakaka. It follows the subsequent outline. The first chapter introduces the study. In the second chapter, we see the theoretical and theological foundation of leadership and church growth. In chapter three, we describes the local setting of the church in Ilakaka. Chapter four presents a strategy for solving the problem of church growth in relation to the leadership in Ilakaka. The last chapter gives a summary and conclusion along with recommendations from the study.

⁵ Terence G. Joshua, “Toward the Development of a Theological Critique of Church Growth Principles from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective” (DMin diss., Andrews University, Michigan, 1980), 10.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

The Bible shows that God needed a leader to direct his people. That's why He told Moses to bring His people out of Egypt (Exod 3:10, NAS). God chose a responsible man to carry out His mission.

Then, Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh that His people should go from Egypt to worship Him in the wilderness (Exod 5:1). God wanted His people to grow spiritually. In the New Testament, Jesus sent His disciples on a special mission: to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). This means that God also wanted his people to grow in numbers.

He also said that the world should know they are His disciples through their mutual love. (John 13:35). This marks the growth in their relationship. From these, we can conclude that growth in all areas is expected and much depend on the leaders.

Throughout the Bible, we find many great leaders. These are leaders who use different styles of leadership. And each one brings growth in their areas of responsibility. For example, we see the impact of Jesus' leadership. The Bible affirms that a great great multitude followed Him. (Mark 3:7). We have also examples of other great leaders from the Bible.

Leadership in the Bible

Knowledge of this term is most important to anyone who is and wants to be a true leader. It helps the person who leads the church and to have in mind the change

he/she wants to see. “Leadership is about influence and change,»¹ as James Tucker wrote.

Leadership and Its Relationship with Church Growth in the Bible

The Bible has many leadership models. Some of which includes, but not limited to the following: the school of prophets, servant leadership, teacher-learner relationship, disciple-making, coaching, mentoring, shepherd-leader. What is the impact of these types of leadership on the growth of the church?

In this section, we explore these different types of leadership. The Bible calls us to be transformed Christians (Rom 12:2, KJV). Paul uses the word “metamorphosis” here. It means “to change into another form.” From this biblical passage it can be deduced that a leader must bring about change. But the purposes and methods of leadership must be in line with God’s purposes.²

Prophets

In the Bible, a prophet is God’s messenger to speak truth to His people. It comes *prophetes*, which can mean “one who speaks forth.” They are also called “seers,” because of their spiritual insight or their prediction in the future.³

In another sense, a prophet is a spiritual leader because he “is an individual who is regarded as being in contact with a divine being and is said to speak on that entity's behalf, serving as an intermediary with humanity by delivering messages or

¹ Skip Bell, *A Time to Serve* (Lincoln, NE: Adventsource, 2003), i.

² Miebaka Dagogo Tamunomiebi, Israel Oghenero Omosioni, and Akintokunbo Odunayo, “Church Leadership and Congregational Growth: A Review of Literature,” *British Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 21, no. 2 (2018): 49, accessed 25 March 2021. [http://www.ajournal.co.uk/HSArticles21\(2\).htm.pdf](http://www.ajournal.co.uk/HSArticles21(2).htm.pdf).

³ Got Questions Ministries, “What Is a Prophet in the Bible?” accessed 25 March 2021, <https://www.gotquestions.org/prophet-Bible.html>.

teachings from the supernatural source to other people. The message that the prophet conveys is called a prophecy.”⁴ For God's people to progress in all areas, they need a prophet. One whom God chooses to speak to his people in this world. Before sin, God manifested himself directly to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8). But, when man transgressed the principle, this relationship is interrupted. Therefore, God «chose to communicate with men primarily through prophets.»⁵ A prophet has an important role between God and his people. According to Martin Adhikary, God calls and anoints a prophet who is known for being empowered in their mission (Num 11:17; Ezek 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 15, 24, 43).⁶

Servant Leadership

The question arises as to the value of servant leadership for the growth of the church. As the Malagasy saying goes: "Animals cannot walk without a head," i.e. we need a leader who knows how to motivate the church to grow. That is why we speak of servant leadership. The leader should set an example for the church. What is servant leadership?

Servant leadership aims to achieve authority rather than power.⁷ This ensures “great relationships and results.”⁸ The servant leader has a great responsibility for the growth of the church.

⁴ “Prophet,” Wikipedia, accessed 25 March 2021, <https://en.wikipedia.org>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Martin Adhikary, “Old Testament Prophets and Their Roles,” accessed 23 March 2021, <https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/460163/Old-Testament-Prophetsand-Their-Roles>.

⁷ Will Kenton, “Servant Leadership,” accessed 25 March 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/servant-leadership.asp>.

⁸ Ken Blanchard, “What Is Servant Leadership,” in *Servant Leadership in Action: How You Can Achieve Great Relationships and Results*, ed. Ken Blanchard and Renee Broadwell (Escondido, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2018), 12.

Teacher-learner Relationship

The church needs leaders who can handle the teaching. The irresponsibility of leaders in this regard has become a problem as it was in the Apostolic Church. The Bible reports that the early church was increasing in number (Acts 6:1). For this reason, it is necessary for leaders to realize the importance of caring for the members. So when this is accomplished, then the word of God would greatly spread. (Acts 6:7)

What is teacher-learner relationship? It is a type of leadership who emphasizes the relationship between teacher and student. For example, we have in Jewish times, Gamaliel, the first-century Jewish great rabbi, mentioned twice in the Scripture as a well-respected teacher (cf. Acts 5).⁹ In this area, we also clarify the term teacher-learner. A leader should know how to build a relationship with people.

Teacher-student relation - the academic relation between teachers and their students: “pupil, student - a learner who is enrolled in an educational institution, instructor, teacher - a person whose occupation is teaching, academic relation - a professional relationship between instructors and those they instruct.”¹⁰

According to Michael David Camp, “The relationship between a teacher and a student is defined as a formalized interpersonal association between an authority figure and a subordinate who interact on nearly a day to day basis.”¹¹

⁹ Got Questions Ministries, “Who Was Gamaliel in the Bible?” accessed 25 March 2021, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Gamaliel-in-the-Bible.html>.

¹⁰ *The Free Dictionary*, s.v. “Teacher Student relation,” accessed 16 July 2020, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/teacher-student+relation>.

¹¹ Michael David Camp, “The Power of Teacher-Student Relationships in Determining Student Success,” (Doctor of Education dissertation, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2011), iii.

Disciple-making

There are three characteristics (or definitions) of disciple-making: (1) Friendship with a vision and is relational, (2) Personal spiritual training, and (3) Passing relationship with God on to another.¹²

In the passage of Matthew 28: 18-20, Jesus is a role model for his disciples. He makes them into disciples so they should follow this example with others.

Coaching

For the church to grow, the leader must have the spirit of a coach. What does coaching mean?

Coaching is “the act of giving special classes in sports, a school subject, or a work-related activity, especially to one person or a small group.”¹³ Coaching can be viewed from various ways. It is helping a person to achieve that they aim for, give him a direction, support him; all these in view of a change.¹⁴

An Example of Coaching in the Bible

Paul presents himself as a model coach. He says it in 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NIV). And the Thessalonians themselves were witnesses of his model coaching.

Mentoring

Mentoring is one of the key things needed church growth. The leader must realize that if he does not become a mentor, he becomes an obstacle to growth. In the Bible, Jethro counselled Moses in leading the children of Israel. Jesus also counselled

¹² Justin Gravitt, “Three Disciple Making Definitions,” accessed 20 July 2020, <https://www.justingravitt.com/blog/3-definitions>.

¹³ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “Coaching,” accessed 10 October 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coaching>.

