

THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP LETTER

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HELPING WESLEYANS BECOME GIVERS

Question: Why are Pentecostals better givers than Wesleyans, and what should we do about it:

Response:

Rev. Charles Saywon

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Wesleyan Church,
Liberia.*



What says it all, I think, are “teaching” and “understanding” of God’s word to His Saints! If the Pentecostal are “better givers”, as may be seen or believed by many, than Wesleyans, this could be rooted in the orientation or background of teachings in connection to the foundation of Biblical giving - what does the Scripture say about “Biblical giving” yesterday and today? What are lessons that we can learn as contemporary worshipers? What are some Biblical facts or guidelines about giving? Are there profits in giving to God’s work on earth? These are questions that the Pentecostals may have answered correctly which are making them to be “better givers” than Wesleyans. Let’s walk through some Biblical facts about giving that could have helped the Pentecostal to be “better givers”.

FOUNDATION OF BIBLICAL GIVING AND BENEFITS

WHY SHOULD WE GIVE?

Christians should pay tithes and offerings because it is a **BIBLICAL COMMANDMENT**

- God tells us to do so in His word. These Scriptures are just as God-breathed and inspired as the rest of the word of God. We need to obey the word in whole, not just in part.

“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse-your whole nation-because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe, says the Lord Almighty” (Malachi 3:8-11 NIV).

In Malachi 3, God commands His people to pay tithes and offerings. If we abide by His word, He will “throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it”. Besides “pouring out so much blessing...” God also promised to “...prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your field...” (Malachi 3:10 NIV). This is our only investment approach that has all of heaven behind the return.

Dr. James Partee Toga discussed in his book *“Basic Biblical Facts about Giving to*

God's Work", a few reasons why people in the past gave to God's work and we, as contemporary worshipers, should do the same. According to Dr. Toga, people gave in the past to "build God's house" (Exodus 25: 35; 36; 1Kings 5 & 6); to "maintain God's house" (2Kings 12:4-5, 9-15); to "support God's servants" (Malachi 3:10; 2Chronicles 24:12) and to "acknowledge God's ownership of our belongings" (1Chronicles 29:11d, 12a, 14).

Faith to believe God's word is the very essence of receiving the promises that God says we can have. As a Christian that Scripture in Romans 10:17, "...Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God..." gives us knowledge on how faith comes, by taking in God's word. The Pentecostals may have listen to these teachings and their faith was built up in giving to the work of God. What they are doing now is the full demonstration of their faith.

WHAT SHOULD I GIVE?

God commands that we give a tithe. A tithe means a tenth. From our wages or revenues, the tithe (10%) belongs to God, and we live on the rest (90%) of our wages or revenues. In Malachi 3, God says He will bless us with more than we could ever do with the 10% if we give it to Him.

In addition to the tithe, God also commands us in these scriptures to give offerings. Offerings are additional gifts that we give to God at our own discretion, without a specific value tied to it. Offerings are given at our own will. When we give to God, He will bless us with more than what we give. We should ask ourselves, how much blessing do I want from God? Luke 6:38 says: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the **SAME**

measure you use, it will be measured to you" (NIV).

POSSIBLE BENEFITS FOR GIVING TO GOD'S WORK.

There are possible benefits for giving to the work of God. If we are moved and give to God's work, we stand to have "possible benefits" for giving to His work. There were at least three possible (personal) profits or blessings that those who gave to God's work in the past received, which we might receive if we give obediently to His work today. According to Dr. Toga, the first of these is "The Receiving of Immeasurable provisions from God" (Malachi 3:10; 1Kings 17:8-16) secondly, "The Receiving of Impenetrable protection from God" (Malachi 3:11-12), and thirdly, "The Retaining of Inseparable Fellowship with God" (Malachi 3:7-8).

We cannot and will not out-give God! The more we give, the more God will bless us. God's blessings will not always equate to monetary blessings, but He pours out his blessings in a currency the world cannot afford. We need more of God's blessings than just money - we need good health, divine favor, and His divine presence!

I strongly want to believe that the Pentecostals believe and hold on to this teaching - the Biblical foundation of giving. This could be the driving force behind their giving to the work of God. They have been taught the reasons Christians should give to God and the possible profits in giving to God's work. After hearing these teachings, they believed and practiced it.

WHAT SHOULD WE (WESLEYANS) DO ABOUT IT?

Did we (Wesleyans) teach our members well about biblical giving? If so, how did we do it, how often, and why it seems not working? We need to do vigorous and long-term

teaching about Biblical giving in our local churches. How long shall we carry on this teaching? I will suggest, as often as we can during every church calendar year. Teaching needs to be done repeatedly so that our people will understand what it means to give to God's work.

