TOWARDS GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS:

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN WESTERN AND TANZANIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Ralph Ipyana Schubert and Louise Kretzschmar[1]

Theological Ethics

University of South Africa

Abstract

This article identifies Western and Tanzanian leadership styles and evaluates how they affect cross-cultural partnerships. Christian leadership is defined and the methodology used in this study explained. The main research findings with respect to leadership and culture, character, relationships, power and conflict are discussed. Western and Tanzanian approaches to leadership are compared to each other in terms of Christian values in order to promote improved understanding and genuine cross-cultural partnerships.

Keywords: Leadership, Partnership, Culture, Character, Relationship, Power, Conflict

This article seeks to promote better partnerships between Christians in Africa by investigating Western and Tanzanian leadership in a rigorous manner. For the purpose of this article "Western" is mainly used for the Anglo-Saxon (USA, UK, Canada, and Australia) and Germanic countries (Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands). Despite the differences between these Western countries and the variety of ethnic groups within Tanzania, it is argued below that there are enough similarities to warrant a description of the important tendencies. By using these cultural lenses, it is also possible to identify more particularly what constitutes Christian leadership.

In recent years there has been a stronger emphasis around the world on partnerships than fifteen years ago. The term partnership, understood broadly, includes networks, consultations, strategic partnerships, joint ventures and sponsorship agreements. Many parts of the worldwide business and Christian community now recognise the importance of cooperation. But, partnerships also make working environments much more complex. This article hopes to facilitate mutual respect and appreciation, reduce conflicts and to explore possible ways of strengthening cross-cultural partnerships.

What is Christian Leadership?

Which Christian values ought to characterise Christian leadership? Many Christian values are mentioned in the Bible, (e.g. Proverbs 11:1; Micah 6:8; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12-15; 1 Timothy 3:2-7). But, this study focuses on the values of *love, justice, mercy, faithfulness* and *humility* as they are, arguably, central to leadership and partnership. *Love* is

the centre of Christianity and thus ought to be evidenced in relationships and leadership. Justice, mercy, faithfulness and humility are the primary forms and expressions of love (Matthew 23:23; John 13). If leaders do not lead with *justice,* they abuse their position and oppress people. Leaders without *mercy* find it difficult to forgive those who do not live up to their expectations, make mistakes or fail. *Faithfulness* is required of a leader because s/he must persevere and be committed to God, the people and the task. Because a primary responsibility of leadership is to enable and empower others, leaders need to have *humility.* Humility means that they are honest and willing to put the interests of others before their own. This focus on values makes the point that leadership is also about *character* (Brown 1998:137-147). Without moral character and the practice of virtues, one cannot speak of Christian leadership. The corresponding Christian virtues (enacted values) are: being loving, just, merciful, faithful and humble. If these virtues are not being lived out, Christian leaders will exercise their power in an abusive manner.

These values were represented in the life and ministry of Jesus and reflect the norm of Christian leadership. However, although Christians agree that Christ is the example and that values are central to leadership, these values are *not* interpreted in exactly the same way by leaders from different cultural backgrounds, hence the need for an in-depth dialogue.

Research Design and Methodology

This study combined *theoretical* and *empirical qualitative* research in a dialectical process. Many books and articles drawn from several fields of study, including Ethics, Leadership, Missiology, Cultural Anthropology and Research Methodology were used to develop an understanding of Christian leadership in different cultural contexts. This understanding influenced the research design and interpretation of the empirical data and, in turn, was influenced by the data thus gathered. This research project required a substantial empirical component because although a significant amount of literature is available on leadership in the West, very little has been written on Tanzanian leadership. A qualitative approach was employed in order to obtain more in-depth data and avoid simple generalisations. This was particularly important given the aim of furthering genuine Christian partnerships.

Data was obtained from the available literature as well as from participant observations, interviews and a group discussion (Mason 2002:126 & 176). The empirical data provided contextual information and uncovered emic views (Guba & Lincoln 1994:106), that is, insider views provided by people from within a society. These were mainly obtained from the people interviewed, but also from the researcher who has experienced significant immersion in both Western and Tanzanian cultural settings.[2]

Use was made of both semi-structured interviews and a group discussion to elicit reliable data. The semi-structured interviews made it possible to take the context into account and ask questions for clarification during the interview. The interviewees were encouraged to tell stories and provide examples, which enabled them to be at ease and allowed for a more accurate categorization of their views in the analysis.