¹⁴ International Coaching Community, “What Is Coaching?” accessed 10 October 2020, <https://internationalcoachingcommunity.com/what-is-coaching/>.

his followers. They were made to advance the Church. A mentor is “a person who can support, advise and guide you. They typically take the time to get to know you and the challenges you're facing and then use their understanding and personal experience to help you improve.”¹⁵

Shepherd-leader

The evangelistic mandate of the Church is to go out and make disciples as found in Matt 28:19. If someone decides to follow Jesus, it means, they need a Shepherd-leader. He plays an important role in the progress of the church. The work of the shepherd-leader is to keep the members firm in their decision to follow Jesus. That is why all church leaders should know what a shepherd-leader is.

In the Bible, according to Ezekiel 34:23 and Jeremiah 23:5, David's Son would be the shepherd for His people. And the ultimate shepherd-leader is Jesus. As Psalm 23; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7, say, Jesus is the shepherd of Israel (individually and corporately).

Leadership in the Old Testament

As said above, leadership is influencing and changing a person. So after Adam and Eve sinned, God wanted to change their way of looking at things. So He began to influence Adam and Eve so that they could change by asking them questions where are you? (Gen 3: 9). God also asked about their nakedness and their transgression to His instruction (Gen 3:11). Then another question to Eve about the wrong she had done (Gen 3:13). God led our first parents to confess what they had done. To make them accept their faults, God uses a particular method: question-answers. These

¹⁵ Nicola Cronin, “What Is a Mentor? Definition, Purpose & More,” accessed 27 October 2022, <https://www.guider-ai.com/blog/what-is-a-mentor>.

questions show that the Lord inquires with man, instead of commanding him for the purpose of seeking/finding him.¹⁶ Through a long period in the Old Testament God had sent different leaders to achieve their goals in this sinful world.

Patriarchal Leadership

We start with patriarchal leadership in the Old Testament. After sin, God worked through patriarchs to lead his people. We see for example Abram/Abraham. He was a great leader in the Old Testament.

According to Maxwell, as quoted in Fatokun and Sewakpo, “leadership is influence; without influence, a person cannot lead a group of people anywhere.”¹⁷ In line with this, Abraham was able to influence his family to leave Ur and go to a land he did not know (Gen 12:1- 5). As a patriarch, he knew how to solve the problem of strife among their servants affecting the relationship between him and his nephew (Gen 13:7, 8).

This problem is a power struggle. There were so many sheep and goats that the water was not enough for all of them. That's why there was a dispute between the two parties. This problem should have required a third person who was neutral. However, Abraham intervened to solve it, even though he was one of the sides involved. Even if this was the case, they were able to deal successfully with the issues without mediation¹⁸ That is one of the responsibilities of a patriarch.

¹⁶ Victor B. Hamilton, *Book of Genesis Chapter 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MN: Eerdmans, 1990), 195.

¹⁷ J. C. Maxwell, *The Twenty-one Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 6, quoted in Samson A. Fatokun and Honore Sewakpo, “Leadership Qualities in the Old Testament,” accessed 31 August 2021, https://www.academia.edu/34288577/Leadership_Qualities_in_Old_Testament.

¹⁸ Hamilton, *Book of Genesis Chapter 1-17*, 357.

That is why “*we are brethren*, singled out the aspect that mattered in face of an alien world (cf. 7b), and his proposal, being selfless as well as practical, resolved the immediate tension without creating any future ones.”¹⁹ As an elder, Abraham always tried to maintain peace. The word “brethren” meant that the two parties were one and that there should be no conflict. According to *Seventh-day Adventist Commentary*, Abram did not take advantage of his seniority vis-à-vis his nephew – he demonstrated to him his honesty and good faith.²⁰

King’s Leadership

Another model of leadership is king’s leadership. According to the Holy Scriptures, it was God who reigned over and led his people. He is the King (Psalm 84: 3). Thus it is said that His throne is established in heavens (Psalm 103: 19). It was God himself who directed the Israelites out of Egypt (Exod 13: 9). But the Israelites wanted to have a king like all the nations (1 Samuel 8: 5). God was grieved, and answered that in fact He was the one who was rejected as King (1 Samuel 8: 7).

Because of the unfaithfulness of Samuel's two sons, Israel asked for a king to judge them, just like the surrounding countries. The children of Israel wanted to imitate those nations around them because of the problem in leadership. Baldwin confirms that desire of the Israelites to be like all other nations who have kings (cf. Deut 17:14-15).²¹

¹⁹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC) 1 (Westmont, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1967), 140.

²⁰ “We Be Brethren” [Gen 13:8], *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 1:302.

²¹ J. G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOCT 8, 91.

So, God allowed a man to rule over his own people called king. That is how the Lord achieved His objectives, irrespective of human plans and agendas.²²

Priest's Leadership

We also find about the priest's leadership in the Old Testament. God used the priest to lead his people. The principal roles of priests were to oversee sacrificial worship. They directed people to carefully follow the rules for worship. They were the "ministers of the altar" (Joel 1:13). The priests were to show the holiness, the purity of this worship because they were considered as holy and pure individuals compared to the others (Lev 21: 1-23).

In the Bible, there is a high priest and subordinate priests. Their roles are different. The subordinate priest offers the daily sacrifice worship and served in the holy place. But the high priest, apart from his responsibility to help the priests, the high priest is the only supreme religious leader of God's people.²³

Servant Leadership

The last model of leadership that we can see is servant leadership. In the Old Testament there is a lot of talk about patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings. All of these rulers were servants. Servant comes from the verb to serve which means: "One who serves another, providing help in some manner."²⁴ According the Bible, God used human instruments, that is Moses, Aaron and Miriam, to bring the Israelites out of Egypt (Mic 6:4). Jehovah chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

²² Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 94.

²³ Got Questions Ministries, "What Was the Biblical Role of the High Priest?" accessed 2 January 2020, <https://www.gotquestions.org/high-priest.html>.

²⁴ *Definitions*, s.v. "Servant," accessed 4 April 2021, <https://www.definitions.net/definition/servant>.

God always aims to benefit his people. This is exactly why he chose a leader to carry out his will.

Leaders show love, humility, and altruism.²⁵ In this line of thought, David is said to have demonstrated altruism, service, and vision.²⁶ Those are some of the qualities expected from a servant leader.

An Example of Leadership: Moses

The Bible tells us about the leadership of Moses after God chose him. How did God call him? What did he do to be able to lead Israel? When faced with the problem of leading the children of Israel, what did he do?

In spite of Moses' hesitation, God reminded him that he is sent to free His people from Egypt (Exod 3:10). The signs in Exodus 4 show the proof of appeal for Moses. Ellen G. White observes that Moses was amazed and terrified, but God promised him that He would be with Him in that mission.²⁷

Although Moses seems to reject the mission here, his words demonstrate humility. As Fuller Barnes writes, he was concerned about his incompetency in expressing himself.²⁸ But God provided a mouth-piece for him, namely, Aaron, his brother.

²⁵ Carlo Serrano, "Charismatic and Servant Leadership as Seen in King Saul and Young David: An Inner Texture Analysis of 1 Samuel 17: 1-58," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 6, no. 1 (2014), 27-40.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ellen G White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Silver Spring, MD: Publishing Ellen G. White Estate, 2010), 252.

²⁸ A. Fuller Barnes, *Exodus– Ruth*, The Ages Digital Library Commentary (Rio, WI: Ages Software 2000), 16.

