Discovering Africa's Presence in Biblical Leadership

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This article applied social - culture and ideological analysis to Acts 2 and Acts 13 to show how the first church and the development of Christianity were founded by a diverse group of leaders, which included leaders with African heritage. The Holy Bible, as current-day believers and scholars know it, would not be possible without the contributions made by people of African descent. Yet there has been a deliberate attempt by the dominant culture found in Europe and the United States to de-Africanize the Holy Bible. De-Africanizing the Holy Bible, minimizes the role(s) and contributions completed by people with African ancestry. The most common place where de-Africanization occurred in the Bible was when Africans held leadership positions. Through a socio-rhetorical analysis of selected passages, scholars discover the high level of diversity found within the founding fathers of the Christian church. Since God incorporated diversity into the original leadership of the Christian church, current-day Christian organizations have an example of what diversity in leadership can do and should strive for diversity when creating an executive leadership team. Hambrick and Mason's (1984) Upper Echelon Theory explains the benefits of diversity in leadership positions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that African Americans pursuing executive-level leadership positions are less likely to receive equitable and fair treatment during the consideration process for the job (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Individuals of African descent receive the same treatment from faith-based organizations as they do from nonreligious organizations. Overlooking people of African heritage for leadership positions in American organizations that are either Christian based or whose leadership team members identify themselves as Christians may stem from misinterpreted passages of Judeo–Christian scripture.

The Holy Bible's first words describing people of African heritage reside in Genesis 4 and 9. What Moses wrote in these two chapters about people of African descent was not ultimately how he or other future authors of the Bible viewed and described people of African ancestry. Moses' words in Genesis 4 were drastically different from the leadership role that Africans held throughout the remainder of the Old Testament and the development and growth of the Christian church, which resides in the New Testament. The holy text contains several stories where people of African ancestry held leadership positions. African Old Testament characters like Nimrod (Genesis 10), Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 10), Cushan-Rishathiam (Judges 3), and Abishag (1 Kings1, 2) were respected as leaders. New Testament characters with African ancestry like Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15) and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) provided examples of African interactions with Christ and His disciples. Acts 2 and Acts 13 enlightened readers and believers on how Africans were embedded in the foundation of the Christian church and the development of Christianity. In addition to the Bible's essential intellectual evolution about Africa and Africans, an abundance of literature supports the benefits of organizations embracing diversity in their leadership team. However, the majority of the national organizations located in the western hemisphere repeatedly fail at evolving from past thoughts about people with African ancestry. This failure is most evident in the lack of diversity in leadership positions.

According to T. A. Jones (2013), present-day African Americans are commonly viewed and judged by the dominant culture in the United States. Oliver (1994) and Dubriel (2006) argued that the dominant culture bases many of their presumptions about African Americans on what they see and hear through media sources as well as how African Americans were viewed decades and even centuries ago. In business, advancement for African Americans occasionally occurs. When there is an opportunity to promote African Americans into leadership positions and the leadership positions requires the African American candidate to supervise subordinates who are apart of the dominant culture in America, century-old perceptions of African Americans infiltrate the decision process on whether they should be hired for the position. If an organization does decide to hire the African American candidate for the leadership position, the new leader's ability to effectively do their job is often challenged by subordinates, fellow leaders, and higher levels of management. The practice of using old perceptions about people of African heritage against current day applicants with African ancestry is also evident in Christian organizations. In 2013, there were 15 major nationwide Christian based companies that were still in operation throughout the United States of America (Nisen, 2013). Out of the 15 Christian based companies, only three of the companies

had a person of African descent in an executive leadership position. These Christian companies do employ people of African descent, but rarely, if ever, do these nationwide Christian based companies hire people of African heritage for leadership positions. The absence of diversity in leadership positions at Christian based organization leads research to wonder how the people who work for Christian-based organizations interpret the sacred text. Desireable attributes of a leader, the role of Africans in the Bible, and how people of African descent were pivotal in the development of Christianity as well as in the first-century church is all found within the Holy Bible.

