



THE MAKING OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS: CASE STUDY OF NELSON ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA, MOTHER TERESA, AND WILLIAM CAREY

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The purpose of this research is to explore the contributing factors to the making of organizational leaders. Historical leaders from the political, social and spiritual arena in the persons of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (Mandela, 1998), Mother Teresa (Spink, 1997), and William Carey (Carey, 2009) have been chosen and studied. This paper used the case study research design (Yin, 2014) along with the content analysis method (Padgett, 2016). The contributing factors to the making of organizational leaders are identified as a sense of calling; burden and passion for solving problems; singleness of purpose; commitment to causes beyond self; steady predictable character; vision clarity and articulation; servant attitudes and lifestyle; hardworking behaviors; and finishing strong.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to explore the contributing factors to the making of organizational leaders. This study contributes to the knowledge base by answering the research question – What factors contribute to the making of organizational leaders? Three historical leaders, namely: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (Mandela, 1998), Mother Teresa (Spink, 1997), and William Carey (Carey, 2009) are chosen and studied in this work.

According to Clinton (2012), several people believe the lie that no one can rise beyond his or her situations and circumstances. Most people embrace the attitude that it is impossible to become a person of influence when one's background is negative

(Sanders, 2007). Such an attitude, however, is proven wrong when the unexpected men and women such as Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey emerged into positions of influence against all the odds. Even though life experiences might break people, still “people's life experiences can dramatically affect the caliber of leaders they become” (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011, p.55). When the God factor enters into the equation, Clinton (2012) believed that God raises leaders of influence over time by using various process items, and therefore leadership emergence becomes a much broader term than leadership training. Clinton indicated that God often prepares leaders to accept the next steps of guidance by taking them through negative experiences, difficult circumstances and challenging situations.

Regarding Christian spiritual leaders, Sanders (2007) posited that God alone makes spiritual leaders; they are neither created nor appointed by human agents. This concept indicates that the emergence of leaders from the unexpected background is possible. Since the focus of this paper is three historical leaders, namely: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey, it is important to present their personal and leadership backgrounds respectively.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

Mandela (1998) is known for fighting for justice, equality and freedom, he described it in his own words at Rivonia courtroom in Johannesburg in 1964 and on 11 February 1990, in Cape Town, when he was released from his 27 years of imprisonment, saying, “I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination” (p.76). Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who lived from 18 July 1918 to 5 December 2013, is the ex-president of the Republic of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 (Ellis, 2011). Mandela was South Africa's first black president who was democratically elected (Battersby, 2011).

He is from the Xhosa tribe, born in Mvezo, Umtata village of Eastern Cape province. Mandela was given his Xhosa forename – Rolihlahla, meaning troublemaker (Mandela, 1998). It is no wonder he made big trouble for apartheid, a policy of racial discrimination, living up to his name (Forster, 2014). Nelson, an English name, as it was a tradition during his time, was given to him by his teacher when he started schooling (Ellis, 2011).

Later in life, he was more known by his clan name – Madiba, which he cherished and wanted people to call him by (Boehmer, 2005). He is from a royal family as his grandfather, Ngubengcuka, was king of the Thembu people. Mandela's father, Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa, was a local chief who was also a counselor to the monarch (Battersby, 2011). Mandela had 13 siblings (4 brothers and nine sisters) from four mothers as his father was a polygamist. He lost his father at an early age to the undiagnosed disease. His mother was a devout Christian who attended the Methodist church (Forster, 2014), while his father adhered to his tribe's ancestral worship (Mandela, 1998). Mandela attended Methodist church with his mom and went to Methodist mission school where he was influenced by Thembu Regent, chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo (Forster, 2014).

Mandela is a national pride in South Africa and seen an icon of national freedom, democracy, equality, and justice, because of his 30 years of struggle against apartheid

and how he conducted himself while in power for five years and how he passed over power to his successor after serving for only five years (Boehmer, 2005). He autographed a book called *Long Walk to Freedom* that narrates his story of a struggle for freedom, justice, and democracy through his party called the African National Congress (ANC), during the white inhuman and brutal political control and racial discrimination within the Republic of South Africa (Mandela, 1998). People remember Mandela (1998) for saying and living the statement:

During my lifetime, I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. (p.76)

Mandela indeed fought for, lived for and died for cutting white or black domination in South Africa by introducing democracy, freedom, and justice into the country.