Even though the mission was difficult for Moses, because he needed motivation - which all leaders should have - he went under the guidance of the Lord. He clung to God's promise that He would be with him.²⁹

The behavior shown by Moses in this mission gives a lesson to the leader to combine his own power with the power of God. During the mission, Moses was always dependent on God by calling on to Him. The Bible says "Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, . . ." (Exod 14:1), and then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward" (Exod 14:15). This is confirmed by the *Seventh day Adventist Bible Commentary* that God's word was not a reproof to Moses, but an admission so that Moses would move to action.³⁰

Leadership in the New Testament

As in the Old Testament, we see some examples of leadership styles that are used in the New Testament. They are notably the dictatorial leadership, preferential leadership and servant leadership.

Dictatorial Leadership:

In the the third epistle to John, we see Diotrephes who is said to love to dominate (3 John 1:9). Here, we find the characters prevalent in Diotrephes' leadership. Diotrephes had a domineering nature and this caused some problems in the development of the church. He conceded to the meaning of his name:

"Diotrephes. Gr. Diotrophēs, from Dios, meaning "of Zeus," and trephō, "to

²⁹ W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. F. E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 1:368-369.

³⁰ "Wherefore Criest Thou?" [Exod 14:15], *SDABC*, 1:566.

nourish,” “to nurse,” hence, “nourished by Zeus.” Some have suggested that there may be significance in the fact that Diotrephes had retained his heathen name.”³¹

Preferential Leadership

When the church grew in numbers, there were several leaders. This type of leader depends on the members of the local church. That is, preferential leadership is that which results from popular choice. Paul talks about rivalries based on belonging to Paul, Apollos or Cephas in the church of Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11,12). Party spirit is clearly wrong.³²

Situations like these are common all the time, even today. The congregation chooses the leader they want based on their spiritual condition. This causes problems in the operation of the church. This is why Paul said that cannot be divided (1Cor. 1:13). The mission of the church leaders is to preach Christ who was crucified for the salvation of the world. This is the most important mission given to all leaders and members of the church.

Servant Leadership

This style of leadership is frequent in the New Testament. It helps the church to have a spirit of service. Church leaders should give lessons in service. Jesus said that whoever wants to be the first should be the servant (Mat. 20:26). “Servant leadership (SL) is a set of behaviors and practices that turn the traditional ‘power leadership’ model upside down; instead of the people working to serve the leader, the

³¹ “Diotrephes” [3 John 1:9], *SDABC*, 7:698.

³² “Of Paul,” [1 Cor.1:12], *SDABC*, 6:663.

leader actually exists to serve the people.”³³ So according to the New Testament, a great leader must be a servant.

The Example of Jesus’ Leadership

In His life, Jesus set a perfect example of leadership. As a leader, he had a purpose: to save His people from their sins (Matt 1:21). His name marks His mission: Jesus means Yahweh is salvation.³⁴ He has always been an example of love, humility, communication with his Father (i.e. prayer), setting priorities as a leader and carrying out His mission.

Luke’s gospel reports the mind of James and John: to destroy others through fire (Luke 9:54). Faced with such a strong character, Jesus rebuked them and reminded them of His mission to save, not to destroy (Luke 9:55, 56). Jesus always gives priority to the mission of saving people.

Jesus clearly told the disciples that He came to serve and give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10: 45). And before His death, when He was with His disciples in another occasion, in the upper room, as He was washing their feet that He left them a model so they may follow (John 13:14,15).

Jesus made it clear that there is no room for first place for any leader who accepts Christ. The only greatness in His kingdom is the greatness of humility, that is service to others.³⁵

³³ Servant Leadership Institute, “Servant Leadership Is . . .,” accessed 4 April 2021, <https://www.servantleadershipinstitute.com › what-is-servant-leadership>.

³⁴Ben F. Meyer, “Jesus Christ,” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 3:773.

³⁵Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Silver Spring, MD: Publishing Ellen G. White Estate, 2021), 558.

Others Concepts of Leadership

Theories of Leadership in the Bible

Leadership theory is a key component in becoming a great leader. That is to say, to explain how he becomes a leader. So, in this part, we are going to see some leadership theories. And in order for the Church to progress, the Church needs them.

Situational Leadership Theory

This theory contemplates that there is all types of leadership are equal, but one who knows how to adapt his style to the situation is the best.³⁶ When the problem arose in the early Christians, the leaders of this early church had applied this situational theory to solve these problems in Acts 15 concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles and the Law of Moses. That congregation applied styles of leadership by saying what to do, selling ideas, letting others participate and make decisions, and delegating power to others to make decisions. That is, Telling, Selling, Participating, Delegating.³⁷

As the church grows, it needs a leader who can solve problems like the one seen here, so that it can retain the progress of the church. In such a situation, it is necessary to know everyone's opinion in order to be able to identify the root of the problem and to make a decision. This is related in Acts 15:12.

There was a positive result in the midst of the church because everyone agreed with this solution. In fact, they were rejoicing (Act 15:31).

³⁶Kendra Cherry, "The Situational Theory of Leadership," accessed 26 April 2021, <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-situational-theory-of-leadership-2795321>.

³⁷"Situational Theories of Leadership," accessed 26 April 2021, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-principlesmanagement/chapter/situational-theories-of-leadership/>.

Participative Theories

In this theory, participatory leadership believes that it is best to involve others to achieve the goal.³⁸ It is very important to involve everyone so that everyone can participate in the development of the church. God has given everyone a spiritual gift. Leaders are expected to know how to use them to achieve their goals. As Paul says, spiritual gifts have been distributed to the members of the church to build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11, 12). Mary D. Poole reiterates the importance of participative theory by saying that “Leadership should be more participative than directive, more enabling than performing.”³⁹

Relationship Theory

A leader must be goal-oriented. This depends on his or her interpersonal relationship. For one needs another person to achieve goals. Moses needed support as God himself said in (Exod. 4:14-16). That support was provided through Aaron. So, “Relationship theories, [is] also known as transformational theories.”⁴⁰ This theory emphasizes the interpersonal relationship of a leader with his adherents or his employees. That means, success depends on the performance of each person. Bass states that a person who connected with his followers on emotional level will be a prominent leader.⁴¹

³⁸ Kendra Cherry, “The Major Leadership Theories” (2019), accessed 27 April 2021, <https://www.verywellmind.com/leadership-theories-2795323>.

³⁹ Anastasia Belyh, “Participative Leadership Guide: Definition, Qualities, Pros & Cons, Examples,” accessed 27 April 2021, <https://www.cleverism.com/participative-leadership-guide/>.

⁴⁰ Cherry, “The Major Leadership Theories.”

⁴¹ “Transformational Leadership Theory,” accessed 28 October 2022, <https://www.communicationtheory.org/transformational-leadership-theory/>.

Leadership in the Bible

There are several types of leadership, but in this part we expound three types of leadership in order to understand what they are.

Autocratic Leadership

It is a leader who has authority, power and responsibility over an organization. Rarely do we see the team making a decision.⁴² In His ministry, Jesus used His power, His authority when he entered the temple in Jerusalem to cleanse it (Mat 21:12,13). As a leader who wants to keep the dignity of the Church, He should have this way of acting without hesitation. But the mission must be kept in mind. The temple was His house and He must exercise authority to determine for the use of its precincts⁴³

Visionary Leadership Style

A visionary leader does not work alone. He always shows the employees a better future through his projects, just like David did. He wanted to make a house for his Father. Prophet Nathan gave him the go ahead in his plan (2 Sam 7: 2, 3). Even if he didn't do it, he prepared the project. Because he knew that a leader who had the ability to change a person or a group would influence them for new ideas by gaining their trust.⁴⁴

In calling His disciples, He applied this style of leadership. The call of the first disciples is recorded in (Matt 4: 18): Then Jesus told them they would be fishers of men (Matt 4: 19). And they followed Him, indeed. (Matt 4: 20).

⁴² Laura Berlinsky-Schine, "The 7 Types of Leadership," accessed 27 April 2021, <https://fairygodboss.com/articles/types-of-leadership-leveraging-your-qualities-to-find-an-effective-style-for-you>.