Symington and Symington (2012) asserted that many of the foundational principles and ideologies practiced in the United States are biblically-based principles. Therefore, it would be appropriate to review the dual relationship between people of African descent and people of European descent from a theological point of view. Stone and Duke (2013) described theology as a way of thinking about life. Ultimately, thinking about life leads to creating beliefs and standards. In the case of organizations in the western hemisphere, the beliefs and the standards that leadership has about the nondominant culture in a country contribute to the continual low number of people with African heritage in leadership positions. Understanding the causes behind the dominant culture's thoughts about people of African descent requires a hermeneutical and sociorhetorical analysis of the sacred books used by the dominant culture. This analysis involves an exploration of the meaning of the words written in the Holy Bible and how these words apply to the lives of previous and current believers.

II. DIVERSITY LEADRESHIP THEORIES

Reconciliatory Practices

Swain and Sayweed (2006) purported that leaders who embrace reconciliatory practices help their subordinates understand antecedent events that have occurred and contributed to any problems that their organization faces. Reconciliatory leaders seek to find and spend more time evaluating why certain events happened and less time on current problems occurring within the organization. Van de Ven and Poole (1995) believed that if the true reason why problems exist in an organization are discovered, analyzed, and explained, than there is a greater chance that those problems will not continue to reoccur. Reconciliatory practices consist of three components: (a) building relationships, (b) not avoiding uncomfortable topics of discussion, and (c) borrowing successful leadership practices. Lederach (1997) stated that when co-workers establish relationships with one another that their overall communication with each other improves. Secondly, reconciliatory leaders should never avoid activities where staff express grief, loss, or anger. According to Gardner-Feldman (1999), organizational leaders that incorporate reconciliatory practices into their workplace should show their subordinates that feelings of anger, grief, and loss is felt by all groups of people. Lastly, reconciliatory leaders commonly incorporate successful reconciliatory techniques used by other organizations. Day (2000) said that good leaders do not have to reinvent all of their leadership practices. Christian organizations that desire more diversity in their leadership positions requires the organization to go back to the Holy Bible and reevaluate the presence of Africa and Africans in the sacred text.

Organizations that are Christian based must reconcile within themselves and acknowledge the active practice of De-Africanizing the Holy Bible. De-Africanization of the Bible has been an unconscious and unchecked reality for Bible readers and believers for centuries. Until readers and believers of the sacred text accept that people in the western hemisphere are unconsciously biased against the continent of Africa and descendants of Africa, people will never see the need for true diversity and inclusivity in leadership. Reconciliatory practices of current leaders in organizations that desire diversity allow current leaders to look back and try to discover why and where the lack of diversity stems from. Also, the application of reconciliatory practices to organizations that lack diversity in leadership allows current organizational leaders the ability to welcome the fears, confusion, and anxiety of its subordinates that seek for more diversity. Current leaders also have the required space needed for subordinates that express fears, uncertainty, and anxieties about accepting and welcoming more diversity in the workplace.

Upper Echelon Theory

Hambrick and Mason (1984) created the UET—a theory associated with business leadership and states that organizations can obtain many benefits if they attract, recruit, and maintain a diverse executive leadership team for their organization. Nishii et al. (2007) purported that when UET is practiced, positive outcomes occur. The positive effects are felt on all levels within the organization as well as the organization's stakeholders. UET is a widely known and accepted concept in the United States, yet, according to Nishii et al., only 15% of managers in American organizations are people of color. UET believes that the concrete ceiling concept continues to be the reason why organizations struggle with diversity. Ray and Davis (1988) compared the known glass ceiling that women experience in the corporate world to the concrete ceiling that many African Americans endure in the same corporate world. Glass ceilings and concrete ceilings are both barriers established to prevent specific groups from growing in an organization. When comparing the glass ceiling experience to the concrete ceiling experience, the concrete ceiling experience is unequivocally worse (Davidson & Davidson, 1997). Concrete ceilings are almost impossible to penetrate, and people who continually try to break through the proverbial concrete usually end up hurting their future career. Incorporating UET into American organizations will have contemporary implications for leading racial reconciliation in an organization's leadership.

