

ARTICLE



Adopting Transformational Leadership Approach towards Poverty Alleviation among Christians in Nigeria

Helen Ishola-Esan, PhD^{1*} | Oluwafemi Samuel Amoran, Ph.D²

Abstract:

Poverty has always been a perennial issue in Africa, which is still seeking for its alleviation to the barest minimum. Evidence of it is seen as many individuals in the streets of some towns and villages, together with cities are roaming and dangling around seeking to meet up with the provision three square meal per day. Nigeria, as a nation, is faced with a gross crisis of absolute poverty. Currently, issues like unemployment, malnutrition, homelessness, and offensive attacks that cause many to be living under inhumane conditions are prominent in Nigeria as articulated by Mathole (2005, p. 3). Some of these indigent persons are found in the local churches. What can the church leadership do in a bid to alleviate poverty among her members and in the society at large? This paper, therefore, seeks to infer that pastors can employ the requisites of a transformational leadership approach in their leadership endeavors towards alleviating poverty among church members and Christians in Nigeria at Large. The awareness and practice of transformational leadership approach by leaders through entrepreneurial initiatives towards poverty alleviation such as idealized influence, inspiration motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration are core in the paper.

Keywords: Adopting, transformational leadership, poverty alleviation, Pastors, church members, Christians in Nigeria.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The existence of the challenge of poverty in society is a fact. Africa, as a continent with no exclusion to Nigeria her vast country, suffers great ordeal as a result of the prevalent dearth that continues to ensnare her people. A good number of individuals in the streets of many towns and villages, alongside cities are roaming and dangling around seeking to meet with a required three-square meal per day. Another complication surfaced at the advent of the

economic recession over which the Nigerian government had pronounced victory, yet many people remained victims. Nigeria as a nation is faced with crisis of serious poverty. Currently, issues like unemployment, malnutrition, homelessness, and offensive attacks that cause many to be living under inhumane conditions are prominent in Nigeria (Mathole, 2005, p. 3).

1 President, Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku, Delta State, Nigeria.

2: Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Supplementary information the online version of this article (<https://doi.org/10.52868/RR/2022-3-3-3>) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users. Helen Ishola-Esan and Oluwafemi Samuel Amoran. 2022; Published by MEERP, Inc. This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

The socio-economic status of man has over time been traced to his religious affinity with the belief that man is holistically responsible for his object of worship. Virtually, all religions in Nigeria are affected by poverty, the Christians, the Muslims and the indigenous or traditional religions are all faced with the challenge of poverty. Poverty has thus become an existential problem in the society that most of the indwellers of the land are struggling for self-means of escape through different kinds of godly and ungodly means. An ordinary man in the society continues in the struggle with angry feelings of pain, incontinence, reproach and uncertainty. Many African countries, including Nigeria, have committed themselves to carrying out extensive economic reform programmes (Aluko, 2003, p. 255).

Based on the opinion of these researchers, the church as a religious organization should be responsible in positioning strategies that can help alleviate poverty amidst her wards, since the differing measures the government had projected to have put in place to alleviate poverty continues to have little or minimal impact in ascertaining its purpose. Certain human-oriented investments are required in the Nigerian Churches as a primary means of effecting the social transformation of members other than the usual gigantic erection of auditoriums. Johnson (2009) an ordained minister of God, articulated that “the process of effecting social transformation is indeed complex and costly” (Johnson, 2009, p. 7), yet the fact remains that it is more profitable to invest in lives than small mundane things. It should be noted that the lives one invested in, would, in turn, become a source of blessings to many generations.

Therefore, since there is the evidence of prevalent poverty in the society alongside visible in the church with members; and that the different measures the government are proffering has not adequately impacted the people, then the adoption of transformational leadership approach of Bass is assumed to be capable of helping the church get a new means of alleviating poverty among her members. The focus of the paper is to discuss the

four essentials of transformational leadership style and its consequent application of it in aiding church pastors and leaders in delivering their church members from the chains and bondage of poverty that holds the people down in a continuum. Hence, this paper seeks to present how the essentials of a transformational leadership approach can be explored to alleviating poverty in the church.