⁴³ "Cast Out" [Matt 21:12], *SDABC*, 5:471.

⁴⁴ Indeed Editorial Team, "10 Common Leadership Styles," accessed 24 April 2021, <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/10-common-leadership-styles>.

Pacesetter Leadership Style

It is very important in the church to do a good and quick job. A leader should have a plan to achieve his goals for the advancement of the Church. When God created the world, it says in Genesis 1:31 that everything was very good. God has given a model for doing good things. According to the *Seventh-day Adventist commentary*, “Everything was perfect in its kind; every creature met the goal appointed by the Creator, and was equipped to accomplish the purpose for which it was created. The application of the term ‘good’ to everything God had made, and the repetition of the word with the emphasis ‘very’ at the close of creation.”⁴⁵ What the Church needs is this - good and quick work.

When Jesus gives a mission to these disciples, before His ascension He gave them the great commission (Matt 28: 19). In a way he was using this pacesetter leadership style by telling disciples, that they would be able to do more than what He did (John 14: 12).

Church Growth

It is Jesus’ desire that the gospel be spread to all nations. This is exactly why He told his disciples that they should be witnesses from Jerusalem (Act 1: 8). Jared W. Ludlow describes the hardships faced by the apostles in spreading the gospel message to the nations.⁴⁶

To experience growth, the Church needs a leader filled with the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission set by the Lord. Not only that, but everyone wants their church

⁴⁵ “Behold, It Was Very Good” [Gen 1:31], *SDABC*, 1:217.

⁴⁶ Jared W. Ludlow, “The Book of Acts: A Pattern for Modern Church Growth,” in *Shedding Light on the New Testament: Acts–Revelation*, ed. Ray L. Huntington, Frank F. Judd Jr., and David M. Whitchurch (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 1-29.

to grow, not only the leaders. Hence, likewise each one takes responsibility for his church to develop in all areas: spiritually, intellectually, in relationships and numerically.⁴⁷ Rick Warren says that it is natural for church to grow since it is a living organism – if it is not growing, it is evidently dying.⁴⁸ Church leaders have an important role as their churches grow.

Church Growth in the Old Testament

Growth has been part of God's plan since the creation of the world. When God created the universe, especially when He created the animals and the human race, He told them to multiply in numbers (Gen 1:22). Such statement is repeated in Genesis 1:28. To be fruitful and multiply is a standard formula of blessing.⁴⁹

When He called Abraham to go out of his own land and he would be a great nation (Gen 12:1, 2). In the Old Testament, in Patriarchal times, it is the head of the family who played an important role for the family development. He is the leader of the family. On his journey to Canaan, we see the attitude of Abraham. Abraham trusted God's promise. He was making his family grow spiritually, he was an example of building altars whenever he moved. It is said that he built an altar wherever he went (Genesis 12:8).⁵⁰

It is God who gave him the directions towards the fulfilling of His promise. God directed His people through His servants: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This period was marked by the Patriarchal leaders: they exercised control and served as political,

⁴⁷Garry E. Milley, "Four Dimensions of Church Growth," accessed 28 April 2021, <https://www.christianweek.org/church-growth-four-dimensions/>.

⁴⁸ Patricia, "7 Keys to Church Growth," Smart Church Management, accessed 28 April 2021, <https://smartchurchmanagement.com/keys-to-church-growth/>.

⁴⁹ "God Blessed Them" [Gen 1:22], *SDABC*, 1:214.

⁵⁰ Patricia, "7 Keys to Church Growth."

legal, and spiritual heads of their community, in other words, they led them in worship.⁵¹

When Jacob's family grew, his sons had jealousy against Joseph. The way Jacob ran his family had caused this situation. He loved Joseph more. The Bible confirms it (Genesis 37: 3). But when Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, Joseph himself told them that it was God's plan that he was sold in Egypt (Gen 45: 8). The family of Israel came to settle in Egypt. The question arises: how did it multiply?

Joseph was a leader of Egypt. His leadership made it easier for his family to settle in Egypt (Gen 46: 32-34).

After Joseph's death, the Israelites multiplied in number. Fear arose in the leaders of this country. That is the reason why the leader of the country commanded the midwives to kill all boys born to Israelite women (Exod 1:16). But God, seeing that He is the supreme leader of the Israelites, did not allow it to be done. Inherently, the midwives feared God and followed His direction.

Church Growth in the New Testament

We see in the book of the Acts of the Apostles the great scale of church growth. The question arises how the church was increasing in number? What was the secret?

According to the Bible, Jesus is the great leader or the head of the church. The Apostle Paul said "Christ is the head of the assembly." (Eph 5: 23). If the church follows the instruction of the great chief, the result is growth.

⁵¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (1988), s.v. "Patriarchal Age."

In Acts of the Apostles 1: 4, Jesus told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. God calls different people to accomplish different tasks in his church.⁵²

In the Act of the Apostles, each leader played an important role in church growth. And also, it depends on the style used. If there is a lack of leader, it becomes a barrier to the development of the Church.

The Bible reports that there was a conflict in the early church, dur to distribution of food (Acts 6: 1). The leader of the resolved the situation by choosing officials for his services, the seven deacons (Acts 6: 5). Consequently, the word of God increased, and the church grew exponentially (Acts 6: 7). The statement echoes the Old Testament command to multiply.⁵³

Thus, the leader of the church used the participatory style so that everyone had a responsibility for the growth of the church and for them to achieve their goals. Because “God calls different people to accomplish different tasks in his church.”⁵⁴

The church multiplies quickly if we follow the principle of the supreme head of the church, which is Jesus Christ. Following His recommendation, “three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41) gave themselves to Christ. And then “five thousand” (Acts 4: 4). The secretary could not count the number of people joining the church, so the Bible affirms: "and so many believers joined the Lord, a multitude of both men and women." (Acts 5: 14).

⁵² Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, Holman New Testament Commentary 5 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 90.

⁵³ Allison A. Trites and William J. Larkin, *The Gospel of Luke and Acts*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2006), 12:428.

⁵⁴ Gangel, *Acts*, 90.

Responsibility of Leader

This section presents views related to advising. It is necessary to know this in order to succeed as a leader. The question is: how does God guide his people? As leaders, what is our responsibility? This way of leading from God is our model. Hayford shows this in his statement God is our leader, meaning in takes the front position so that we may follow.⁵⁵

There is the prayer for the psalmist, asking God to lead him (Ps 5: 8), to teach him His statutes (Ps 119: 33), and to guide Him (Ps 23: 3).

One of the best definitions of a leader is “someone who is willing to take responsibility for someone else.”⁵⁶ Successful leaders must be able to sell their projects. This enables him to advance in the position he holds. According to the major political or military leaders, such as Napoleon Bonaparte, «a leader is a dealer in hope.»⁵⁷

Furthermore, it is necessary to be able to share one's vision with others. Jesus is our example for this. The Scriptures say that Jesus made know to His disciples His concerns about the people that they would faint on their way if they went without eating (Matt 15:32). Jesus wants to show His followers He came to care for and help the hungry and thirsty by sharing his vision.

⁵⁵ J. W. Hayford and H. Rosenberger, *Appointed to Leadership: God's Principles for Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 101.

⁵⁶ M. Shelley, *Building Your Church through Counsel and Care: 30 Strategies to Transform Your Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1997), 37.

⁵⁷ Anna Mar, “7 Definitions of Leadership,” accessed 30 August 2021, <https://training.simplicable.com/training/new/7-definitions-of-leadership>.