Mother Teresa

Anjeze (Agnes) Gonxhe Bojaxhlu of Macedonia affectionately known as Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and recently known in the Catholic Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta, is an Albanian-Indian Roman Catholic nun and missionary (Chawla, 1996). She was born on August 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia and died on September 5, 1997, in Kolkata, India (Clucas, 1988). She founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious organization, in 1950 as a response to Christ's enormous love for her and all humanity (Benenate, & Joseph, 2000). Missionaries of Charity had nearly 5,000 sisters freely and voluntarily working in 133 countries as of 2012 (Spink, 1997).

The Missionaries of Charity provides homes for dying HIV/AIDS patients, leprosy, tuberculosis, and social outcast who are dying (Greene, 2004). The organization provides soup kitchens, mobile clinics, counseling, orphanages and schools (Egan & Egan, 1989). The members of Missionaries of Charities take vows to chastity, poverty, obedience, full service to the poorest of the poor (Clucas, 1988). Mother Teresa and her organizational members are dedicated to serving the poorest of the poor as a way of demonstrating Christ's love for them (Alpion, 2007). Among several recognitions and awards, winning the Noble Peace Prize was the most prominent recognition of Mother Teresa's work in 1979 (Spink, 1997).

William Carey

William Carey is British Christian missionary who served in India for 40 years (i.e., 1793 -1834) as a Baptist minister, evangelist, discipler, translator, social reformer, and cultural anthropologist (Carey, 2009). He was born on August 17, 1761, in Paulerspury, a small village in Northampton, England and died on June 9, 1841, in Serampore, India. Carey is known for asserting, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God" (Carey, 2009, p.77). William Carey was an ordinary English man, with a burning passion for reaching India for Christ, he set out on a long

journey not knowing precisely what to expect humanly. However, he put his absolute faith in his God and ventured out into the unknown territory of the world expecting great things from God as he attempted great things for God.

Although Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey were not hand-picked for a leadership development program that helped them to become the leaders of influence, they became, some factors that significantly contributed to the making of a leader in them have been presented in this paper.

II. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the contributing factors to the making of organizational leaders. The research design is a case study (Yin, 2014). Patton (2014) defined a research design as “a plan that guides the researcher” (p.244). In conducting case study research, the “case” under study could be an individual, company, event, or action, that occurs in a particular place at a particular time (Padgett, 2008). The research method for this paper will be content analysis (Padgett, 2016). The content analysis method utilizes documents and their interpretation (Padgett, 2016). In this paper, contents from books and journal articles on the life and leadership of the three cases under study are analyzed and interpreted to make meaning out of them.

III. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE MAKING OF A LEADER

Leaders are made up of various factors such as worldviews, beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape their personalities, characters, and behaviors. The factors that have contributed to the making of a leader in Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey is presented below.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

Contributing factors to the making of a leader in Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela are explored as being born into a leader family, exposures to palace life, education, making hard choices, enduring sufferings, and continuous learning (Battersby, 2011; Boehmer, 2005; Broun, 2012; Carlin, 2008; Ellis, 2011; Mandela, 1998). Each of the factors is discussed below.

Born into a Leader Family

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the royal family (Carlin, 2008). His grandfather and father were leaders in various capacities among their people including chieftaincy (Battersby, 2011). The trait theory (Stogdill, 1948) of leadership asserts that leaders are born. Even though there is much debate around that since leaders are also made, it could be true of Mandela that he inherited leadership traits from his family and was born a leader. It could be seen later in this paper that Mandela was also made a leader through various leadership development exposures, experiences, and training.

Exposures to Palace Life

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela lived with a Regent of Thembu chief where he was exposed to observing how leadership functions go on (Battersby, 2011). He would observe how the chief carries out his leadership responsibilities. The environment of being at the “palace” helped him learn what public leadership looks like (Barber, 2004). Besides leadership exposures, he was encouraged to become a leader, as Mandela (1998) wrote, “The Regent of reminded me that my destiny-like my father was to become a counselor to kings” (p.7).

Education

During his stay with the Regent of Thembu people, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was able to go to school and receive a modern education (Barber, 2004). He went to Methodist mission school, “ I was sent to Clarkebury boarding school” (Mandela, 1998, p.7). After that, he was able to join Wits University in Johannesburg and receive his law degree. Becoming a lawyer opened Mandela’s eyes to the enormous injustice, unfairness, exploitation, and suppression his people were facing.