2 | CONCEPT OF POVERTY AND ITS DIMENSIONS

Poverty as a word or theme has been explored over time by many scholars across the globe. It could be seen as an anti-human problem facing humanity in the developed and under-developed countries. Addressing it is not expected to be a one-way course but at all levels with the church playing a significant role in undertaking the task of confronting and devising means of alleviating it. Jayakumar (1999) describes Poverty as a complex phenomenon, and that it is a value-loaded concept involving evaluative judgments with regards to the basic needs and desires of the human within a minimum level of living (p.17). Poverty is believed to be necessarily a resultant effect of lack of essential things that should necessarily incapacitate effectual human living and endeavours (Myers, 1999, p. 578). It is the lack of ratification of the basic human needs that are required to adequately sustain life from the sphere and experiences of disease, misery, hunger, pain, suffering from structural injustice from one end to another as opines by De Santa Ana (1979, p. 76).

The sociological implications of Poverty both for the individuals and the society at large cannot be underemphasized. Poverty is anti-development, deprives people of the needed growth that assures a suitable life. Poverty is man’s most potent and massive affliction. Aluko (2003, p. 257) opines that it is the progenitor of much pain ranging from ignorance, hunger, disease to social and civil conflict. It is divisive and is often the source of political instability and social disorder. Corruption in Nigeria has become so pervasive to the extent that young men and women do not see the essence of doing the right thing or going to school to learn

Research Review

because they see daily how illiterates and half-baked educated ones control billions of naira while the highly educated once conducting research that is contributing to advancement of knowledge and the society are looked at with scorn. In this context, people can hardly believe and respect their leaders (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto & .Nkah, 2015, p. 51).

Poverty is also a problem because it constitutes an obstacle to the rapid economic development of a nation as it usually affects both performance and productivity negatively. The poor cannot contribute effectively to economic growth because they lack the skills to do so. The poor also lack the motivation to commit themselves to socioeconomic growth since the reward of doing so is neither self-evident nor guaranteed. Again the poor are alienated from the state which they regard as the source of their poverty. Poverty creates pent-up grievances and resentment against the power elite and the ruling authorities. It breaks up families as women and children are usually the worst victims of poverty. Poverty is also directly responsible for a crime in the cities as well as the rural areas (ERA, 1998). To Quinney (1980), crime is a direct product of poverty; it is a by-product of the political economy. In the splendid views and as previous studies have shown (Quinney, 1980; Fadayomi et al., 1988; and NHDR, 1996), poverty contributes to social deviation such as delinquency, drug addiction, and general criminality.

According to Fadayomi et al. (1988), the poor experience greater difficulties in achieving their personal goals and aspirations through traditional means. Therefore they tend to experience unfulfilled aspirations, which result in anomie for most of them. Consequently, the only choice open to them is often a resort to illegitimate means to achieve those personal goals which people who are better off generally achieve without resource to deviance. Again, the poor youths are more likely to be exposed to the life of touts, drug pushers, thieves, prostitutes and other types of criminals sharing a community of residence. In essence, there is a correlation between poverty and deviance.

According to ERA findings in 1998, poverty also leads to social and environmental degradation.

Poor people can hardly be expected to care about their environment as they are persistently faced with the constant battle for survival. Hence, the filth, which persists in Nigerian towns and cities despite the monthly environmental exercise, is ignored by the vast majority of the poor. Many see it as a nuisance, which affects their time and income. Again, the NHDR 1998 reported that as environmental degradation gets worse by the day; this phenomenon is both a cause and a consequence of deepening poverty. According to the report of the Technical Committee on the review of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria, Vol. 11, October 2000, poverty has also been known to force women into situations in which they are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy and health complications. Poverty is also a factor in the high rate of infection of women with HIV/AIDS/STD (Aluko, 2003, pp. 257-258).

Without doubt, poverty has continued to leave an imprint of suffering and pain with the people with the church of no exception. Its resultant effect continues to lead people into various psychological disorder and spiritual declination. Ishola-Esan (2017, p. 277) stated that the effect of poverty is multi-dimensional and poses a threat to social stability as well as social cohesion. It also serves as a threat to good health care, to education, to the provision of housing, to acceptable income levels and access to essential utilities of life. The effect of poverty encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. Poverty, therefore, degrades the human person and denies individual the capacity to participate meaningfully in all aspects of social life. It affects every aspect of a person's life, be it emotional, spiritual, physical and psychological.