This is exactly what Warren Bennis states, "leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."⁵⁸

God's Plan for Church

This is part of God's plan for the church to grow in all aspects. For example, Paul said that the church should bear fruit of good work. But this can be achieved only through divino-human cooperation.⁵⁹

In the Book of Acts, Luke reports about the great number of people who came to the faith (Acts 11:24). One indicator of the church growth is the increase in numbers. A growing church is not just growth in numbers, but many signs that mark growth. For this reason, Wagner as quoted in Towns says: "Church growth is that science which investigates the nature, function and health of the Christian church as it relates specifically to the effective implementation of God's commission to 'make disciples of all nations.'"⁶⁰

Moreover, the church growing is not only growing in numbers but also in the health of the church in all its aspects. The church cannot grow if it is not healthy. According to Peterson Wang'ombe, "The argument is that since the church is a living organism, it should grow naturally if it is healthy."⁶¹ It is the purpose of a church leader to always seek the health of his church.

⁵⁸ Kevin Kruse, "What Is Leadership?" accessed 30 August 2021, <https://www.forbes.com › kevinkruse ›>.

⁵⁹ Russell Burill, *How to Grow an Adventist Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 2009), 43.

⁶⁰ C. P. Wagner, printed class notes, Church Growth I (MN 705), "Church Growth Eyes," 6, quoted in Elmer L. Towns, "The Relationship of Church Growth and Systematic Theology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 1 (March 1986): 63-64, accessed 2 November 2022, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=towns_articles.

⁶¹ Peterson Wang'ombe, *How Healthy Is Your Church* (Nairobi, Kenya: Nyayo Stadium, 2006), 11.

Conception by Ellen G. White

God's church organization is important so that His church can grow in all dimensions: spiritually, fraternally, socially, and in numbers. That's why we need an effective leader to lead the church.

According to Ellen G. White, the basic element to an organization is to support the ministry while work is carried out in the new fields.⁶²

Leadership

Ellen G White said for all leader: "Leadership is not Lordship," and that "No man is ever to set himself up as a ruler, as a Lord over his fellowmen, to act out his natural impulses. No one man's voice and influence should ever be allowed to become a controlling power."⁶³ Ellen White cautions all church leaders not to follow the example of Jewish leaders, who looked after praise of men instead of loving God.⁶⁴

A true leader should follow Nehemiah's example when he worked to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. His influence was widely felt.⁶⁵ If a leader is to be successful in his ministry, he should have qualities to achieve his goal as a leader. Thus, Ellen G. White advises that integrity, intelligence, and tact are required of them.⁶⁶

⁶² Ellen G. White, *Christian Leadership* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1895), 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶⁴ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1982), 195.

⁶⁵ White, *Christian Service*, 176.

⁶⁶ Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1995), 53.

Church Growth

Church growth is God's desire. It depends on Himself. Church growth needs the power of God to make it happen. Concerning that, Ellen G. White reiterates that is needed for the growth and prosperity of the church.⁶⁷ All members should have the confidence to be able to perform.⁶⁸

Each leader and each member should ask the question to himself, “will you have a stunted Christian growth, or will you make healthy progress in the divine life?”⁶⁹ Because we are expected to attain full stature in Jesus,⁷⁰ as Paul says in Ephesians 4:13.

The growth of the Church depends very much on the spiritual aspect at the center of the Church. The secret is the spiritual side that we find in the study of the Word of God.⁷¹

Spiritual growth, however, does not happen by itself, but requires effort on the part of each individual. All leaders must deny themselves in order to achieve it. As Ellen G. White appeals that church members should be taught to grow spiritually, a growth that is needed in winning souls.⁷²

⁶⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1991), 50.

⁶⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1875), 133.

⁶⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1889), 265.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), 38.

⁷² Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), 69.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTING CHURCH OF ILAKAKA

Description of Ilakaka

This chapter presents the surroundings of Ilakaka. It also helps to describe the problems that the church is facing in its growth.

Ilakaka is a small place but it has its own underground treasure: sapphire stones. This usually outlines the situation of people's lives and has an impact on the growth of the church.

Background of Ilakaka

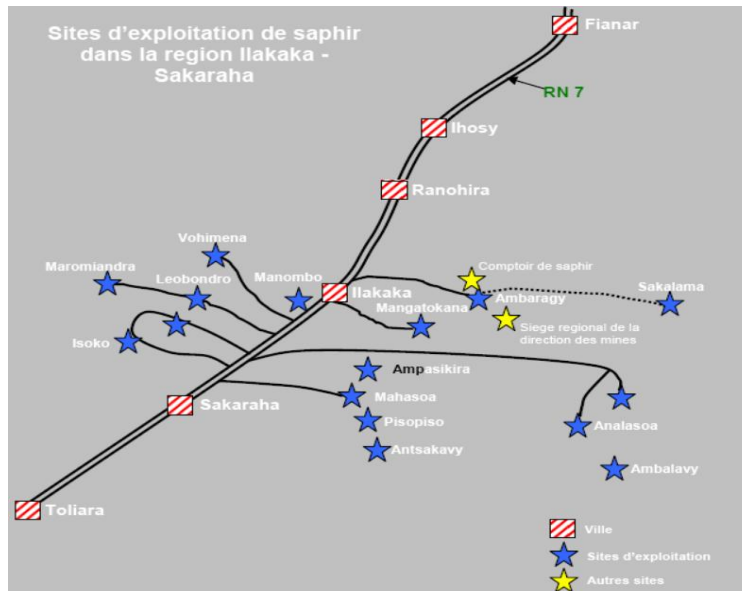
The commune of Ilakaka is in the district of Ihosy, in the Ihorombe region. It is located 735 km south of Antananarivo, close to the Isalo National Park. It is located on the RN7 on the way to Tuléar. In 1990, there were only 40 inhabitants in this place. But after a few years, the number of population rose to 60,000 in 2005. There are eighteen tribes existing in Madagascar.¹ Most of them come from the South, West, East and North coast of the island.

Economic Activities

People have various reasons for coming to Ilakaka. But most of them are here to mine sapphire stones and trade them. Agriculture became scarce when sapphire mining began. People were more inclined to go and dig for sapphire stones. Few made

¹ "Ilakaka," accessed 1 November 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilakaka>

a living from trade, agriculture and livestock. Being a major capital of sapphire mining, the cost of living there is quite high. Ilakaka is a place that is full of sapphire stone mining sites and that is why people flock to this place.



Because of the large number of people and the availability of sapphire stones, which amounts to approximately 50% of the world's sapphires, Ilakaka has become a place of insecurity. In addition, it has become a hub for entrepreneurship and capitalism. Despite the insecurity, some of the people still live there in order to protect their family and their pride, which turns out to be their only defense against violence. The reason for that is that in spite of the issues there, the tribes still have some respect for the elders.²

² Jonny Hogg, "Madagascar's Sapphire Rush," BBC News Madagascar, accessed 2 November 2022, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/7098213.stm.

The Traditional Culture

Many of the residents come from the different places mentioned above. These origins define the culture that is found in Ilakaka. They are all different and that is why leadership is so difficult.

Foreigners are also becoming more and more common as it is not only Malagasy people who live in Ilakaka, but also Africans, Sri Lankans, Comorians, Thais and Chinese. They don't just come to buy sapphires, they also come to bring their religion and culture.

Leadership for Church Growth at Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church

The church leadership is indeed facing problems because of the many reasons mentioned above. As stated previously, it is mainly due to the many different religions, especially the Muslims. The economic aspect also complicates the leadership and restrains the development of the church. Let us start the following presentation by introducing the history of the Adventist Church here in Ilakaka. This helps us understand the problems that the church is facing.

Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church

Before the sapphire frenzy broke out, there was not even a single Adventist there. The original inhabitants (the indigenous people) lived according to their own traditional religion. From 2003 onwards, the population started to gradually arrive and by 2005 it was significantly larger. It was during that period that Adventist members arrived in Ilakaka.