Organizations that desire to diversify the demographic make-up of their employees should start by introducing people of color into senior management positions. The adoption of diversity practices, in conjunction with the demographic changes in an organization's workforce is more positively affected when there is more diversity in senior management. Organizations that implement UET annihilate barriers created by the concrete ceiling and advance their organizations by widening their opportunities to serve and meet the needs of the organization's clients/customers. Nishii et al. (2007) reported that when people of color hold executive leadership positions, they help reshape the mindsets of their employees. Leaders who are people of color help their subordinates understand that being a reliable and capable leader are not characteristics solely reserved for Caucasian leaders. New Testament writers described

Upper Echelon Theory practices in their writing when they wrote about the development of the first church and the Christian faith. Essential elements of Upper Echelon Theory are found in Luke's writings. These elements include the contributions towards Chrsitianity made by people of Afrian descent.

III. AFRICA AND AFRICAN'S PRESENCE IN THE HOLY BIBLE

De-Africanization of the Bible

Africa and Africans have a significant place in the Bible (Cone, 2008). Interpreters of the sacred text, institutions of higher education, and even Christian churches have consciously and unconsciously de-Africanized the Bible (Nyang, 1985). The de-Africanization of the Bible continues to happen in America. De-Africanization practices have been so ingrained into the mindset of all Christians born in or raised in the United States that it is the biggest obstacle for why it is difficult to see the African presence in the Bible. Nyang (1985) explained that people and institutions of faith and education have taken references and allusions to Africa out of the Bible and suggested that those African nations and people existed somewhere else in the world. Bennett (1971b) suggested that before scholars could identify the African presence in the Bible, scholars must first acknowledge what had been done to erase the African existence in the first place. Bennett (1971a) believed that to recover from the de-Africanization of the Bible, scholars must accept the notion that there had been and continues to be a denial of the presence of African nations and African people in scripture.

Currently used translations of the holy text were translated after 1500 A.D. by people of European descent (Smith, 2007). Modern-day Christianity began to take its shape during the late 1600s and early 1700s during the Reformation period in Europe (Rublack, 2017). People first downplayed the Bible's connection to Africa during the Reformation. Europeans were against Africans and saw them as inferior. Slavery in Europe served as the reason why Europeans viewed Africans as inferior. According to West (2000), European translators of the Bible in the 16th century did not believe that the beautiful work and land described in the holy script could have happened in the perceived impoverished continent of Africa. For example, according to Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994), there has been a continual movement to dispel the idea that the Garden of Eden may have been located in Africa. The reason why there is a push by some groups to move the Garden of Eden out of Africa is that if the Garden of Eden is in Africa, that would make the Garden of Eden an African place, which would further mean that the first human, Adam, was African.

Genesis 2 describes the Garden of Eden. Four rivers flowed through the Garden of Eden. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers serve as the two most commonly known rivers the Garden of Eden narrative.   Modern-day maps as well as historical maps created by Eurocentric mappers describe the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as rivers located in modern-day Iraq (Flanagan, 2001, Ingram, 1993). According to Genesis 2:10-14, the Garden of Eden consisted of two more rivers; the Gihon River and the Pishon River. Genesis 2 purported that the Pishon River flowed around the land of Havilah and the Gihon River ran around the land of Cush. Lemons (2014) reported that Havilah and Cush were African countries. Scholars like Adamo (1986) argued that the continent of

Africa may be the true location of the Garden of Eden. Historians that support Adamo's argument agree with Adamo because of the lack of parallel rivers in Mesopotamian or other Near Eastern countries (Oya, 1984). These parallel rivers do however exist in Africa. While research can eliminate some locations as the possible location for the Garden of Eden, the presence of the Pishon River and Gihon River in the Garden of Eden allows Africa to be a strong possible location for the Garden of Eden. Felder (1990) stated it was just as possible for Africa to be the location as the Middle East. In an attempt to de-Africanize the Bible, as well as rationalize and justify chattel enslavement in Eurocentric countries, oral storytellers and historians could not allow Adam, the first man to be of African descent. If Adam was of African descent it would make it difficult Europeans to claim that Africans are inferior to Europeans if Europeans were decedents of Africans (Onah & Nwosu, 2019).