African poverty is described according to Parrat (1996, p. 44) as anthropological poverty, which is believed to encompass the cultural and material loss brought about by colonial domination of Africa by the Western nations. It is poverty which brings about unacceptable physiological and social deprivation. It brings about the denial of access to

Research Review

necessities of life. Poverty brings about the absence of amenities which are needed to sustain one's life and to promote the dignity of the human person. Psychological poverty hinders a person's ability to make a sound judgment that informs one's action. It deprives a person of societal acceptance, care and love (Nwagwu, 2014, p.22). Poverty undermines social justice and the right to life since it enslaves people by making them exposed to exploitation. The many inter-religious conflicts and war in Nigeria are traceable to the advent of poverty that continues to prove abortive in the country due to lack of sufficient and transformational leaders.

3 | POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

Poverty seems to be predominantly a rural phenomenon with almost all those suffering from intransigent poverty living in the rural areas; although the incidence of poverty in urban areas has also increased grossly (National Planning Commission, 2009). There is evident perception that the state of poverty in Nigeria is worsening (Ayeetey, 2018, p. 12); and since there is the growing perception that the number of poor people living below the poverty line has not changed in relation to economic growth, the relationship which exists between economic growth and poverty in most cases is unclear (Ishola-Esan, 2017, p. 278). The government in, government out always has project-specific measures they would put in place to alleviate the suffering of the people by establishing different schemes, programmes and initiatives, yet with little or no evident change with the people. Poverty level with regards to unemployment is predominantly high and drastically becoming immeasurable in Nigeria. The country produces graduates a year in and out without employment or adequate empowerment for self-employment.

Aluko (2003, p. 260) quoting (CDHR, 1996; NHDR, 1996, 1998) recalls that

Presently, Nigeria is faced with the unpleasant phenomenon of highly educated professionals who are poor because there are no jobs for them. Graduate unemployment has become a major

social problem. Nigeria produces some 100,000 graduates a year, but less than 10 percent of these have any reasonable hope of finding a job. Again, the problem of underutilization of industrial capacity has meant regular retrenchment exercises in both the private and the public sectors of the economy, thereby aggravating the already high level of unemployment. Thus unemployment is one of the main causes of poverty in Nigeria.

It is disheartening to realize that many of the challenges facing the country in virtually every aspect of the nation's life are bore down to the fact that poverty has dug dip into the heart and mentality of the people. Other than many other causes of poverty in the Nigerian society, this unemployment challenge has led many into sorts of the ungodly act, thereby leading to more economic degradation of the nation. For instance, an unemployed youth entangled by poverty would look for any means to ensure he provides for himself and his family. Painstakingly, this could be one major of the reasons why many youths are engaged in kidnap, arm robbery, insurgency, forgery and the likes.

Different ideologies and principles had been projected over time to reduce or eradicate poverty in Nigeria. The different government had provided various economic policies to ensuring good economic state of the people; most politicians used that as a means to canvas for election. Some get to power to introduce various schemes for poverty alleviation, yet its predominance in the society (both rural and urban) cannot be viewed microscopically. There have been many principles projected by scholars and economists on the possible means of alleviating poverty in Nigeria. For instance, the World Bank, in its report in 1990, suggested two strategies for poverty alleviation. The first was about the promotion of the productive use of the poor's most abundant asset-labour, which is to focus on establishing policies that enable stable market incentives, social and political institutions, excellent infrastructure and adaptable technology. The second is to make essential social services available to the poor both in the rural and urban settlements. This is to be done by providing

Research Review

health care, balanced nutrition and primary education (Aluko, 2003, p.263).

Many states of the nation established different schemes to alleviate poverty for the poor. For example, Osun state under the regime of Aregbesola started a programme he tagged OYES (Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme). The programme was designed to eliminate the frustration and paralyzing effect of unacceptably high and seemingly intractable youth unemployment pervasive in Osun, Nigeria. It aims at creating a bridge to employment by equipping as many young men and women (<http://www.oyes.org.ng/oyes.php>). Unfortunately, what was established to equipping many young men and women as a means of poverty eradication could only provide monthly peanuts to 8% of about one million youths that applied for the scheme (Ibid). The painful experience of the matter is that many politicians were enriched the more through the scheme while few of the masses that the scheme was established for barely benefited.