According to the history of the church recorded in the guest book to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the church since 2004, about 3 families worshipped in the house of an Adventist member at that time. The number of members increased so

much that it could no longer fit in the house. Hence, some of them donated land to build a wooden church.

For a long time, the church worshipped in this wooden edifice. And when the number of members grew to 100, they built a new brick house church to honor God.³

Just like during the times of the Apostles (Acts 6), problems began to arise in the leadership and this hindered the growth of the church. Especially when a family member had a problem with the pastor and burned down the pastor's house, the church leadership began to experience a serious decline. There might be many reasons for this, but they can all be summarized is the fact that the leaders were afraid.

It should be noted that the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Ilakaka is an organized church in the South West Malagasy Conference. Geographically, the district of Ihosy, where Ilakaka is found, is located more in the South East, however ecclesiastically it belongs in the territory of the South West Malagasy Conference. This Conference was created in 2018. It currently has 9336 members. Previously, this Conference was joint with the South East Malagasy Conference and was formerly known as the South Malagasy Conference which had 27955 members.⁴ The church of Ilakaka is a church with 121 members,⁵ who come from different places. That is to say, the church is multiracial with 75% of the members being “Merina” and “Betsileo.”

This multiracial situation plays an important role in either the growth or decline of the church. It entails that the different leadership has been the cause of some cases of confrontation.

³ From the Golden Book recording of the Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2011.

⁴ Report of the President South Malagasy Mission during the spiritual assembly (August 2016).

⁵ Ilakaka Church register (February 2022).

In addition, the number of women is higher than men. That is, 70% of the members are women, 20% men and the rest are children.⁶ This also creates a problem in leadership and similarly has an impact on the growth of the church. The reason for this stems from the education dispensed in this area.

The Different Leadership in Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church

The problem started when the church membership grew, mainly due to the reasons mentioned above: ethnicity, profession, relationships, religion. These also determine the leadership style applied in the church.

Some used the traditional leadership style, meaning that it is the elders in the family who were to lead. Others use the *laissez-faire* style because of the insecurity in Ilakaka. And the last one being used is the transformation style. The question arises: what is the problem? In addition to that, one of the leaders of the church, a pastor, has suffered from lawlessness. His house was burnt down.

Leadership problem in Ilakaka Seventh-day Adventist Church

Several people of different ages and ethnicity in the church were informally interviewed. The following question was asked: What is the reason why the Church is not developing here in Ilakaka? It can be summarized as follows depending on the answer they gave concerning the root of the problem.

As pastor of this church, the researcher was able to identify these problems very well thanks to the interaction with them and the visits that were made and all the personal interviews.

⁶ From the Sabbath School Membership List and Sabbath School Report on the Ilakaka Church, (February 2022).

Spiritual immaturity: As this is the sapphire field, people's hearts are there to exploit the mines. People are busy with their livelihood. And the church leader and some members cannot get away from it, so they don't even have time to meditate personally because they are too tired. This is reflected in the attendance of prayer meetings every Wednesday, on the beginning of the Sabbath and the Sabbath afternoon.

For example, there are more than 100 people registered in the church, but hardly 60% of them come to pray on Sabbath morning, only 10 or 12 people gather to pray together on Wednesday and on the beginning of the Sabbath. Almost all of them are young people from the church.

- Leadership: mostly, the poorly educated people have become leaders in the church. But among the people they lead, there are better-educated people. The leader is affected by an inferiority complex and this becomes an obstacle in his leadership.

For example: when teaching the *Church Manual*, members often ask questions. Leaders find it difficult to answer this because the ideas proposed by the members are accepted by many. But this has become an obstacle to the progress of the church.

- The number of women in the church (cultural context): If we look at the way of life in southwestern Madagascar, there are many obstacles to the development of women. However, they are the majority in the church and they have the influence, and the ideas they put forward are more strongly backed because they are in the majority. Thus, the culture keeps women out of leadership positions. Men are troubled because there are more women in the church, and in the distribution of responsibilities in the church.

- The “sapphire mentality” (just like in sapphire mining, it is every man for himself): They only look at their own interests. This is found at the very center of the church, so if what is done is not beneficial to one person, said person does not come to fulfil his responsibility, either in the church or during the evangelic campaign.

For example: they consider that the time spent preaching the gospel is too long and they lose their material benefits, so they do not accomplish it. This is a major obstacle to the progress of the church.

- The influence of other religions (especially Muslims): There are members who are married to Muslims who still follow their ceremonial law and they bring it to the church as a principle to be followed. Because they have influence, many members follow them.

Example: About menstruating women. People say that she is unclean and should not have a responsibility and that she is not allowed to partake in the Lord’s Supper. This also becomes a hindrance to the work of the leader in the church.

- The economic aspect and security: Usually, people who do not have much become leaders in the church. They have an inferiority complex because of the economic situation of their family. Hence, they have difficulty in applying their leadership because of this.

When leaders teach the *Church Manual*, students often object. This is an obstacle for leaders in protecting and developing the church.

Summary

If we look at the situation in the church, the state of leadership is dependent on the situation of the area, the economy, the gender, the standard of living and the influence of different religious groups, especially the Muslims. These become obstacles against growth. However, even in front of these problems and challenges, it

is still possible to make the church grow. This relies heavily on the perseverance of the leader. The next chapter describes how we can develop the church in Ilakaka.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGY FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM

This chapter shows the four steps to solving the leadership problem in Ilakaka Church: biblical guidance, spiritual aspects, training, and learning.

Biblical Guidance on Solving the Leadership Problem

The Word of God always has solutions for leaders. This paragraph focuses on that. God provides a solution to the situation in His church. What is that solution?

Counsel from the Old Testament

The Scriptures give instructions to all leaders. These words of God encourage and help leaders with leadership problems. Let us look at a sample.

The Lord calls upon His people to trust in Him, not in their own understanding (Prov. 3: 5). In Hebrew, "trust" is בטח batach which can be translated as: “to trust” or “to have confidence, to be confident.” It means a life that is completely on God's side so that we can have complete protection. It is not that knowledge, skills and experience are not needed. But the first important thing for the leader is total dependence on God. In all situations, whether easy or difficult, we must always trust and rely on God.

As a leader, we have to think carefully before we do something. Leaders need to plan what to do. This is exactly what the Bible says in (Prov 20: 18). Leaders need two things to succeed: the ability to organize ideas easily, and to rely mainly on God's guidance. According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, we need to seek

counsel of others because of our limitation, in other words, there should be consultations.¹

In fact, God always makes promises to His people. Even though the problem is difficult, He said that He would fight for us (Exod 14: 14). It is an assurance to all leaders that they are not alone. Ellen G. White counselled leaders to hold on to God's promises so as not to fail in their duties.²

Guidance from the New Testament

Anyone with responsibility will always be faced with challenges in front of him/her. The Apostle Paul gives a special message, to say be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6: 10). Leaders are to always increase their strength - mental strength, physical strength and spiritual strength - to face the responsibility. This does not happen by chance, but is found in the Lord. It is therefore necessary to be with Him every day.

Increasing piety is the first important thing that all leaders should seek. The Bereans were in a good state of mind compared to those in Thessalonica. There are two reasons for that: first, they received the Word of God with a good heart, that is, they lived every word they heard. Secondly, they had a relationship with God every day by reading His Word every day, even to the point of counter-checking at home what he had heard in church services (Acts 17: 11). According to Ellen G. White they were willing to investigate the teaching preached to them; even angels came by their sides in that endeavor.³

¹ "By Counsel" [Prov 20:20], *SDABC*, 3:1015.