Making Hard Choices

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela made a tough choice when he entered the fight through ANC against the giant apartheid that seemed to be unshakable (Ellis, 2011). It was not a funny thing to do, but he counted the cost and made a hard-nosed decision. While Mandela could have stayed at the Regent’s house and lead a happily married life, he fled to Johannesburg that ushered him into a new life (Carlin, 2008). After getting his degree, while he could have led a normal life, he chose to become a freedom fighter. This eventually made him end up in prison for nearly 30 years (Broun, 2012). While he could have compromised and get released from prison, he chose to stick to his causes and suffer in prison. He made hard choices till the end. In his words, Mandela (1998) described some of the situations as follows:

On 31 January 1985, P.W Botha stood in parliament and made an offer to me, and to all other political prisoners. He would free us if we ‘unconditionally rejected violence as a political instrument.’ ... ‘It is therefore not the government that stands in the way of Mr. Mandela’s freedom. It is he himself.’ This offer of freedom – with conditions- was not the first. This was the sixth time I had got such an offer in the past ten years. (p.118)

Enduring Sufferings

When he was being followed up by security officers for inciting violence against the apartheid regime, he did not back off (Broun, 2012). He endured the life-threatening intimidations (Carlin, 2008). When he was imprisoned, he suffered the loss of his child and mother (Ellis, 2011). It was painful, not to be able to attend the funeral. He fell sick several times (Mandela, 1998). He was beaten, tortured and mistreated humanly, but he endured all of these things (Carlin, 2008). He turned down the offer from the apartheid government to stop the violent fight against the government and then get released. He

endured the multifaceted pains and seasons of difficult life for nearly 30 years (Barber, 2004). He stood firm for his cause. He was determined and focused on the goal that someday he might prevail. He saw it worth paying the price, no matter what the outcome may be. He was a courageous and fearless man who loved his oppressed people and sacrificed his freedom for their freedom (Boehmer, 2005).

Continuous Learning

Since his childhood, Mandela never stopped learning. Every learning opportunity he got, he seized and capitalized on (Carlin, 2008). When he was in prison, Mandela, along with his friends lectured one another on the history, politics, and future of their struggles as Mandela (1998) put it in his own words, “The Robben Island became known as the ‘university’” (p.101).

Mother Teresa

Contributing factors to the making of a leader in Mother Teresa are explored as deep sense of calling, loving the social outcast, unreserved commitment, singleness of purpose, courage to persevere, extreme dependence on God, servant heart, purposeful partnership, and God’s favor (Alpion, 2007; Benenate & Joseph, 2000; Chawla, 1996; Egan & Egan, 1989; Greene, 2004; Spink, 1997). Each of the factors is discussed below.

Deep Sense of Calling

Spink (1997) captured the words of Mother Teresa, “The call of God to be a Missionary of Charity is the hidden treasure for me, for which I have sold all to purchase it” (p.22). This indicates that Mother Teresa learned the importance of having a deep sense of calling.

Loving the Social Outcast

Mother Teresa understood that people need, not only food, shelter, and money but also tender love, compassion, and care (Benenate & Joseph, 2000). Such passion drove her into serving the poorest of the poor, who have been neglected, forgotten, isolated due to sicknesses, illness, and unfortunate incidents. Some of the people were on there, but she still believed that such people need love and tender care as they die (Chawla, 1996).

Unreserved Commitment

According to Alpion (2007), Mother Teresa committed herself to her vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for life on 24 May 1937. Having a spiritual perspective, purity of heart, prayer centered life, striving for perfection, total surrender to God, obedience up to death, firm discipline, listening to people, waiting with patience, Chastity and Charity in words and deeds, she established the core values of the Missionary of Charity (Spink, 1997).

Singleness of Purpose

Spink (1997) wrote about Mother Teresa that she was able to accomplish her mission due to the singularity of purpose and vision and a reliable steady character she possessed. Mother Teresa was offered positions of authority in the church, invited to live in beautiful places, and live a better life, she, however, stayed focused and faithful to her calling and mission (Greene, 2004).

Courage to Persevere

Because of the leadership qualities like severe endurance and hard determination (Spink, 1997); although she faced much discouragement, loneliness, lack of food, rejection, destructive criticism, death threat, deep sorrows, formidable challenges, disasters, desperations, false accusations and sicknesses, Mother Teresa could persevere and go ahead fulfilling the mission that she believed in (Chawla, 1996). Mother Teresa remained unshakable in the face of opposition and challenges.

Extreme Dependence on God

Mother Teresa demonstrated extraordinary faith in God for accomplishing her mission, which required great resources (Egan & Egan, 1989). Spink (1997) captured what Mother Teresa once said, "Divine Providence is much greater than our little minds and will never let us down" (p.49). Spink also noted that "what mother wants, she gets" (p.vii).