Individuals who only studied the Bible with Israel in mind functioned as another contributing component of the de-Africanization in the Bible (Myers, 1991). Burgh (2006) suggested that people who studied Israel only reviewed Israel and its relationship to Near Eastern countries and Mesopotamia. As a result, biblical scholars in the 1500s and the 1600s just looked at Israel and its connection to its eastern neighbors. These scholars never looked west or to the south to see how Africa shaped the Old Testament's theology. C. Copher (1991) expressed that Africa had more effect on how Israel looked in its early stages than any of the Near Eastern countries. Africa had a notable shaping effect on Israel, especially when people embrace Egypt as the African nation that it is and not a Middle Eastern country that some people would like to believe that it was.

Finally, the last component that has helped de-Africanize the Bible is the identification of African nations that were hindered by people who designed biblical maps. Most of the maps we currently have of ancient Africa were not done by people who lived at the time and could define where different nations were (J. M. Miller, 1983; Wesley, 2017). These maps were drawn by European scholars in the 1500s who read the Bible and tried to trace back what they thought was Africa. There is a significant difference between how things were initially laid out and how Europeans thought how things were laid out based on what they learned and how they interpreted the Bible (Burgh, 2006). The problem with how designers designed the maps occurred when a person in 1500 read the Bible and did not connect or think a place described in the Bible was an African place. For example, the land of Cush described in Genesis is the same place known as Ethiopia in 1500.

All three components show how the Bible has been de-Africanized. Therefore, if European scholars from 1500 had not produced these three components, the evidence and contributions to the Bible made by people of African descent would be more pronounced. Moreover, it would also make it more challenging to limit people of African descent to the role of servanthood and inferior to the Israelites, as Genesis 4 suggest.

A problem for Christian based organizations or organizations that only have members of the United States and Europe's dominant culture in leadership positions is that these organizations struggle to see past skin color when promoting people into executive leadership positions. Also, these Christian organizations do not recognize the vast amount of diversity located in the Holy Bible. People of African heritage played a significant role in the recorded events found in the Old Testament and the development

of the Christian faith described in the New Testament. A greater understanding of the reasons why organizations dislike or fear people of African descent in leadership could generate relevant conversations. These conversations would focus on whether this country has genuinely evolved as much as it thinks it has. Specifically, for organizations located in the United States, this dialogue would help the United States definitively answer whether this country, as a whole, has let go of its divisive racial tendencies and has embraced the constitutional concept that all Americans are created as equal and can equally be successful as leaders of an organization.

Organizations that embrace diversity strive to accurately reflect the diversity found throughout the organization. These organizations also apply reconciliatory practices into their workplace practices and behaviors. Christian leaders and Christian based organizations that lack diversity in their companies would experience a shift in their thinking and behaviors towards potential leaders of color if they understood the misconceptions that surround the first descriptions of Africans in the Bible, which is commonly known as the Curse of Ham.

Curse of Ham Theory

The phrase "curse of Ham" is misleading. It is misleading because God never put a "curse" on Ham. Yet people in both European countries as well as in the United States of America believe in the curse of Ham. People also believe that God ordained the curse over not just Ham, but all of Ham's genealogy. Adamo (2010) stated the origins of African people began with Ham, therefore God's curse over Ham also meant that all African people were also cursed. According to Adamo (1986), the dominant culture in the United States and Europe promoted the idea that God cursed a certain group of people because of actions performed by Noah's son Ham. Whitford (2017) stated that God inflicted a curse on a certain group of people and that the curse was two-fold. First, God cursed a certain group of people with black skin. Secondly, people cursed with black skin would be under the control and submissive to individuals that did not have black skin. These two fundamental thoughts about people of African heritage continued past the end of legalized slavery in both countries. The effects of the curse of Ham theory were and continue to be prevalent in countries where the European culture serves as the dominant culture. The misinterpreted passage of scripture serves as a primary reason why organizations continue to lack in diversity in leadership positions. People believed that it was not God's design for people of African descent to hold a leadership position. According to Braude (1997), Asian countries and African countries are not affected by the curse of Ham theory like European countries and America. Concepts from the curse of Ham theory have been found in the foundational design of England and later in the United States of America (Haynes et al., 2002). In the United States, this controversial theory dates back to the New England Puritans (D. Whitford, 2010). According to Mackinlay (1973), the idea that Puritans did not support the concept of slavery was not entirely accurate. Puritans were firmly in favor of enslaving another person as long as the enslaved person was not of European descent. Puritans saw nothing wrong with people of African descent being forced into slavery (Rosenthal, 1973). The reason why Puritans saw nothing wrong with African slavery is that Puritans believed that God created Africans to be both inferior and servants to Europeans.