Some of the interviews with Westerners were conducted face to face. Others responded by e-mail because of geographical distance. The interviews with Tanzanians were all done face to face. This is important since Tanzania is an oral society, whereas Westerners respond well to questions in writing.

---

[2]   Ralph Ipyana Schubert was born in Tanzania (Ipyana means "grace"), lived in Germany, and from 1994 to 2006 lived and worked in Tanzania. As a fluent Swahili speaker and well known personally to the communities in which he worked, he was well placed to conduct interviews and gain further insights into cross-cultural leadership and partnership patterns.

Who were the interviewees? Ten Tanzanians were interviewed and ten Westerners, five from Anglo-Saxon and five from Germanic countries. Most of the ten Tanzanian interviewees came from the urban areas and represented a wide variety of different ethnic groups such as Ndali, Nyiha, Burunge, Ngoni, Mbugwe, Gogo, Chagga, Zinza, Rangi and Kuria. The Tanzanians were interviewed in Swahili for better communication. To avoid the possibility of interviewees providing answers perceived to be appropriate to questions from an expatriate interviewer, the majority of the chosen interviewees had previously had intensive interactions with other expatriates or had previously been involved in research. The interviewees were also well known to the interviewer, hence a relationship of trust made it possible to obtain honest, informed and even critical responses.

Other selection criteria for interviewees included: not more than five persons under thirty years, at least three persons not in a top leadership position, people from at least five different denominations and at least two female participants. Five male and five female Westerners were interviewed, and eight male and two female Tanzanians. For cultural appropriateness, a woman research assistant was employed to interview Tanzanian women leaders. This provided a female perspective on leadership issues and enabled the women interviewees to state freely that they are disadvantaged in terms of leadership roles.

In terms of *formal education* the majority of *Western* respondents had master's degrees. One respondent had a bachelor's degree and one a PhD. The majority of *Tanzanian* respondents had at least completed secondary school, others had earned a certificate, diploma, bachelor's or master's degree. Depending on their age, most of the interviewees had *extensive work* and *leadership experience* in a number of different areas, including that of manager, minister, project leader, teacher, church elder and youth group leader. These criteria ensured a broad cross-section of interviewees.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, a group discussion was embarked upon to facilitate a cross-cultural dialogue. For the group discussion, three Western and three Tanzanian senior leaders from different organisations and churches were invited. In order to include female perspective, two women leaders (one Western and one Tanzanian) were invited to participate. Unfortunately, the Tanzanian woman was not able to attend the discussion. The group was intentionally small to facilitate an in-depth discussion. As the individual interviews were conducted first, several earlier comments could be compared with subsequent statements.

Leadership and Cultural Values

Christian leadership may be understood and applied differently in the West than in Tanzania because of the influence of culture on how Scripture is understood. The challenge is to understand what it means to be a Christ-like leader in each cultural context (Bennett 2005:13-15).

The social context in which somebody grows up and lives, shapes the norms and virtues they appropriate.[3] Leaders make ethical decisions based on their worldview, loyalties, norms, values and experience. Individuals in a society adopt a related set of assumptions and values, which are elaborated in their worldview and form their *cultural bias*. This cultural bias is an interactive and dynamic process of a person's culture, theology, and character as presented in figure 3.1.

---

[3]   The social environment consists at least of the areas of family, work, colleagues, study, media, economy, church and friends.
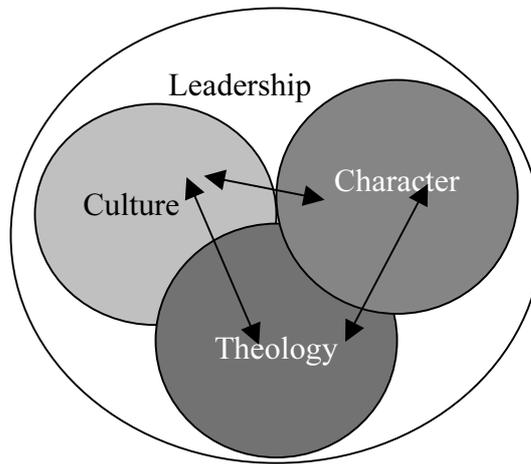
Figure 3.1

Culture can be defined as follows:

> Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization 1978).