We should know that Romans 10:17, "...Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God..." gives us knowledge on how faith comes, by taking in God's word. As they continue to hear God's words about

supporting God's work, the Spirit of the Lord will surely convict them to be moved and give. Consistent teaching and praying will definitely change the story of "**NOT GIVING**" to the work of God. We Wesleyans can be "**BETTER GIVERS**" if our pastors will teach our congregation continuously about giving. We may have been doing it, but we need to step a little further in different dimensions and styles of our teaching.

God bless!

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## PLANNING FOR LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

**Question: How can leaders plan for succession when leaders are chosen by a vote of the members?"**

**Responses:**

**Rev. Johnathon Goosen**

*Assistant Regional Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church of Southern Africa.*



Firstly, we must begin our answer by giving a very broad definition of succession planning in the church:

**Succession planning is a means of identifying leadership positions, beginning at the junior leadership levels and extending up to the most senior leadership positions in the church. Succession planning is the process of equipping and developing leadership of the church to hand over the baton of leadership whatever the position of leadership.**

The development of succession planning policies enables continuity in the church. Succession planning also ensures smooth handover of influence, sharing and retention of knowledge if experienced leaders leave the church. Succession planning is a key strategic tool for church survival and, should be given due care by church leaderships.

Churches and church leaderships can avoid crises by developing succession planning policies and strategies that help the churches' experienced leaders to pass on knowledge to less experienced leaders before the experienced leaders both paid and volunteer leave the church. There is much to be said regarding succession planning and The Wesleyan Church in Africa. Unfortunately, we must agree that as a church we are struggling to successfully plan, apply and implement succession planning. While there are some success stories mostly, we hear of the leaders or

indeed the church holding onto the status quo!

I will answer the question not only from a ministerial (*possibly remunerated*) role but, also from the lay person (mostly unpaid and volunteers) who serve as leaders.

## **CHARACTER**

Vision begins from the heart of God. **Proverbs 16:9 (ESV)** *The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.*

Prayer underpins the spiritual knowledge and wisdom any leader exhibits. Conduct, commitment and indeed character are all key elements to the fulfilment of the call of God. Any succession planning is doomed to failure if the leadership is not in relationship with God.

People are not impressed by façades or manipulation, but by authenticity and by those who are genuinely others-centred. Character is not a matter of outward technique but of inner reality. God is concerned with what you are really like when no one else is looking. Spending quality time with God is the match for the fire. Only ungodly leaders cling to their leadership positions.

Godly character within a leader will result in a humble Christ like leader willing to fulfil the mandate left by our Lord regardless of position.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication cannot be overstressed. Most church leaderships struggle to communicate the vision of the church efficiently. The lack of clear communication regarding succession planning will influence the life of the church. Communicating this life transforming vision must be the duty and

responsibility of the local church leadership. The process **which can be years** to make the case for change can possibly be something like this:

- Counselling of pastor/s, leader/s about their need to remain outside of the succession planning process.
- Assessing the church, district, region, etc.
- Demonstrating the need for succession planning.
- **COMMUNICATING THE PROCESS AND FINDINGS OF THE ASSESSMENT TO THE LOCAL CHURCH, / DISTRICT, REGION, ETC.**
- Counselling of pastor/s, leader/s to plan for life outside of the organizational leadership. (*Possible opportunities for experienced church leader's laity and ministerial alike are coaching, mentoring, and supporting inexperienced leaders, etc.*)
- Determining the organizational requirements for smooth transitioning. (*This is to include the financial obligation*)
- **COMMUNICATING TO LOCAL, DISTRICT, REGION ETC**
- Link succession planning activities to the organizational strategy.
- Formulating a mission statement (*which is succession planning inclusive*)
- **COMMUNICATING TO LOCAL, DISTRICT, REGION ETC.**
- Writing policy and procedures (*Standing Rules etc.*) that would require succession planning.
- Identifying candidates for the leadership transition.
- Implementation of succession plan.

## **COMPREHENSIVE ACCEPTANCE**

Leadership and church members should accept the succession planning process. We dare not assume the local church only functions correctly when the pastor is leading alone. The Word of God is clear! A leadership team is meant to be leading, all exercising their gifting and growing whilst leading. Examining Scripture, we find the principle, to have numerous leaders within any local, district and regional church leading. We are all called to serve. People must be given the opportunity to exercise leadership gifts within the local, district and regional church. The local church is the “higher certificate” if you will of learning to be a leader. When a local church is raising plenty of leaders willing to use their gifts and serve, an environment is created for successful succession planning.

The Wesleyan Church of Southern Africa has two Bible Collages namely Wesleyan Evangelical Seminary and Emmanuel Bible College in Swaziland with gifted faculty who are more than capable to develop and provide leadership development courses. Wesleyan Church leaders may also present leadership courses to enhance skills and provide exposure to succession planning.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, succession planning is doomed to failure if the leadership lacks character and fails to communicate in a clear well strategized manner the need and further, the process of the succession plan.