Servant Heart

Mother Teresa was invited by the then Pope himself to serve the poor in Rome in 1968 at a time when Rome had already twenty-two thousand nuns serving there (Spink, 1997). This invitation to Mother Teresa indicates that it is not the quantity but the quality of servants with a real servant heart that the world is crying for. Mother Teresa did not withhold anything she could give to the poorest of the poor (Benenate & Joseph, 2000). All she did was in a spirit of genuinely serving them (Alpion, 2007). This service indicates that Mother Teresa did not expect anything in return, but her joy came from serving them with all she is and all she had.

Purposeful Partnership

According to Spink (1997), purposeful partnership and meaningful collaboration are what drew thousands of men and women, churches and para-church organizations, companies, and governments to work with Mother Teresa and Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa asserted, "You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together, we can do something beautiful for God" (Spink, 1997, p.103).

God's Favor

God's favor and blessings gave Mother Teresa widespread influence among the clergy and laity, professionals and politicians, secular and religious, cultures and languages across the globe (Benenate & Joseph, 2000). Mother Teresa marveled that her work would grow so faster than she thought and reached. She thought this could be because of God's favor (Spink, 1997).

William Carey

Contributing factors to the making of a leader in William Carey are explored as recognizing and seizing opportunities, unconditional obedience to the sense of calling, God's favor, having faith in God, and by becoming a change agent (Carey, 2009; Mangalwadi, 1999; Riddick, 2006; Robert & Alaine, 2003). Each of the factors is discussed below.

Recognizing and Seizing Opportunities

When William Carey was growing up, various dynamics were playing together in the environment of the British spiritual, economic and social world (Mangalwadi, 1999). These include the spiritual awakening that was taking place; Britain's business world that was expanding and getting into closed places of the world; the unevangelized and unreached peoples of the world were burdening the heart of British people (Carey, 2009). Such opportunities helped him to present his cause of going to India (Riddick, 2006).

Unconditional Obedience to the Sense of Calling

In Carey's time, children were being sold so that they could work in the sugar cane farms (Carey, 2009). He responded by abandoning the use of sugar as a way of protesting such inhuman acts (Sharma, 1988). William Carey prayed continually for the freedom of slaves (Carey, 1961). When he sensed that God called him to India, despite the oppositions he faced from church leaders and his wife, he stepped out in faith (Robert & Alaine, 2003). That made his wife change her mind and join him as well (Carey, 2009).

God's Favor

In his time, outwardly, William Carey had nothing in his favor as a preacher (Carey, 2009). He was short, impoverished, and lacked a college education (Mangalwadi, 1999). His hands looked terrible as a result of leather stitching because he was a shoemaker. He came from a humble background with much financial struggle (Sharma, 1988). Despite these facts, the people gathered as to one whose lips had been touched by hot coal from the altar (Carey, 2009).

Having Faith in God

When voices of pessimism, opposition, and misunderstandings surrounded him, William Carey pressed on with his vision to reach the heathen for God and said, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God" (Carey, 2009, p.77). In challenging situations where his health was not well, he never quit but trusted in God and carried on his mission until his last breath. He never depended on his circumstances or people around (Riddick, 2006). When he lost his dear friend and supporter, William Carey felt the loss, "It appears as if everything dear to me in England has now been removed. Wherever I look, I see a blank" (Carey, 2009). However, he did not lose hope, he looked up to God for help and pressed on.

Change Agent

William Carey wanted to change the evil that he saw by doing something about it (Carey, 1961). In India, when he saw the widow burning, he confronted and was able to change the social norms of the area. When he heard the leper's burning, he built a hospital for them (Carey, 2009).

IV. COMMON THEMES OF THE MAKING OF LEADERS

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey had the following common themes arising from the factors that contributed to the making of a leader. These common themes are a sense of calling, burden, and passion for solving problems, singleness of purpose, commitment to causes beyond themselves, steady, predictable character, vision clarity and articulation, servant attitude and lifestyle, hardworking behaviors, and finishing strong.

Sense of Calling

The three leaders seemed to have a deep sense of calling that intrinsically motivated and gave them hope and faith to prevail against the odds on their journeys. According to Fry (2003), Calling refers "to the experience of transcendence or how one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life" (p.703). Fry posited that "having a calling through one's work or being called" vocationally is necessary for providing hope and faith to prevail against the odds and achieve goals (p.703).

Burden and Passion for solving Problem

The leaders exercised proactive leadership by taking initiatives that they believed to solve the problems that they were burdened with. When they had a burning passion, they did not sit around and mourn but took actions that eventually saw them solve the problems. The theory of motivation asserts that intrinsic motivation drives individuals to make contributions and leave a legacy (Konopaske, Ivancevich, & Matteson, 2013).