This definition includes a theological perspective; culture is not only a system of values and customs, it also has to do with beliefs.

Hofstede[4] (1997; 2001) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner[5] (2000; 2002) have developed useful models of value orientations. In fact, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner employ Hofstede's research, but incorporate more dimensions developed within sociology and anthropology. Only the set of individualism versus collectivism overlaps. These models were applied in this research to analyse and compare the cultural contexts of leadership styles in the West and in Tanzania.

Hofstede (1997:23-138; 2001:234-248) has identified a set of five distinctive values to examine society: power distance, individualism versus collectivism and assertiveness versus modesty, uncertainty avoidance, and short-term orientation versus long-term orientation. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000; 2002) extended this model, and seek to understand cultural diversity using fourteen patterns that may be grouped into seven pairs of polarities.[6]

---

[4]   Hofstede (1997:13) conducted extensive empirical research for IBM, examining different cultures in more than fifty countries across the globe. Even though all his interviewees were employees of one corporation, his results confirmed the predictions and findings of anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists (:14).

[5]   Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2002:1-2) did fifteen years of academic and field research in a 1,000 cross-cultural training programmes in over 20 countries to identify different cultural values. Thirty companies in 50 different countries contributed to the research and a database with 30,000 participants exists (:2).

[6]   These values are based on the work of Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (1951) on how people relate to each other. So Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner combine theory and empirical research to support and substantiate their results.

Universalism	Particularism
A stress on rules, codes and laws	Circumstances strongly influence decisions
Individualism	**Communitarianism**
Focuses on the individual person and is characterized by competition, self-reliance, self-interest and personal growth and fulfilment.	Interests of the group prevail over the interests of the individual. Cooperation, social concern, altruism, public service and societal legacy are important.
Specificity	**Diffuseness**
People tend to be direct, precise and blunt.	People tend to be indirect, tactful, and somewhat ambiguous.
Achieved status	**Ascribed status**
A person fills a certain position because s/he has accomplished something	A person is given a certain position based on age, status
Neutral	**Affective**
Society separates emotions from reasoning.	Feelings are more freely expressed
Sequential time	**Synchronous time**
Time is looked at as an arrow or line.	Time is circular. Societies are event-oriented.
Inner direction	**Outer direction**
Societies tend to control their environment	Societies adjust to the circumstances

Figure 3.2

As noted below, in most cases the Western and Tanzanian cultural preferences were different. Even though leadership in the West and Tanzania cannot be seen as watertight categories, significant tendencies could be detected in the two groups.

An Analysis of the Research Findings

The analysis of the information accumulated comprised three steps: *first*, the major themes were extrapolated. *Second*, the responses of the interviews were linked to the information in the existing literature. *Third*, the similarities and differences were noted in order to identify different value perceptions and preferences. Below the findings are discussed with respect to leadership and the four areas of *character*, *relationships, power* and *conflict*. In each of these cultural preference played a significant role.

Character and Leadership

As noted earlier, character and Christ-like leadership are understood in terms of biblical values and virtues. Significantly, all the interviewees identified the five biblical values of love, humility, faithfulness, justice and mercy as important to leadership. Both groups valued qualities such as listening, loving, caring, serving, humility, putting others first, setting an example, being wise, competent, encouraging and courageous. However, how these biblical values are actually practiced is strongly influenced by culture.

Whereas the Western respondents assumed that a good Christian leader is a committed Christian, the Tanzanian respondents emphasised this fact. Whereas the Westerners emphasised the importance of practicing Christian values and virtues, the Tanzanians

highlighted the importance of listening and taking advice. The research also revealed that there may be a dissonance between the ideal as opposed to the actual practice. For example, interviewees stated that Westerners struggle to practice values such as love and mercy, whereas Tanzanians struggle with justice and faithfulness. The way in which character formation takes place also differs as Westerners emphasised self-reflection and Tanzanians stressed the importance of education, experience and mentoring.