Puritans tied scripture to their actions and how they interacted with Africans (Thomas, 1975). By linking scripture to their actions, Puritans created a way to make their actions ordained by God, which relieved them from owning their racial acts (Bartour, 1983). Puritans were able to alleviate their sense of guilt from enslaving another group of people by placing the reason for the heinous act of slavery on God and the Bible. The Antebellum south received most of the credit for slavery and ideas of European supremacy in America (Cell & Cell, 1982). North of the Mason–Dixon line, in particular, the Puritans in Massachusetts, had their fair share of racist acts and the acceptance of racist behaviors. Griffith (1999) added that the Puritans in New England were the first group of Christians in America to argue that God created Africans innately inferior to other human beings and that Africans' inferiority stems from God's curse over Ham's son Canaan.

While the mindset of most people in the western hemisphere has progressed and improved about people of African descent, behaviors and actions of some show that the original thoughts about Africa and Africans still exist. In organizational leadership, there continues to be a struggle to see African Americans into leadership positions, and some of the justifications for European Americans not being able to see African American in leadership is linked back to thinking that African Americans are inferior. The commonly spread misconceptions of the curse of Ham allowed and still allow organizations the ability to shut out diversity in leadership positions. Organizational theories like Upper Echelon Theory indicate that diversity in the highest level that reflects the diversity found in the lowest level of the organization increase the impact that the organization has on its customers and propels the organization to grow.

Acts 2: The Cyrenians and the Book of Acts

According to Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger (2006), the Book of Acts showcases the Cyrenians' prominence in the development of the early church. The developing church felt the presence of the Cyrenians, and the New Testament links several biblical figures to the nation of Cyrene (DelCogliano, 2011). These people include Simon, Alexander, Rufus, and Lucius, all of whom made substantial contributions toward the church and Christianity. Simon helped Jesus carry his cross to its final destination. Brothers Alexander and Rufus, the sons of Simon, were original leaders within the church, and Lucius was responsible for sending Paul and Barnabas on their missionary work to nonbelieving nations (Ndirangu-Kihara, 2018). Wedderburn (1995) argued that Acts 2 highlights the bulk of the Cyrenian contributions to the church's development.

Acts 2 describes the day of Pentecost. Keener (2009) declared that the purpose of Pentecost was to empower people to go throughout the world and spread the message of Jesus Christ. During the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the people who were in the upper room; the individuals present received the gift of speaking in languages in which they were not trained (Keener, 2009). C. G. Williams (1975) clarified that all languages spoken during Pentecost were known languages, simply unknown to the person who spoke them. Dueck (2002) suggested that God equipped the people with the gift of language as a tool to spread the message of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Acts 2:10 lists the first locations taught the gospel of Jesus

Christ after Pentecost, and Acts 2:10 explains that two of the countries represented at Pentecost were the African countries of Egypt and Cyrene (Williams, 1975). Empowering people with language to spread the good news of Christ meant that followers of Christ would not be limited to Jerusalem and allowed God to spread his message across the world, including Africa.

IV. SOCIAL-CULTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE ANALYSIS OF ACTS 2 AND ACTS 13

Acts 2

Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen (2005) affirmed that when applying social and cultural analysis to a selected pericope, the reader of the text must be "self-conscious and critical in its awareness of the effects of the social context within the world that produced the text" (p. 9). Allbaugh (2017) described *social and cultural texture* as an investigation into the local world that surrounds the text when the text was written. Understanding the social and cultural environment that surrounds a selected passage of scripture facilitates understanding of the meaning of that identified pericope. Robbins' (1996a, 1996b) description of social–cultural analysis helps scholars understand how Christianity was impacted by the diversity of the original church leaders and developers of the Christian faith.