The Federal Government of Nigeria also in 2018 pronounced a poverty eradication scheme they tagged “Trader Moni,” which were given to market men and women as a loan without collateral (<https://www.tradermoni.ng/>). The scheme only makes provisions of ten thousand Naira loan to the poor masses, which many people did not benefit. Despite the minuteness of the amount, the political undertone that the scheme projected is another problem to the poor masses. Funny enough, the scheme became popular some months before the general election and went down the drain after elections. The low popularity of the scheme might mean the scheme is no longer in existence or its existence is no longer being celebrated compared to how it was in November/December 2018 up till early 2019.

The various schemes propounded by different governments and yet with little or no output pose another threat to the nation’s economy. The more the schemes, the more profound people get more entangled with poverty. The constant report of many foreigners who had done good businesses with Nigerians has always been that “Nigeria as a

country is rich, but the people therein are poor.” What could this mean? It is nothing but the problem of leadership. The problem of many societies is leadership and the operating system of such a society. Poverty is a critical issue that requires a critical approach that goes beyond mere politicking (Amoran, 2018, p. 137). Examining the different applications of transformational leadership approach to different spheres of life gives a clue that when applied to poverty alleviation scheme in Nigeria will do much help in aiding the masses out of their prevalent poverty saga.

4 | OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP STYLES VIS-A-VIS CONCEPT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

People approach leadership based on individual peculiarities; personal understanding and worldview; the personality of the individual; exposure to life and situation; environmental influence; the level of knowledge acquired; principles of life or scriptural interpretation; situation or circumstances and lots more. Different leadership theorists may have propounded their theory based on the experiment; observation; feedback from teachings; research; personal experience and or testimonies of others, yet the fact remains that leadership exhibition is a product of individual mindsets and worldview as well as response to situation or circumstances (Amoran, 2018, p. 132).

Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth (Obasola, 2002, p. 9). Leadership involves a leader’s approach to the use of influence, power and authority, which becomes visible in the reader's mode of communication and conduct peculiar to their thinking and reasoning (Amoran, 2008, p. 132). The various Leadership approach adoptable by different leaders forms their style of leadership. Leadership style involves a leader’s approach to the use of authority and participation in decision making; this becomes visible in the reader's mode of communication and conduct (Adetunji, 2010, p. 21). One may tend to ask, is the influence of political leadership or governments in Nigeria meant to compound the problem of poverty or

Research Review

lessen it? Anyway, accessing the products of thinking and reasoning of Nigerian political leaders and government personnel is not the focus of this paper but would be a focus of another time.

The Nigerian situation, without doubt, requires a drastic focus on leadership and governance. Reflecting on the worldwide thrust toward political and economic liberalization, it is of great importance to revisit the kind of leadership that is suitable for the continual holistic degradation of the country. Throughout the whole world, there has been an urgent desire among various people and government for unity, justice, peace and stability. The resurgence of this desire is not only explicable through their political policies alone; but it is also reflected in the social and economic policies (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012, p. 141).

There are different kinds of leadership styles adoptable by various leaders, depending on the peculiarities or situations of the leaders. Nevertheless, psychologists, leaders and people in business have described simple ways to define the most significant styles of leadership based on the different theories of leadership. Understanding leadership styles helps individuals to develop their skills and become more productive. Adetunji (2010, p. 22-24) identified several leadership styles to include; authoritarian; laissez-faire; bureaucratic; charismatic; and democratic leadership styles. On a common ground for leadership theories, styles of leadership can be classified and analyzed. Behavioural theories, which have its origin from the work of Lewin, Lippitt and White, who outlined a framework of leadership on decision-making behaviour, identified three main styles of leadership. They include autocratic; democratic and laissez-faire, but for this research, Transformational leadership style as propounded by James Macgregor Burns and expanded by B. M. Bass would be explored.