A morally mature leader is more likely to practice Christ-like leadership than one with a bad or weak character. Also, a leader of good character is more willing to act against any negative cultural values and practices in her/his leadership, as Geoffrey Mdimi Mhogolo, a Tanzanian bishop, explains:

> If somebody is appointed as a bishop or political leader he does not cultivate his field or plot anymore himself. There are people who will do it for him. Once he is in a leadership position he is not supposed to do these things himself but to be served by others. This concept is very strong in our culture. When I became bishop I still had a plot, which I cultivated. People told me I ought not to be doing this. But I continued to cultivate my plot to set an example (2004: Oral communication at a Bible study).

Thus, spiritual maturity and character formation are absolutely essential in any society in order for Christian leadership to be practised.

Relationships and Leadership

Because relationships are essential to leadership, the research sought to identify how leaders relate to each other and to their followers. In general terms, it was found that Westerners tend to be more individualistic, whereas Tanzanians live and work in community.

The way people relate to each other is expressed in their power distance. In the West the power distance is smaller than in Tanzania. Tanzanians noted that their organisations and churches are much more hierarchical than in the West. One leader said:

> The organisation of the Anglican Church is like a pillar. The bishop is at the top of the pillar. Below him is the pastor, then the catechist and then the church elders. Last are the lay Christians. Everything from the bottom what they are doing is directed to the head to the bishop. So the bishop is a very top person. He is very powerful. Anything that is done he needs to approve. If he does not agree you cannot do it.

This is also reflected in the fact that whereas Westerners have no problems with joking between superiors and subordinates, this is hardly possible among Tanzanians. Significantly, Jesus related to his disciples both as master and friend; he exercised authority and had personal relationships with people.

According to the research, it seems that Tanzanians feel a tension between relationships versus task. Tanzanians try to maintain a good relationship and care for others. They want to accomplish what needs to be done, but the relationship has greater priority. A high value is placed on people and a group orientation exists.

As individualists Westerners are very task oriented and they expect clear goals and delegated responsibilities. Whereas Westerners are satisfied when these goals are achieved, Tanzanians stress relationships. Tanzanian subordinates expect their leaders to understand their problems and help to solve them. Whereas Westerners focus on the end result, Tanzanians emphasise the process. While Westerners are time oriented, Tanzanians are event oriented. Both groups feel a tension between being people oriented as opposed to being time and task orientated. Tanzanians stated that they feel the tension between having

good relationships and being more task and time oriented, and Westerners stated that they would like to be more people oriented.

Power and Leadership

Power is central to leadership. Therefore, it is important to understand how Westerners and Tanzanians understand and exercise power.

The Western respondents defined power as the authority to make decisions on behalf of other people and/or things, and the means to see these decisions through, even against the will or consent of those involved. It is the ability to make things happen, the authority to control circumstances and people. The Tanzanian respondents said that power is the freedom to make a specific decision that has been authorized, which someone else cannot later oppose. It is the ability to do something within a certain time.

The research showed that the main sources of power in the West indicate a tendency towards an *achieved* status through knowledge, experience, abilities and education. However, there are also secondary power sources, which refer to an *ascribed* status, such as contacts, friends, other relationships, personality, and age.

The Tanzanian respondents mentioned very different sources of power. *Achieved* sources of power in Tanzania were stated to be trust and honesty, performance and ability, treating people equally, force, wisdom, deceitfulness, seeking advice from others and common sense. *Ascribed* sources of power are being called by God, elected, appointed or educated, having cooperative agreements, being in relationships and inheritance. Whereas status is usually achieved in the West, the research indicated that in Tanzania it is achieved as well as ascribed.

Even though the power distance is still large in Tanzania, there seems to be a slow shift in people's attitudes. In the past, leaders were not questioned. This is now starting to crumble: "The parishes do not accept every pastor anymore with an authoritarian leadership style. How can it be that the pastor has all the power and authority to make decisions even though s/he is paid by the parish?" More and more young, educated people question leaders today and few will submit unconditionally to a leader. This shift in attitude and behaviour may be the result of increased education, and the growing awareness of democracy through which Tanzanians have gained more self-confidence.