A common social and cultural topic found in the passages of scriptures in Acts 2 is the concept of dyadic personality. Robbins (1996b) described dyadic personality as reliance on others to form one's own identity. In Acts 2, when the people received the gift of speaking in unknown languages, each required assistance from someone else in the room to interpret what was said. The gift of speaking in unknown tongues or languages in Acts 2 is different than the unknown languagues spoken in 1st Corinthians chapters 12 and 14. According to Nel (2017), then people began to speak in unknown tongues on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) the words uttered by the speaker may have been unknown to the speaker, but was understood by someone else that was present in the room. When Paul referenced speaking in tongues in his letters to the church in Corinth, Paul use of the phrase *unknown tongues* referred to the heavenly or angelic language that a believer used to commune with God that only God understands. Ford (2003) suggested that before the visitation of the Holy Spirit, believers of Christ were able to live a faith-based life in which only themselves and God were needed. After Pentecost and the visitation by the Holy Spirit, believers of Christ needed a relationship with God and a connection with people to fulfill and spread Christ's mission. On the day of Pentecost, the gift of speaking in an unknown language connected people and created relationships for believers of Christ who represented different races, nationalities, and places of origin.

According to Robbins (1996b), ideological texture focuses on the language used in the holy script. This style of analysis inspects the verbiage presented in the text, studies the language that interpreters of the text used, and gauges how individuals and groups are inspired by the text. An ideological texture topic found in Acts 2 is the concept of gangs. Robbins (1996b) briefly defined a gang as a large clique that has one specific leader. Cliques are groups of people who share common beliefs. In the Book of

Acts, those present in the upper room when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven shared the same beliefs, namely that Jesus was the son of God and that only through believing in Jesus and fulfilling the words that he commanded could a person enter into heaven. Further, the common belief in Jesus Christ as their leader established the Cyrenians and other nationalities represented in Acts 2 as a gang, rather than simply a clique. This identification of Jesus Christ as their leader shifted all decision-making responsibility from members of the group to Jesus.

This analysis of Acts 2 presents the following lessons. First, while the church initially started in Jerusalem, actions performed by Jewish leadership caused followers of Christ to stretch beyond Jerusalem's borders and find other places to live and worship, such as the African nation of Cyrene. Second, Cyrenians were represented in the upper room during the day of Pentecost; thus, God gave a language that could be understood by people from the African country. Third, all languages spoken during the day of Pentecost enabled missionaries to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to nonbelievers in different countries (Cram, 2013). Last, Africa and African nations not only learned and embraced the church and Christianity but were critically involved leading development.

Acts 13: The Church of Antioch

Events described in Acts 13 occurred at the church of Antioch. Penner and Vander Stichele (2009) held that Acts 13 functions as a foundational chapter for followers of Christ for two reasons. First, Acts 13 uses the term *Christian* for the first time (Pervo & Attride, 2008), a term that has since been used to describe believers of Christ. Second, leaders of the Antioch church blessed and sanctified Barnabas and Paul to go out into the world as missionaries to defend Gentile, converted believers against Judaizers (Hoefer, 2005). According to Acts 13:1, leaders from the church of Antioch were Barnabas; Simeon, also called Niger; Lucius of Cyrene; and Manaen. Though the Bible's account of these four leaders is brief, and never mentions all four men together, Musvovsi (2010) asserted that they were listed in Acts 13 to demonstrate how men of different nations worked together toward the same goal and mission.

Two of the four leaders of the Antioch church were men of African heritage. Simeon, also called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene were men of color. Padilla (1982) commented that while the Bible does not value or devalue a person based on ethnicity, in this pericope, the author of Acts 13 emphasized Simeon and Lucius more than the other two leaders, particularly in reference to their African heritage. Acts 13 refers to Simeon as "Simeon the Niger," a Greek word meaning *black-skinned*. Therefore, the Bible referred to Simeon as *Simeon the Black Skin* (Musvovsi 2010). Lucius was the second named man in the New Testament to originate from Cyrene. While Antioch was not the first church to believe in Christ, this early church was the first to call its members "Christians" (Acts 11:26). Importantly, this historical and biblically memorialized church had leaders of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Social-Cultural Texture Analysis of Acts 13

A common social and cultural topic found in Acts 13:1 is the concept of colleague contract. Actions exhibited by the four leaders at the church of Antioch represent Robbins' (1996a) concept of colleague contract. Readers view all four leaders as equal partners who worked together to complete their assigned task, which was to lead the church of Antioch and bless Barnabas and Paul before they started their missionary work. All actions taken by these leaders were intended to benefit their church and mission. In this colleague contract, no contracted partner accentuated himself over another.