Transformational leadership style is all about leadership that creates positive change in the followers whereby they take care of each other's interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole (Warrilow, 2012) other than pursuing personal interest or gain. James Macgregor Burns

introduced the concept of transformational leadership in 1978 in his descriptive research on political leaders, but its usage has spread into organizational psychology and management with further modifications by B.M Bass and J.B Avalor (Jung & Sosik, 2002). Transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale, and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the project and the collective identity of the organization (community); being a role model for followers that inspires them and makes them interested; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that enhance their performance (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, p. 356). Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve organizational mandates and also develop their leadership capacity. They help their followers to grow and develop into becoming a better person who would be capable of leadership more productively and excellently (Bass & Riggio, p.3). These kinds of leaders believe in their followers and motivate them to do what they think they are not capable of. This is a kind of leadership that can influence change in reality, most notably when it is done with right and godly motive.

Transformational leadership advocates for real transformational agenda in the society with the focus of the leader on the developing the followers. Bass (1985, p. 17) reports that "transformational leaders sharply arouse or alters the strength of needs which may have lain dormant." There are potentials in the community of humans that requires extrinsic motivation to activate the intrinsic through proper self-less and intentional ignition of the human potential. Nigeria, as a country needs transformational leaders who are capable of upgrading the needs that would enable followers to become self-directing, self-actualizing and self-reinforcing; not necessarily depending on the government for everything. Peanuts provided by the government as a means of poverty alleviation would do nothing in the lives of the people other than providing mental avenue and

Research Review

environment that encourages self-development of the followers. Leaders embodying these characteristics are transformational, primarily because they motivate people to perform at peak levels way beyond the irrational expectations (Gronn, 1996, p.15).

Bass (2008) described Transformational leadership as such leadership approach with four main elements which are regarded as four distinct subcomponents of leadership behaviour. They include; idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration. Gronn (1996, p. 15) reports that leaders with a thorough understanding and application of these four components of transformational leadership operates at a significant level of influence and performs beyond their reasonable expectations. The adoption of this leadership approach by church leaders and the government would do much help in helping people out of poverty.

- a. **Idealized Influence:** “Transformational leaders behave in ways that allow them to serve as role models for their followers. They are admired, respected and trusted (Bass & Avolio, p. 6). Among those things, leaders do to earn respect and value with followers is for them to consider the needs of the followers over theirs. A church leader with this approach will instil pride in the followers for being their members, and not embolden them as to be feeding on them rather than feeding them; will go beyond self-gain, self-interest for the good of his/her members (followers); will always in act in ways that build others’ respect for him; and display a sense of power, confidence and capability in his members (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 94).
- b. **Inspiration Motivation:** Every sane human within a community has potential that requires motivation to ignite or activate. “A transformational leader behaves in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge their followers’ work” (Bass & Avolio, p.6). Individual and team spirit is aroused within

a community. Enthusiasm and optimism are displayed to ensure everyone is up and doing in the church. Church leaders in this wise must encourage members to envision attractive future states which they can ultimately envision for themselves other than waiting for governmental provision of jobs (Avolio & Bass, p. 94). Therefore, church pastor/leader must talk optimistically about the future of his members; talk enthusiastically about the needs to be accomplished within a stipulated time; articulate a compelling vision of the future and express in his members that their goals will be achieved. Enough of the deceptive poverty alleviation programme of the government that are meant to enrich some other people further.

- c. **Intellectual Stimulation:** one other important function of a transformational leader is his ability and duty to stimulate (kindle) their follower’s efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways (Bass & Avolio, p.7). The church pastor/leader that will prove transformational in his leadership exhibition would not be carelessly be concerned with the inability of the government to get people out of a problem instead lead his members to identify problems and creatively lead them out of such problems. Creativity in leadership is crucial. The problem-solving ability of individual leaders is of great importance in getting wards out of many challenges. This is one of the reasons; the adoption of Transformational Leadership approach to poverty alleviation in the church is very applicable.