The abuse of power was a concern for all the respondents. Their perception was that the abuse of power, for instance corruption, is more of an issue in Tanzania than in the West. Corruption is the extent to which public offices are perceived to be used for private gain. The respondents' perception is consistent with public statistics like the index published by *Transparency International*.[7]

Power is often used and expressed at meetings and in decision making. In Tanzania the word of the chairperson carries a lot of weight. If the chairperson summarizes the discussion, and incorporates her/his own opinion, s/he will seldom meet resistance. Often, leaders make decisions without consulting others. The interviews showed that voting was not popular among Tanzanians. As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2002:61) point out: "The communitarian society will intuitively refrain from voting because this will not show respect to the individuals who are against a majority decision. It prefers to deliberate until

---

[7]   Out of 180 countries (Transparency International 2007), Australia, Austria, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the USA were ranked between seven and 20, whereas Tanzania was ranked 94.

consensus is reached. The final result takes longer to achieve, but will be much more stable." Tanzanians do not like to be pushed towards a decision. As particularists, they get suspicious when hurried (:40-41). They need a considerable amount of time first to build a personal relationship and grow close to their partner. However, if this time is used well in the beginning, this will save time and trouble later.

The research showed that in the West decisions are mainly made by the delegates with the chairperson being neutral. In an individualistic culture like the West, a representative is given authority and can make a decision on the spot, whereas in Tanzania usually only the top leader has the authority to make a decision. The responses of the Westerners showed that individuals in Western societies with a *small power distance* expect to participate and have a say in the decision-making process. As individualists, they will frequently ask for a vote to come to a decision. Processing information and making decisions in an individualistic society is typically fast and incisive (:96). In an achievement-oriented culture like Western countries, decisions can only be challenged on technical and functional grounds (:119). In the West, the outcome of a meeting is important and when a decision is made it is usually binding, whereas in Tanzania it can be subsequently overruled by a senior leader.

Conflict and Leadership

Dale (1986:159) has estimated that average persons spend 30 percent of their time dealing with some kind of conflict. Leadership behaviour can be clearly observed in how leaders deal with conflict.

The research showed that if a conflict arises in Western individualistic cultures, it is usually addressed by the two parties and an apology to the person concerned can defuse the conflict. Talking to a third person about a conflict would be seen as talking behind somebody's back. An ongoing disagreement can also lead to the termination of a relationship. Hofstede (1997:58) points out that for a Westerner "speaking one's mind is a virtue. Telling the truth about how one feels is the characteristic of a sincere and honest person. Confrontation can be salutary, a clash of opinions is believed to lead to higher truth". This is a classic characteristic for a specific, assertive society. Specific cultures tend to separate the person from the issue discussed. Only if the two parties are not able to resolve the conflict, is a third party involved as mediator.

Dealing with conflict is a challenge for Tanzanians as they are generally *non-confrontational*.[8] An important contributing key factor is that Tanzanian society is a shame-oriented culture. As a result of her studies in Japan, Ruth Benedict suggests that there are guilt and shame cultures. She (in Adeney 1995:251) suggests that people in guilt cultures internalize and associate right and wrong with personal sin. In a guilt-oriented culture the individual does everything to conform to the norm, that is, *the justice and law* as formulated by the culture, society and group (Käser 1998:138). Benedict (in Adeney 1995:251) suggests that people in shame cultures associate right and wrong with disgrace or loss of face before the group. In a shame-oriented culture the individual does everything to conform to the norm, which is the *commonly accepted behaviour* recognized by the culture, society and group (Käser 1998:138). It is important not to go against accepted behaviour, to keep face, to protect prestige, and to maintain relationships as part of the group (:137-140). Collectivistic societies like Tanzania have a strong need for harmony, as Hofstede points out:

---

[8] See also Mwombeki (2004:67-73) and Mayer, Boness and Thomas (2003:19-20 & 35) on how Tanzanians deal with conflict.