Singleness of Purpose

These leaders avoided the destruction that would have derailed them off their goal. They demonstrated unwavering determination to confront the brutal realities. Collins (2001) asserted that great leaders do confront brutal realities and believe that they will prevail at the end. These three leaders focused on combating their brutal realities even in the midst of hardships and had enough courage to say no to destructing offers. Their lives were worthless in pursuing the actualization of their vision. They endured hardships as they stayed focused so that temporary and ridiculous benefits would not divide them.

Commitment to Causes Beyond Self

Unreserved commitment towards their mission and maintaining an unshakable stand as they pressed on towards the accomplishment of the causes beyond themselves. Servant and transformational leaders commit to causes of change (Northouse, 2016). For the causes they each stood for, each paid the critical personal prices. Patterson (2003) posited that servant leaders do sacrifice their welfare for the sake of serving others. These three leaders sacrificed their future, wealth, health, well-being and everything that belonged to them including family members. This way, they showed altruistic love to their generations.

Vision Clarity and Articulation

These leaders were able enlist the support of others by helping others clearly see the cause they stand for. Kouzes and Posner (2012) posited effective leaders do enlist the support of others. These three leaders were lone rangers but collaborative leaders who could win the heart of several people to buy into their vision.

Steady Predictable Character

These leaders had disciplined lives that have been tested and tempted but remained strong. They were emotionally stable. When faced with discouraging obstacles they carried on with emotional intelligence. A character is a foundation for leadership (Gibbs, 2005). With its lack, the danger is assured in the life of a leader and followers. Gibbs writes, "Leaders who have Charisma, but lack Character, are a danger to others and often bring disaster on themselves" (p. 128). These three leaders had a real character that helped them navigate through the multifaceted problems and formidable challenges they faced along the journey.

Servant Attitude and Life Style

These leaders rendered selfless services that put the interest of others before themselves. Servant leaders put the interest of others before themselves (Greenleaf, 1977). They stood for the less privileged, lived in spiritual darkness, lacked justice, oppressed and suppressed at the expense of their comfort, freedom, and future. Servant leaders value service, altruism, humility, and agapao love (Patterson, 2003).

These leaders made the marks that are hard to erase in their generation through their selfless services. They made the world a better place to live through their selfless love for others.

Hardworking Behavior

These three leaders were not lazy but hard-working people. Yukl (2013) posited that effective leaders are hard workers. These leaders worked day and night tirelessly. They were not working alone, but also empowered others to work hard alongside them. Because they were so faithful to the cause they stood for, they gave their best so that the causes would be translated into action and benefit others.

Finishing Strong

None of the three leaders quit diverted attention or shifted focus from their original vision despite the formidable challenges they faced. Northouse (2016) leaders who are effective, are also strong in their character traits. Through solid character, constant values and disciplined behavior, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey finished strong. Eventually, each of them was able to reap the fruits of their labor before they passed away. What fruit! Indeed, sweet fruits of bitter struggle!

V. IMPLICATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ASPIRING LEADERS

There are several lessons that contemporary aspiring leaders, who want to do something about the problems they see in their societies or the world, can learn and apply into their context from the making of a leader in Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey. Such lessons could be having the sense of calling that transcends self; selfless service and sacrificial living; unreserved commitment and paying the price; and self-discipline and strong, steady character.

Contemporary aspiring leaders can learn and apply the significance of unwavering determination and steadfast focus; undivided loyalty and unshakable faithfulness to the cause they stand for; discerning the time and seizing when opportunity knocks; proactive leadership and riskful decision making; corporate achievement and public recognition of others; and loving the enemy and leaving lasting legacy.

In the context of Christian leadership, contemporary aspiring leaders should learn that it does not matter what background a leader comes from when someone is trusting God and following His will. As Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) put it, "When the Lord is developing someone, all of life is a school. No experience, good or bad, is wasted" (p.70). This is because God can still raise leaders today against all the odds (Clinton, 2012).

VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to explore the contributing factors to the making of organizational leaders. The contributing factors to the making of organizational leaders have been identified as common themes: a sense of calling, burden, and passion for

solving problems, singleness of purpose, commitment to causes beyond themselves, steady predictable character, vision clarity and articulation, servant attitudes and lifestyle, hardworking behaviors, and finishing strong. The lives and works of the historical leaders: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (Mandela, 1998), Mother Teresa (Spink, 1997), and William Carey (Carey, 2009) inspire and incite contemporary leaders to live and work for causes beyond themselves.

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