This, as extracted from Avolio & Bass (2004, p. 95) that leaders in this wise are saddled with the responsibilities of re-examining critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate or not. One would recall that many strategies had been adopted to alleviate poverty by

Research Review

the government and various individuals, but to no avail, transformational approach to poverty alleviation in the church would have technical questions to ask, most essentially on whether the said approach will be applicable or not:

- i. Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems;
 - ii. Get others to look at problems from different angles; and
 - iii. Suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments and ensure solution is provided.
- d. Individualized Consideration: The needs of the followers are germane to a transformational leader. Such a leader pays attention to each member's needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor. A church pastor in this wise is grossly concerned about ensuring the betterment of all members, steering close to them to ensure their potentials are thoroughly explored, and that sound output becomes visible with their little efforts. Bass & Avolio (2006, p. 7) reports in a similar vein that members of the church are developed to a successful high level of potentials, through their exposure to new learning opportunities, thus capable of alleviating them from their initial state of dogma and impotence to a level of functionality and productivity.

These elements are crucially adoptable to explore in ensuring a transformational approach to solving whatsoever problem identified. The adoption of this leadership style is capable of alleviating poverty among church members. A transformational leader provides an opportunity for the followers to become leaders (Nash & Bangert, 2014, p. 463), it is not favourable for churches that their members remain in low economic level, instead, be elevated into becoming leaders that shape and influence the economic state of the church and the nation at large. Such a leadership approach that will give room for the development of the masses to be relevant in the world is required. Most of the rich have continually dominated society, giving room to no other to become like

MEERP

them in riches. The powerful continually positions them to retain power without allowing others outside the circle to come up. This is also applicable to the wealthy leaders who continually explore the masses to amount wealth for their self-satisfaction. Approaching poverty alleviation by the leaders both in the church and in the society must provide an opportunity for the people to attain leadership so as for all to enjoy together those things enjoyable. A transformational leader creates learning opportunities for their followers and stimulates them to solve problems in their way, to the extent that the followers become capable of leading themselves economically (Gronn, 1997, p. 2)

5 | ALLEVIATING POVERTY THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP VIS-À-VIS ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES

The dominance of poverty in Africa is traceable predominantly to leadership laxity. One cannot categorically opine that poverty in African and more importantly in Nigeria is caused by lack of resources, but by mismanagement of resources which are mostly found among leaders in the areas of misappropriation, selfishness – accruing all that should benefit the masses to one-self, uncared attitude to welfare and social needs of the people, and the crave for continual marginalization of the general populace and retention of power. It is thus believed that a right leadership perspective of gospel ministers using transformational leadership approach will better help church leaders to help themselves out poor leadership orientation and aid their members out of poverty.

Honestly, Nigeria is blessed with both natural and human resources, but leadership problem continue to malign the people and retaining them poverty. Of course, there had over time been many attempt and propositions by academia, socio-economists, entrepreneurs, and various scholars in the leadership, psychology and sociological fields of study have attempted many proposals and different measures to eradicating poverty in the society, but there proves its continual persistence in the society. It is believed that adequate conception and development of productive heart through the

Research Review

adoption of transformational leadership principles and practices can better form leaders, both in the religious or political strata.

Attitudinal disposition of leaders in Africa are in some cases attributed to wickedness. Wickedness in the sense of conserving power and wealth to themselves with the possibility of zero regard for human dignity. Transformational leadership (TL) conception and ideal practice of it would cause leaders at all spheres of life to embrace the attitude of living to serve their followers and not necessarily occupying positions of authority to extort the masses. This is because TL promotes leadership attitude of considering followers and serving them as role models (Bass & Avolio, p. 6), serving them as influencers who leads considerably by positively influencing betterment of life for his people – this is idealized influence. In this regard, church leaders/pastors are required to:

- i. Lead others deliberately out of poverty by influencing them into wealth through intellectual and financial empowerment. Ensuring that the poor also become wealthy, using the resources available to them to raise others.
- ii. Respect, admire and build trust for leadership capability in their followers; and not holding to power as if power room is meant only for those who are already rich and influential
- iii. Consider the needs of their followers as of utmost priority over their needs or desires. Extortion must become a declared societal evil that all leaders must shun to ensure good life for all a sundry.