> In a situation of intense and continuous social contact the maintenance of *harmony* with one's social environment becomes a key virtue which extends to other spheres beyond the family. In most collectivist cultures direct confrontation of another person is considered rude and undesirable. The word 'no' is seldom used, because saying no *is* a confrontation, 'you may be right' or 'we will think about it' are examples of polite ways of turning down a request (1997:58), [his emphasis].

Thus, potential conflict is avoided in Tanzania since it threatens the harmony of the group (Mayer *et al* 2003:39). Thus, whereas Westerners mainly deal with conflict on an individual basis and want to see justice, for Tanzanians reconciliation is a group process often using a mediator to rebuild relationships, harmony and community.

Conflict has a lot to do with the way in which leaders communicate. Often conflict is caused by miscommunication or different communication styles.

Communication is a great indicator whether societies are affective or neutral. Western leaders communicate predominantly with paper, film and in conversation (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2002:74). They prefer written communication and agreements (Rodrigues 2001:326). The communication tends to be direct, precise, blunt, definitive and transparent (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2002:100). Especially German leaders are well known for being very explicit and direct. According to Schroll-Machl (2003:47), "Professionally Germans communicate primarily objectively and stay on the task level". They are goal-oriented people who support their discussion contributions and arguments with facts (:48). This clear communication style is considered to be honest, straightforward and authentic (:166). The Western communication pattern can be seen in figure 4.1 below.

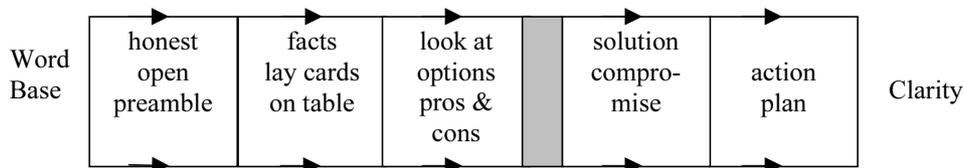| Word Base	honest open preamble	facts lay cards on table	look at options pros & cons		solution compro-mise	action plan	Clarity

Figure 4.1 (adapted from Lewis 2003:99-102)

Leaders in the West look for facts and logic. They might ask a few questions for clarification. As soon as they think they have a clear picture they prepare for debate and discussion. David Hesselgrave (1991:457), a North American Protestant missiologist, writes: "When it comes to communication, in full accord with our bias toward individualism, we Westerners expect open channels of communication in every direction..." The conversation can move quickly back and forth between two or more people, as is shown in figure 4.2:

A _____   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

B   _____ _____   _____ _____ _____

Figure 4.2

It can be observed that Western leaders tend to start talking before the other person has finished her/his sentence.

Tanzanian leaders prefer spoken communication and agreements. If a letter is written to someone in Tanzania it is preferable to deliver the letter personally and explain the content

of it or, at least, to follow up the letter with a phone call. Communication among Tanzanians is more circular than linear. Since it is a diffuse and shame-oriented culture, people take much more time to get to the point and they "beat around the bush". "Diffuse communication styles are indirect – drop hints, and let the other interpret your full meaning" (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000:155). Sometimes this communication style can be perceived by Westerners as being evasive, slippery, and full of euphemisms.

Tanzanians look at relationships and connections before considering all the separate pieces. This has also to do with avoiding loss of face. The Tanzanian communication pattern can be seen in figure 4.3 below.
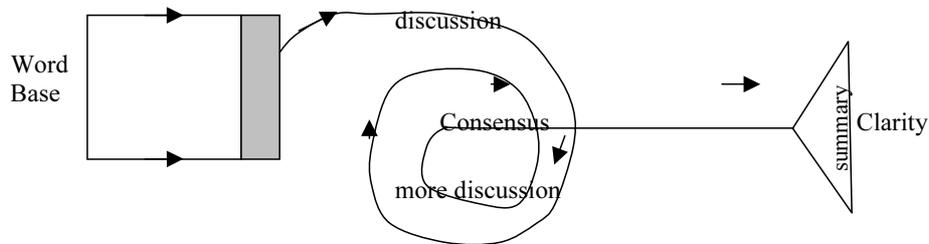

Figure 4.3 (adapted from Lewis 2003:99-102)

In a discussion a Tanzanian listens, confirms what previous speakers have said, and connects to the discussion by adding another thought. Slowly the argument is shaped and a consensus is reached. This discussion process allows for a continued harmonic atmosphere. Often, during the conversation, there are times of silence when people think and reflect on what has been said.