² White, *Christian Leadership*, 19.

³ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate: 2011), 231.

The example set by the Bereans is an indispensable guide for the leaders of the Church. They must study the word of God every day.

Jesus has a special mission for leaders. He said to the Apostle Paul not to be afraid to speak in front of a hostile people because many of them are actually His (Acts 18: 9, 10). Throughout the mission, preachers should always remember that Christ is always with them and He would bless their labor.⁴

A leader's success is about setting a good example in his or her work to get others to support the goals they have set for themselves. For others to follow him, he must have a clear purpose and path. "Management is doing things right ; leadership is doing the right things,"⁵ said Peter F. Drucker.

Design of Program

This section presents a program design which aim is to deal with the problems faced by the leaders for the development of the church in Ilakaka.

Step One: Solving the Lack of Spirituality among the Leaders

The spiritual side of the leader plays an important role if the church is to move forward. The influence of the leader will lead to good or evil and has a direct impact on the Church. This first step looks specifically at how to solve spiritual problems among leaders. Jesus calls us to be perfect (Matt 5: 48). According to the Greek translation of the word "perfect," τέλειος, is "fulfillment," "completion," though it is not about absolute sinlessness in this life.⁶

⁴ W. Hendriksen and S. J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House 1953–2001), 657.

⁵ Emeritus, "What is Leadership?" *Emeritus* (blog), May 23, 2023, accessed 1 November 2022, <https://emeritus.org › learn › what-is-leadership>.

⁶ "Be Ye Therefore," [Matt 5:48], *SDABC*, 5:341.

In order for all leaders to become spiritually mature people, it is necessary to set aside time for spiritual retreats. The first thing to do is to make this announcement at church level a week in advance so that all leaders are prepared. So Table 1 below shows the announcement for a meeting of the elders and other leaders of the church to clarify the purpose of the meeting.

Table 1. Announcement for the Elders and Others Leaders

Who?	All Elders and Department Directors
What?	Personal Meditation
Where?	“Soleil Levant” Private High School
When?	Between March and April of the year from 8.30 am until 10.30 am
How?	District Pastor and SWMC Prayer Department Director

In general, leadership is in crisis, whether in political or religious fields. In order to avoid this crisis, the root of the problem must be solved. As can be seen above, the main reason is spiritual immaturity. How to solve it? Table 2 is about the strategic plan to solve this problem.

Table 2. Strategic Plan

Subject	Timing	Objective	Key Indicators	Results	Responsible
Personal Meditation	Between March and April of the year from 8.30 am until 10.30 am	Getting rid of the lack of spirituality in the leader	1. Increase of number of leaders knowing the importance of Personal Meditation 2. Increase of number of Leaders doing Personal Meditation 3. Improving the performance of a leader doing Personal Meditation	100% 50% for three months to 100% for six months 100%	District Pastor and Department director of Prayer Ministry

Jesus said that we need spiritual and physical retreat. In order to be strengthened, one must take time to be alone. He counselled the disciples to spend time alone in the desert, a place they can communicate with the Father. After all, this was the custom of Jesus (Luke 4: 42).

During the spiritual retreat, the following questions should be explained: What is “Meditation”? What kind of place is appropriate to do it? What is the right time? What are the benefits? What should be done?

This is a special time to meditate deeply on God, to have a personal relationship with Him. Understanding God’s creation in Genesis 1 should help to understand this deep meditation on God. On the third day, God spoke to the earth:

“Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth’; and it was so.” (Gen 1: 11). God made these plants inseparable from the earth, and if they are separated from it, they die. The same is true of fish in water (Gen 1: 20). If it is separated from the water, it will die. On the sixth day, God spoke to himself when He created man (Gen 1: 26). People need to be in constant personal contact with their Creator so that they can live well. The Bible says, “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success” (Josh 1: 8). Meditating day and night means thinking profoundly.

Jesus left an example on this. It was in a silent place, solitary without interruptions and He did it early in the morning or in the evening. Ellen G. White says: “How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: ‘Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.’”⁷

Personal meditation leads to a better understanding of God's love and knowledge by studying the Scriptures (John 5:39), to a life of trust, peace of mind and rest (Matt 11:28), and directs it to the ability to control the mind by doing God's will and understanding the mission that awaits the leader (Josh 1:8). “Biblical meditation is not putting your mind in neutral. Biblical meditation is allowing God’s Word to control your thoughts. This is important because “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is

⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), 362.

he” (Prov 23: 7). The way you think is one of the most powerful influences on the way you live.”⁸

All leaders have time to practice in the afternoon, studying Joshua 1: 5-9 and the corresponding passages in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, for one hour. The aim is for 50% of leaders to do this within the first 3 months and 100% by the end of the second quarter.

Step Two: Training of the Leaders concerning Leadership and Church Growth

There is a great relationship between leadership and church growth. Table 3 gives an announcement for the the elders for training on the Lord’s calling and objective for church leadership, leadership qualities, mission, and how to establish a church action plan.

Table 3. Announcement for the Elders Only

Who?	All Elders
What?	Church Leadership for local Church
Where?	“Soleil Levant” Private High School
When?	Between January and April of the year from 9 am until 11.30 am
How?	District Pastor

The second part is for all church leaders and members, as shown in Table 4, to talk about church growth: vision, mission, growth factors, retentions and how this relates to church leadership.

⁸ Greg Burdine, “12 Benefits of Biblical Meditation,” accessed 3 November 2022, <https://gregburdine.com/12-benefits-of-biblical-meditation/>.

Table 4. Announcement for All Members

Who?	All Leaders and all members
What?	Church Growth
Where?	Local Church
When?	every weekend in April and May of the year Friday: 6 pm to 7 pm and Sabbath: 10 am to 12 am and 3 pm to 5 pm
How?	District Pastor and SWMC Personal Ministry Department Director

Leadership is a calling from the Lord. He said: “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain.” (John 15: 16).

Jesus has a clear and precise plan when he calls: “that you should go and bear fruit.” According to Matthew, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (Matt 28: 19). The work of a leader is a sacred work, therefore, it requires integrity of character and partners.

Paul clearly described the characteristics of a leader which can be summarized simply in these words: good relationship with God and good reputation with people (1 Tim. 3: 1-7). 1 Timothy 3:1-7 clearly instructs that the biblical qualifications for leadership are spiritual maturity and godly character. In Moses’ time it was the same: he “was careful to select, as his helpers, men possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience. In his charge to these elders at the time of their ordination, he outlined some of the qualifications that fit a man to be a wise ruler in the church.”⁹

⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), 94.

This shows that a leader must have followers. According to the transactional record “leadership is a social exchange between leaders and followers.”¹⁰ The leader cannot go at it alone but must depend on followers. He must share responsibility with the people he leads. “King David, toward the close of his reign, delivered a solemn charge to those bearing the burden of the work of God in his day. Summoning to Jerusalem ‘all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king.’”¹¹

Then, in order to move forward, the church leader must have a clear plan, just as Jesus had a clear and realizable plan. “For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory” (Prov 24: 6).

Benjamin Franklin has been reported as having said: “If you don’t plan for your future then you will fail.” One guarantee of a leader’s success is the planning of a well-structured plan that can be implemented.

Table 5 is a summary of the training about church leadership.

¹⁰ Yera Keita, “Leadership Styles and their Impact on Church Growth in Alexandria and Springfield, Virginia,” (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University, 2019), 28, accessed 4 November 2022.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Christian Leadership* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1925), 2.