Another prevalent leadership lacuna in the human society is that many governmental policies does not good room or motivate an average man to venture or be sustained in adventures that will naturally build his wealth and influence. Sometimes, when the policy of a country is not economic friendly to the general populace, engaging in business that could lead into mass productivity will become difficult and even impossible. Leaders in the

various leadership position must become deliberate in motivating their followers into being productive. There are many benefits attached to it.

Nigeria as a country continues to experience economic decadence because the economic power of the country seems to be in the hands of some few influential, leaving the small scale business ventures subjective to them at all course. Adopting TL of inspiration motivation will build the attitude of motivating and inspiring followers (Jung & Sosik, 2002) and stimulating their follower to creative adventures where are capable of breeding new ideas and converting them to reality – products that can add value to the society (Bass & Avolio, p.7), so as to better their productivity through the introduction of flexible economic policies that are capable of encouraging small scale business outlets to better improve their productivity. This can be done in the following ways:

- i. Decentralize economic power and strength of the church and making all members of the church stakeholders in decisions pertaining to the economic state and stability of the church. Expending church wealth should be decisive with all members of the church, and not few who will be concern about wall-building and not live-building
- ii. Build Training Avenue, accompanied with motivating incentives that can propel church members or followers into further exploring their dreams and aspirations and helping them to convert ideals to productive adventures through relational teaching and experiential presentations
- iii. Leadership attitude and disposition should no further be based on their intimacy with those who are rich, but devising the means to empower those who are struggling to rise, giving them attention for productive living. This will propel them to be up and doing, and have a sense of belonging within the Christian fold. The believe that the rich

Research Review

determines the lot of the poor in the society will be abated

- iv. Leaders opening the minds of their followers into possible opportunities around them and giving them the best applicable strategies to ensuring that those opportunities are better maximized

Leaders, both within the church and in the society at large are not required to only seek to occupy positions but to also develop strategies that better the lives of the people they are to or are already leading. Leadership position is for humanity, and thus must put into consideration the dignity of humanity, and thus must ensure that regard, fear and of the people dominates their mind, and build avenue that all members of the society in their various capabilities live to enjoy the dividends of being human in the society. All men can be happy altogether. Happiness and merry making are not meant only for the rich-class.

Adopting TL can then build the initiative of entrepreneurship in leaders in a better way. Entrepreneurship in most developed countries when explored in right perspective and not politically is believed to be capable of alleviating poverty, especially developing avenue for skill acquisition, financial empowerment and business networking – connecting people to streams of influential people who can aid business outcome and multiply further input. In this wise, entrepreneurship influenced by transformational leadership influx would then be a means of creating learning opportunities for followers and stimulating them to solve problems (Gronn, 1997, p.2) creatively based on the intellectual, financial and material provisions they would make available to their followers.

6| CONCLUSION

The issue of poverty continues to invade the lives of people both in the church and in the society at large. Many research outcome attested to this fact, and it is even obvious in the society. Likewise, many attempts had been given to proffering solution to this gentle deadly societal enemy that

have also crept into the church. This paper deduced that pastors can employ the requisites of a transformational leadership approach in their leadership endeavours towards alleviating poverty among church members and Christians in Nigeria at Large using the basic principles of transformational leadership. These include; idealized influence, inspiration motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The paper projected possible ways the application of transformational leadership principles could aid entrepreneur dimension of alleviating poverty in the church and concludes that the practice of transformational leadership approach by church leaders/pastors can aid entrepreneurial initiatives towards alleviating the continual poverty-driven society which continues to affect the church and her members.

REFERENCES

1. Adetunji, O. G. (2010). *Leadership In Action: A Source Book in Church Administration for Students and Ministers*. Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nigeria) Limited.
2. Afegbua, S. I., & Adejuwon, K. D. (2012, September). The Challenges of Leadership and Governance in Africa. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(9), 141-157
3. Aluko, M. O. (2003). Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(4), 255-266.
4. Amoran, O. S. (2019). *Psycho-Philosophical Leadership: Developing Critical Mindset for Effective Pastoral Ministry in Africa*. In S. A. Fatokun, J. K. Akintayo, S. M. Mepaiyeda, O. O. Familusi, & S. O. Okanlawon (Eds.), *African Christianity in Local and Global Contexts: A Festschrift in Honour of Rev.Prof. Isaac Deji Ayegboyin* (pp. 568-578). Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd.
5. Anazodo, R. O., Igbokwe-Ibeto, C. J., & Nkah, B. C. (2015, April). Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria: issues and Categorical Imperatives. *African Research Review: An International*