This summary of Acts 13:1 and surrounding ideological implications presents the following key points. First, the church at Antioch is the first place in the Bible to use the term *Christian*. Second, the church at Antioch had four leaders, two of whom were people of African descent. The presence of Simeon the Niger and Lucius of Cyrene in the church of Antioch's leadership indicates that people of African descent were not only taught about Christianity by local missionaries but also helped to develop the Christian faith. Third, the church of Antioch's leadership demonstrates how all four men collaborated equally to complete their assignments and lead the church. Finally, the story illustrates how the Bible used people from all over the world to fulfill God's mission.

V. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

Hiring officials of organizations, especially at Christian-based organizations, need to apply reconciliatory practices when increasing diversity in leadership. Management and appointing officials of many American organizations have a history of limiting the roles and jobs for African Americans. Religious-based organizations are supposed to be different. Biblical principles function as the foundation on which a Christian-based organization operates. In examining the African presence found in Acts 2 and Acts 13, it is clear that the Bible did not restrict people of African heritage to any one role or type of career. Not only does this pericope show the readers that the founding fathers of the first church came from different heritage, this pericope also functions as an example of diversity that Jesus Christ wants His followers. If God designed for people from various heritages to be equal founding fathers of the first church at Antioch, than it would be rational to think that God would expect and support equality and diversity in leadership positions in all Christ-inspired organizations. Moreover, if Christians are expected to be living examples for non-Christ believers on how people are supposed to love, treat, and respect one another, than Christian based organizations should fill their leadership positions with diversity. Faith-based organizations should strive to have their leadership team be as diverse as the diversity found in their entry-level positions. Christian-based organizations should reconcile their thinking about people of African descent to how biblical authors of the New Testament saw people of African ancestry during the foundation of the first church.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The social and culture and ideological analysis of Acts 2 and Acts 13 shows that people of African descent held a variety of roles in antiquity. One of the roles that people of African ancestry held was the position of a leader or top official of a society. Individuals with African heritage in the Bible were not just leaders and the top officials of African nations but also leaders and senior officials of societies and countries not located in the continent of Africa (Adamo, 1983). When the Bible describes leaders with African heritage who lead non-African countries and societies, it shows its readers that the authors of the scripture, as well as the societies referenced in the sacred book, did not base a person's capabilities to lead on race or skin color. Research has indicated that individuals with African heritage were sought after for leadership positions because of the perceived wealth, their high level of intelligence, their keen military skills, and their ability to protect their followers (Amado, 2015). Having people like Nimrod, Cush-Rashathaim, Queen of Sheba, and Simon the Niger, Alexander and Rufus in leadership positions suggest that successful leadership is not controlled by how people look but by how they behave and, more importantly, how they inspire their followers to act.

For racial reconciliation to occur in organizations, these organizations must recognize that the Bible gives more examples of people with African ancestry in a position of leadership than in submissive and low-level positions in society. Christian organizations would benefit from placing people of African descent in leadership positions. Nishii et al. (2007) suggested that leaders of African descent work harder at their jobs and value their position more than their counterparts who are a part of the dominant culture. This is not to say that people of the dominant culture lack dedication and commitment to their job or that they are not committed to ensuring that the organization reaches its goals. Fear, however, drives people of African descent into working harder in their leadership positions. Members of the nondominant culture in leadership positions live with a feeling that if they make a mistake, do something wrong, or if people of the dominant culture presume or assume that they, the leaders from the nondominant culture are incapable of doing their job, that the role of leadership will be taken away from them. Leaders with African ancestry also have an underlying fear that if they fail in their leadership position that it may impact the organization's decision to put another person from the nondominant culture in a leadership position in the future. Organizational leaders of African descent push themselves as well as their followers harder to achieve more, which ultimately benefits the organization.

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VII. REFERENCES

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