Once comprehensive acceptance is achieved the prospective “newly elected” leader will be clear to those electing. This would be so because the succession process would have been clearly communicated and accepted.

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Rev. John Baminhoma

National Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone.



Succession planning is one of the emerging issues of the twenty first century. In simple terms, succession planning is the structure that an individual or organization puts in place to provide continuous existence of an established system. From a general point of view, succession planning is the process of replacing stakeholders who may have retired, left or died, as the case may be. The results of this practice is predicated upon certain strategic steps that are worth considering.

IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT OF POTENTIAL LEADERS

Visionary leaders are propelled strongly to look out for the young and dynamic people of their organization or community which may step into the shoes of others that would have retired, left or died. Such activities are done by critically minded people who are neither biased, nor self-centred or short sighted. Leaders must soundly observe and carefully identify and recruit suitably qualified persons who will be empowered with the required knowledge and skills in preparation for the future of the organization.

TRAINING POTENTIAL LEADERS

Training is the lubricant that is used normally to facilitate the development of personnel and organizations. Ralph Jacobson, in his book, *Leading for Change*, states: “Without teaching and learning, an organization can get locked into patterns of behaviour that will hasten its decline.” A careful analysis of Jacobson’s statement shows clearly that

training is a tool used to update the systems of groups, organizations, institutions or governance in order to meet the needs of society. Training is also a means by which qualified people are produced for the continuous operation of organizations. This scenario is depicted in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon during the exilic period in the Bible. Because he needed quality leadership in his own era, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that wise, smart and good-looking youths be identified, trained and brought into his administration for good governance. Among the three Jewish children that were selected was Daniel, one of the most outstanding men of integrity, diligence and productive character in the scriptures. (Daniel 1&6). Training helps to shape behaviour, increase knowledge, enhance skills and builds up confidence in personnel. Well trained leaders believe in themselves and are in full control of their emotions to manage any outbreak of economic and socio-cultural threats surrounding their organizations. Organizations with leaders that are passionate to reproduce themselves have high tendencies for a very good succession plan.

MENTORING YOUNG LEADERS TO MATURITY

Following the training of young leaders is the nurturing stage. Newly qualified people from training schools are full of enthusiasm to take their organizations to a higher level. They compare and sometimes want to compete with other organizations. It is at this juncture that the experienced leaders should come in to help mould those dynamic leaders and help them to adjust to the systems of their organizations. Monitoring and directing them very closely will help them to attach to the norms, beliefs, core-values and culture of their own organizations. Mentoring can help translate acquired knowledge and skills into

meaningful product in society. Mentoring will enable the young and qualified leaders to contextualize what they have acquired in their respective organizations. The management of the organization must put a premium on the young leaders who will take up the responsibility of the organization in the near future. Mentoring will help young leaders to translate their abstract knowledge into concrete and applicable terms. This stage prepares young leaders to move to a more mature level in their operations.

COMMISSIONING TRAINED LEADERS TO WORK

Releasing nurtured leaders to other departments or units is not a signal of growth or expansion only, but an indication of continuity of an organization too. Jesus trained twelve disciples and commissioned them to move ahead with what they have acquired to everywhere. Similarly, sending young leaders to explore will enable them to put what they have learnt into practice. Releasing trained leaders on their own will give them opportunity to take critical risks necessary to work in collaboration with others to find solutions together. The more they tackle issues in their leadership, the more they become mature and accepted by members of the organization. When groomed leaders work with their members together, the bond of trust grows deeper and deeper. Commissioning young leaders to manage their affairs exposes their competence to members who would have to decide the vote for the next leader.

The discussion above projects succession planning as a process in which potential leaders are identified and recruited, thoroughly trained, mentored and commissioned to work with members of the organization together. This practice will build confidence and trust on leaders prior to elections.

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**Rev. Kingsley Munsanje**

*Pastor at Pilgrim Wesleyan Church, Munali, Lusaka, Zambia*



1. Mostly, where voting is the system of ushering people into office, the incumbent is aware of the person they are going to stand with in an election. As such, he or she must be ready for anything.

2. In the event where the one who stands with the incumbent wins by majority vote, the incumbent, having been aware of the

process should accept the will of the people and do smooth handovers.

3. In terms of preparations: The incumbent should always be aware of the fact that one day he / she will leave office. As such, a good leader prepares others to succeed him. He / she will identify those who can take over from them in any eventuality. In my view, the best planning for succession is raising others to take from you as a leader. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did. Knowing that he was not going to be on earth forever, he prepared 12 disciples and out of the 12, he still had 3 in the inner circle in whom he was pouring his life.