Table 5. Leadership for Local Church

Subject	Timing	Objective	Key Indicators	Results	Responsible
Leadership for local Church	every weekend in April and May of the year	1. Strengthen the leadership capacity of church leaders	1. Recognizing that leadership is a vocation	100%	District Pastor
		2. Equipping church leaders	2. Accepting the mission and characteristics that a leader should have	90%	
			3. Know how to make a plan	90%	

“Planning is the intellectual process that clearly defines 5W and 1H, i.e., What (List actions), Where (Specify location), When (Date to perform the work), Who (Leader/Speaker), Why (Context and Goals), and How (Budget and other resources), to take any action in order to achieve planned goals.”¹² Each leader must set up a plan during the afternoon training.

If there is good planning at the center of the church, there will be growth. However, the number of members in Ilakak is 0.2% of the population. In other words, the ratio of members to inhabitant is 1/496. The question remains: how can the church in Ilakaka move forward? It is necessary to inform the whole church of the reasons for this.

¹² Sujan, “What Is Planning? Definition, Features, Importance, and Process,” accessed 6 November 2022, <https://tyonote.com › planning>.

Table 6. Factors in the Church's Development

Subject	Timing	Objective	Key Indicators	Results	Responsible
Factors in the church's development	every weekend in January and May of the year Friday: 6 pm to 7 pm and Sabbath: 10 am to 12 am and 3 pm to 5 pm	1. Strengthen the involvement of members and leaders in the development of the church 2. Strengthen the knowledge of leaders and members on the principles of development 3. Make all members aware of the barriers to development and the method of Christ	1-Following of the planning 2-All members participating 3-Return to first love -The number of people attending the prayer meeting increases	90% 50% for three months to 900% for six months 50% to 90%	District Pastor and SWMC Personal Ministry Department Director

One of the main obstacles to the development of the church is the lack of spirituality in the church. “The way to be a growing church then, is by reflecting the character of the one who called us to be a church in the first place. After all, if we’re not going to do that, we’re not growing anyway, however many people may be coming along.”¹³ This spiritual vacuum makes the leader believe that he is the

¹³ Mark Dever, “Biblical Church Growth 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:12,” accessed 7 November 2022, <https://www.9marks.org/article/biblical-church-growth-i-thessalonians-312-412/>.

supreme leader and leads to abusing his authority. Ellen G. White said: “Leadership is not Lordship--No man is ever to set himself up as a ruler, as a Lord over his fellowmen, to act out his natural impulses. No one man's voice and influence should ever be allowed to become a controlling power.”¹⁴

“Church growth is a Divine work. Yet God does not work independently of humans. For the Church growth to be effective, God and humanity work together.”¹⁵ One of the greatest strengths of leaders and members is the knowledge that “God is at work in our world. Jesus is drawing all people to Him. ... At the same time, humanity must work in cooperation with this divine agency. Humans must have a right relationship with this God.”¹⁶ If we want to see a growing church, we must recognize the obstacles: lack of spirituality, lack of brotherly love, lack of vision, lack of planning. The solution is to accept to work with Jesus, to apply the method of Christ and to return to the first love.

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus commanded his disciples: “And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ *He said*, ‘you heard of from Me’” (Acts 1: 4). Why? It was a special time to get rid of the spiritual problems and issues that existed among the disciples in order to secure the help of Jesus: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. “The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian

¹⁴ White, *Christian Leadership* (1925), 31.

¹⁵ Burrill, *How to Grow an Adventist Church*, 47.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

fellowship.”¹⁷ Consequently, following the method of Christ helps to succeed in the development of the church. It says: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”¹⁸

God wants everyone to participate in this mission of bringing people to know God’s love for humanity. It is written: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Pet 2: 9).

Step Three: Study of the *Church Manual* on the Role of Leaders

As a church is an organization, there are rules that govern it, which are found in the guidelines governing the management of the church. This is the direction towards which we are to move. Every leader must master it.

Table 7. Announcement for the Church

Who?	All Elders and all members
What?	<i>Church Manual</i> on the role of leader
Where?	Local Church
When?	Every Sabbath afternoon, on the January and February of year
How?	District Pastor

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), 37.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1905), 143.

In step three, we answer the question: What is the role of the elders in the development of the church?

Table 8. Church Manual on the Role of Leader

Subject	Timing	Objective	Key Indicators	Results	Responsible
The role of leader according to the <i>Church Manual</i>	Every Sabbath afternoon, on the January and February of year	1. Training all leaders in a life of obedience	-Significant increase in acceptance of the <i>Church Manual</i>	100%	District Pastor
		2. Training all leaders in practicing what is written in the <i>Church Manual</i>	-Significant increase in leaders following the <i>Church Manual</i> completely	100%	
		3. Strengthen the role of leaders	-Evidence of elders teaching the <i>Church Manual</i> to members	100%	
		4. Improving transparency in the management of the Church	-Leaders demonstrate integrity and ethics in personal relationships	90%	

Elders were appointed to oversee the church. During Paul’s missionary journey, he chose an elder to be in charge. “And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, and when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

(Acts 14: 21, 23). The Adventist *Church Manual* clearly remind this passage to the elders of the church.¹⁹

In other words, elders are shepherds. They have been entrusted with the spiritual care of the members, i.e. they are the spiritual leaders of the church. “In the absence of a pastor, elders are the spiritual leaders of the church and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience.”²⁰

In addition to being the spiritual leaders, they direct all the services of the church in the absence of the Pastor. They also take care of the members so that they grow spiritually. They are also responsible for the management of departments in the church center. They also promote the action plan of the higher level in the center of the local church. They are responsible to help and closely support the pastor.²¹

The elders and other leaders of the church have their responsibilities in the development of the church. For example, the deacon is chosen to assist the elders in the administration of the church just as the seven brothers were chosen to assist the apostles (Acts 6). The seven deacons demonstrated prudent management resulting into the unity of the church.²²

The leaders of each department carry out the mission of the church. They support the pastor in fulfilling this task: “all are equally engaged in gospel outreach. . . Every church should utilize the services of the departments and organizations to nurture its members and accomplish the mission given by Christ.”²³

¹⁹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 2016), 70.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 73-76.

²² Ibid., 77-78.

²³ Ibid., 86-87.

Program and Assessment

In order to implement these programs (strategy) to help the church grow, it needs preparation and equipment. Success depends on effectively following the strategy and leading the teams to achieve it.

For this to be effective, the materials used must be sufficient: leadership books, books that mark out the steps for church growth, *Church Manual*, other materials and financial support. The availability of trainers and all participants is also necessary.

To facilitate this task and to facilitate evaluation, the strategy should be clear, well communicated and understood by others leaders. Both the day and the time must be well planned so that everyone can participate in the development of the church.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

This project presented the types of leadership styles in the Old and New Testaments, and other views of writers. It also explored the reasons why the church does or does not grow. Strategies for dealing with leaders' problems were formulated so that the leaders and all the members had the same vision for the development of the church.

Conclusion

The approach to leadership has been a problem in this world, not only politically, but also in church environments. Ilakaka Church is not exempted. Therefore, this research has proposed a strategy to solve this problem.

Knowing the problem of leadership and the situation of the church based on its demographic, ethnic and religious backgrounds—which could be an obstacle to the development of the church—was essential in the development of the strategy.

The guidelines given by the experts on leadership and church growth should help church leaders to understand the shortcomings of their leadership and to realize the reason for their calling. They would thus be able to coordinate the leadership of the church for progress.

Recommendation

Effective leadership is a vital part for the growth of the local church. Pastors should see to it that regular training on leadership, based on biblical and sound theological principles, be given to the church. But since the goal is to effect growth for the church, training in church growth principles and practices should also be given to the leaders.

Such training is done to improve the spirituality of the leaders, to equip them, to help them to live a life of sacrifice for God's mission, to encourage them to participate in the Church' development. Other leaders of the churches in the District as well as in the Conference may benefit from the strategy developed in this project.

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