Transformational Leadership

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Professor

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Assignment #3

1. Write a 5-page research paper, not including the cover and works cited pages, as

described below. The essay should demonstrate scholarly work, cover the subject with

sufficient detail to communicate a solid understanding of the basic worldview questions,

and show proper APA 7 style documentation for the resources (works cited).

a. Select an organization with which you are familiar.

b. Explain how the leadership of that organization operates. In your explanation

use the following leadership styles where appropriate.

i. Transactional

ii. Transformational

iii. Incarnational

iv. Moral

v. Managerial

vi. Laissez faire

c. Predict improvements that could arise from a change in leadership style and how

that change could impact stakeholders

Bridgeway Community Church is a multicultural church located in Columbia, Maryland. When it was founded, it was a relatively novel concept to have a church that was rooted in creating a multicultural space for believers to gather and grow their relationship with Christ. Even now, some thirty years later, the head pastor, Dr. Anderson, has created a company called Gracism Global, to equip other organizations with the tools to effectively run a multicultural organization. My family have been partners with Bridgeway for over a decade, and I have been a partner for the last seven years. As an active member of the congregation I have been able to see both the excellence and the gaps in leadership. I will attempt to explain the leadership structure and style of the church and perhaps some possible improvements that could lead to a positive impact.

It must be noted that Bridgeway is a mega church with multiple services and two campuses. There is one lead pastor, Dr. David Anderson, one COO Frank Estham, and a CFO. Dave Michener is over the Owings Mills campus. The leaders have attempted to mimic ministries and events on both campuses while maintaining a sense of unity. Right below them are pastors in charge of different areas such as youth ministries, care, outreach. Those pastors are over groups of ministries. I do believe the aim of the church is to have not only a transformational leadership style, but to provide transformational encounters with members and visitors. While transformative leadership is considered the ideal leadership style, it is not conducive to a multicultural mega church.

There is also the need to understand if a relationship exists between that specific leadership behavior and the spiritual growth of a multicultural congregation (Chassion, 2021). Transformational leadership is more suitable for ministries, life groups etc. In order for the church to properly function, especially with a multicultural congregation it takes a mixture of leadership styles to accomplish a well oiled machine. In the US, on some level the church is a business. There are full time pastoral staff and other necessary employees such as security, environmental services, etc. The bills and salaries of the church come from tithes and offerings. Also, in addition to being a multicultural church, Bridgeway serves a financially diverse group as well. Most of the church is either middle, or upper middle class. People who fall within that tax bracket like to see the impact of their financial contributions. So the leaders have to be transactional. It is a “if, then” scenario. If you give x amount of dollars, then we can have guest speakers, performers, and pay off the building. The leadership style is a mix of transactional and servant leader. The servant leader comes in with having resources on how to maintain finances. The church offers free estate planning seminars, financial bootcamps, and certified budgeting mentors. They also lead by example, they tithe, they participate in first fruits. Recently I was called to the front of the church because I did not have a way to pay my rent. Dr. Anderson asked the church to pour into me financially, and he added to it from his own wallet. While this demonstration was servant leader, and even transformative- it cannot exist independent of transactional.

That leadership style is on the top tier of the church. The next step down is the ministries. With the ministries I think to accommodate the multicultural and multigenerational there is a mix of managerial and laissez faire. To accommodate the numerous ministries leadership roles are given to people with credentials, or who simply completed the leadership courses. There is no consideration given to the interpersonal, communication, or leadership style of the individual. Furthermore, despite the church having connections to Gracism Global, there is any evaluation methods in place to see if a leader has experience navigating multicultural groups. Bobs states that pastors tend to stifle the everyday person from being used in God’s kingdom (Cole,2009). With a high focus on the bottom line and filling positions it can be another tik off a to do list as opposed to seeking out disciple like qualities that lead to those divine moments. The everyday person easily gets passed over.

It is rather ironic the leadership structure and requirements to become a leader in the church go against Jesus’ ministry. Jesus’ disciples were mere fishermen and peasants. Their notoriety came from their obedience to the call. Through their walk with Christ they were able to build the kingdom of God. In an ideal world there would be a harmony between the called and the qualified with a practical way to identify and merge the two. McKenna says Do not see the caller as outside one's self, but see the caller as the self where there is a feeling of alignment between one's skills and roles, or alignment between enjoyments and needs. While the initial creation of a system that would accommodate that, the ending result could be a called and qualified leader who will embody transformational leadership.

Not only does the managerial style of leadership hinder the growth of everyday people, it can tote the line of laissez faire. For example, I led the crochet ministry at Bridgeway for a while. The ministry consisted of 38 participants. 8 of those participants wanted to meet virtually while the other 30 preferred in person. When I sought upper leaders to help navigate this issue I was told it wasn’t a problem because the ministry produced the requested number of items.

While the solution registered as laissez faire, that does not necessarily mean it is the case. Culture certainly plays a role. Even though the church is multicultural, the leadership is mostly caucasian which includes the COO. Caucasians have a western individualistic perspective which differs greatly from most of their counterparts. For deeper context I will use a quote as support. The second perspective is the polarity that African leaders often experience whereby on the one hand there is the Western emphasis on practical, merit based, bottom-line effectiveness and, on the other hand, the Africans’ preference to be interdependent, communal,relationship-aware and respectful. (Magezi, 2015). Our cultural values differ than that of the leadership. When there is a difference in cultural values there subsequently is a difference in the expectations of leadership. Culturally if there is a meeting in between meal times, there is an expectation of snacks. If there is a meeting around a meal time, then a meal should be included with that meeting. Communal values in terms of food are often in conjunction with tradition. It is a daunting task to extract values that are transcultural to appease numerous cultures that also contribute to the culture of the church.

Communication between leaders has the potential to offset these challenges in theory. Therefore, team leaders are required to share their vision and goals of any activity prior to scheduling any form of training. With such a type of leadership, the very self of teachers will be transformed since they will be working in a stress free environment whereby they are valued, and consequently they will endeavour to perform above expectations. It is hoped that the study will provide crucial information about the effect of transformational leadership in enhancing teachers’ performance, engagement and productivity (Ghani,2025). Again, the potential is there. As a former educator and a leader at Bridgeway, solutions on paper and solutions in application are not the same.

With church there are emotional and spiritual ties that are inherently tied to visions, goals, and activities. A no from higher leaders that could be based solely on the resources or capabilities to fulfill said vision, can easily translate to cultural rejection and lead to spiritual or church hurt.

Through my developmental readings and composition of this paper I thought I had solid improvements to offer. I do believe there needs to be a more diverse head of the congregation. I understand that isn’t a guarantee that all or even most cultural values could be incorporated into decision making that impacts the majority of the congregation, it can offer alternate perspectives. There could be more opportunity for considerations and compromises between western thought and other values. That aside it is easy to identify the gaps within leadership, but not as easy to propose solutions. I think any solution is going to be exclusionary on some level. As previously stated multicultural churches are still novel, as most multicultural organizations. While western society views transformational leadership as the ideal, it might not be ideal for every system.

In addition, it may be possible that transformational leaders are more effective for project success in collectivistic cultures as compared to individualistic cultures because of their selflessness, individualized consideration, and team-orientation(Muhammaed, 2021).

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