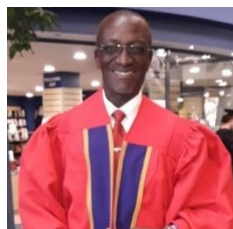
**WHAT WESLEYANS BELIEVE**

**Question: The media regularly reports on outlandish things African pastors are doing in the name of God. How can we as Wesleyans recognize when a church leader is operating under the inspiration of the Spirit or not?**

**Response:**

**Dr. James P. Toga**

*President, Wesleyan College of Liberia*



**Introduction**

The news media across Africa report regularly on outlandish activities of many African pastors and church leaders in the name of God and Jesus Christ. We have heard/read about some pastors on our continent who have persuaded their followers to eat grass or drink petrol in the name of Jesus. Some of them sell so-called “holy oil”, “holy water”, “holy salt”, “holy handkerchiefs”, “holy mantle” (pieces of

their clothes that they have worn), and “the blood of Jesus” (red juices that they produce). Some of them use the power of charms, voodooos (I know some of them) to pull crowds and perform miracles. These pastors and church leaders claim to be called and anointed by God, “baptized in the Holy Spirit” and operating under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The question is are they truly operating under the direction of the Holy Spirit or not?

The Bible does indicate a specific lifestyle and manner of service, which a church leader must portray in order to show that he/she is operating under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This article shall present a summary of the views of several lay Christians and the Bible on this subject.

## Views of Lay Wesleyans<sup>1</sup>

The lay Christians who were interviewed highlighted several characteristics that a church leader displays to show that he/she is operating under the direction of the Holy Spirit:

- Demonstrates evidence of the New Birth
- Demonstrates the Fruit of the Spirit
- Exhibits godly attitude
- Exhibits godly utterances
- Exhibits passion/zeal for his/her calling
- Displays godliness
- Maintains spiritual priorities (i.e. keep equipping the saints for services in the church and keeping the unity of the faith in love)
- Resolves discords rather than causes them
- Puts the interests of his/her people above his/her own
- Trusts in God alone as the source of his/her power and authority
- Exhibits a life of integrity
- Does not undermine his/her colleagues in any manner or form
- Demonstrates a life of humility rather than pride
- Demonstrates godly wisdom
- Demonstrates and life of self-control
- Demonstrates a life of perseverance
- Fears God
- Bears godly fruits

## Biblical View

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<sup>1</sup> About four non-Wesleyans, but faithful disciples of Jesus were consulted also.

The Bible suggests specific characteristics of a leader who operates under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The following characteristics should be sufficient to substantiate this claim:

## The OT

- Prioritizes the interests of the Church (cf. Gen 13:6-11; Ex 32:32)
- Devotes himself/herself to studying God's Word (cf. Ezra 7:10)
- Devotes himself/herself to living out God's Word (cf. Ezra 7:10)
- Devotes himself/herself to teaching God's Word to God's people (cf. Ezra 7:10)
- Ensures that his/her household serves the LORD with him/her (cf. Josh 24:14, 15; Gen 18:19)
- Fears God (cf. Ex 18:21)
- Exhibits a life of integrity (Ex 18:21; 1 Sam 12:1-5)
- Exhibits godly wisdom (Gen 41:33-57; 1 Kings 3:16-28)

## The NT

- Knows God's will and transmits it to God's people (Acts 20:26, 27; 1Tim 3:2)
- Does not exploit God's people financially (Acts 20:34, 35; 1Tim 3:3)
- Exhibits a life of integrity (20:33; 24:16; 1Thess 2:5-10; 1Tim 3:2; Tit 2:7)
- "Avoids godless, foolish discussions that lead to more and more ungodliness" (2Tim 2:16, 23, 24 NLT)
- Cares for the spiritual need of God's people (Acts 20:27; 1Thess 2:7; 1Pet 5:1, 2)



- Teaches sound, biblical doctrine only (Acts 20:27; 1Tim 6:3; Titus 2:1)
- Not cunning or greedy for personal gain (1Thess 2:8; 1Tim 3:3)
- Lives an exemplary life (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet 5:3; 1 Thess. 2:10; 1Tim 3:2-4).
- Matches his/her ministry with his/her personality/lifestyle (cf. Matt 7:15-20; Acts 6:3; 2 Tim 2:2)
- Selfless (1Thess 2:7)
- Serves God's flock rather than bosses them around (cf. Mark 10:35-45; John 13:1-17; 1Pet 5:1-3)

- Delights in the successes of others (John 3:25-30)
- Exhibits the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22, 23)

This article has shown that the views of the lay members, the OT and the NT agree on specific characteristics of a Church Leader who is operating under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The characteristics mentioned in this article are by no means exhaustive. Notwithstanding, they are sufficient to guide every person who aspires to becoming a leader within the Wesleyan Church.



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