Research Review

- Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia, 9(2), 41-58.
6. Aryeetey, E. et al. (2008). *The Economy of Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
 7. Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. (2004). *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: Manual and Sampler Set*. New York: Mind Garden.
 8. Ayiamba, J. O., Theuri, M. M., & Mungai, P. C. (2015). The Anglican Church Poverty Alleviation in Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District, Kenya. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, 15(5), 16-42.
 9. Ayiamba, J. O., Theuri, M. M., & Mungai, P. C. (2015, February). The Mandate of the Christian Church in Poverty Alleviation: The Case of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ack) in Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District, Kenya. *International Research Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 4(2), 43-54.
 10. Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. New York: Free Press.
 11. Bass, M.B. (2008). *The Basic Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research and Managerial Applications* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.
 12. Bass, M.B., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). New York: Psychological Press.
 13. CDHR. (1996). *Annual Report on the Human Rights Situation in Nigeria*. Lagos: Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Nigeria.
 14. De Santa Ana, J. (1979). *Towards a Church of the Poor*. Geneva: WCC, Oikoumene.
 15. Fadayomi, T. O. et al. (1988). *Social Impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme*. Niser Monograph Series. Ibadan: Social Development Department, NISER.
 16. Gronn, P. (1996). From Transactions to Transformations: A New World Order in the Study of Leadership? *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 24, 7-30.
 17. Ishola-Esan, H. (2016). The Role of Theological Education in Servant Leadership Development for the Great Commission in Africa. *West African Journal of Higher Education*, 5, 67-84.
 18. Ishola-Esan, H. (2017). Responding to the Challenge of Poverty through Christian Education: A Clarion Call for Churches in Nigeria. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(8), 273-288.
 19. Johnson, J. L. (2009). The Non-profit Leadership Deficit: A Case for More Optimism. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 19(3), 285-304.
 20. Jung, D. D., & Sosik, J. J. (2002). Transformational Leadership in Work Groups: The Role of Empowerment, Cohesiveness and Collective Efficacy on Perceived Group Performance. *Small Group Research*, 33, 313-336.
 21. Mathole, E. M. (2005). *The Christian Witness in the Context of Poverty*. Pretoria: Department of Science and Missiology, University of Pretoria.
 22. Miller, M. (2009). Transformational Leadership Behaviours and Empathy with Action. *Transformational Leadership Behaviours*, 26(1), 45-59.
 23. Myers, B. L. (1999). *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, World Vision.
 24. Nash, S., & Bangert, A. (2014). Exploring the Relationship between Principal's Life Experience and Transformational Leadership Behaviours. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 17(4), 462-480.
 25. National Planning Commission. (2009). *Nigeria Vision 20:2020 Economic Transformation Blueprint*. Abuja: The Presidency.
 26. Nwagwu, E. J. (2014, March). Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria: A Link to National Insecurity. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 2(1), 19-35.

Research Review

27. Obasola, K. E. (2002, December). Leadership in Religious Organizations and Societies: Traditional Yoruba Perspective. *CASTALIA*, 12(2), 122-134.
28. Odumeru, J. A., & Ifeanyi, G. O. (2013). Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership
29. Theories: Evidence in Literature. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 2 (2), 355-361.
30. Parrat, J. (1996). *A Guide to Doing Theology*. Britain: SCPK.
31. Quinney, R. (1980). *Class, State and Crime*. London: Longman.
32. Warrilow, S (2012) Transformational Leadership Theory - The 4 Key Components in
33. Leading Change & Managing Change. From. HYPERLINK "http://EzineArticles.com/%20?expert=Stephen_Warrilow"http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Stephen_Warrilow . Accessed, May 27, 2019.

How to cite this article:Helen Ishola-Esan and Oluwafemi Samuel Amoran. Adopting Transformational Leadership Approach Towards Poverty Alleviation Among Christians In Nigeria *Research Review*.2022;769-780. <https://doi.org/10.52868/RR/2022-3-3-3>