In a conversation or discussion it is not polite to interrupt. In fact, a Tanzanian gives the other person time to finish her/his sentence and possibly waits a little while to digest what the other has been saying before s/he responds. This style of verbal communication is shown in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

It is a sign of respect for the other person to take time to process the information before speaking again.

In short, improved understanding and communication with regard to *power*, *decision making* and *conflict* can lead to the creation and maintenance of genuine partnerships and fruitful collaboration.

A Dialogical Evaluation of Western and Tanzanian Leadership Styles

The group dialogue made it possible to identify how culture influenced the prioritisation of values and to compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two leadership styles.

Christian values and leadership

During the group discussion each group **prioritized** the biblical values as follows:

PRIORITIZED VALUES OF BOTH GROUPS	
WEST	TANZANIA
1. Justice	1. Love
2. Faithfulness	2. Mercy
3. Humility	3. Humility
4. Love	4. Faithfulness
5. Mercy	5. Justice

Figure 5.1

Significantly, the Westerners and Tanzanians confirmed each other's prioritization. Ideally, the Westerners would put love at the top because they know it is important but they admitted that, in reality, love is not sufficiently practiced. The Tanzanians admitted: "We don't talk about justice." A Western leader observed: "Often here in Tanzania it seems to me 'we are forgiven, therefore there are no consequences'." The Tanzanians replied: "Damages need to be tackled. The guilty one has to pay a goat and they have to eat together." "This is part one of the reconciliation. This is important. It is rebuilding the relationship but is not exercising justice." It was interesting that for Tanzanians the relationship overrides justice, whereas a Westerner would like to have seen compensation made for the fault.

The Tanzanians challenged their partners to really practice love: "Westerners they speak love, but we practice it. We need to see emotions and actions to show love." It was also surprising what one Tanzanian said in terms of how humility prevails over faithfulness in Tanzania: "I am prepared to lie to you as long as I practice humility." It would appear that Tanzanians define humility from a cultural perspective. Humility is shown by appropriate behaviour, which is an external rather than an internal humility. But, if humility is understood as truthful self assessment and putting the interests of others first, then an external humility is false.

The Tanzanians admitted that faithfulness is a challenge for them, and something they could learn from the Western leaders. However, they also said: "There are areas, where Africans are faithful. They are less faithful with time, material things and moral issues. As an African I am agreeing, because I don't want to hurt you. For us saying something directly is very difficult."

From this dialogue it became clear that the perception of biblical values is strongly influenced by cultural values. The values of justice and faithfulness are highly rated in the West because of individualism and a sense of personal responsibility. Love and mercy are low because relationships are not as important as they are in Tanzania. Cultural values in both societies are reflected in the varying priorities given to biblical values, a value which results in friction within partnerships.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the two Leadership Styles

The research identified the strengths and weaknesses of the two leadership styles as shown in figure 5.2.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF BOTH GROUPS		
	WEST	TANZANIA
Strength	• Leader because of leadership qualities • Self-confidence • Skilled manpower • Achievement • Caring for people • Freedom to express thoughts • Knows needs of followers • Planning • Accountability • Close relationship with employees • Direct communication • Education • Facilitation • Helping people to grow	• People orientation • Process is more important than time • Leaders are highly respected • Traditions are honoured • Can keep their face • Being dogmatic when it is needed • Consensus oriented • Knowing the environment
Weakness	• Task prevails person • Plan too far ahead • Difficulties to change plan • Want to assess themselves • Not recognizing hierarchy • Little respect for leaders • Not learning the African culture and understanding the context	• Personal interest prevails over group interest • Hierarchical, authoritarian • Dependence on leader • Little accountability • Decision-making easily influenced • Little achievement • Vulnerable to corruption • Not consistent in executing regulating powers • Dependency on outsiders • Indirect and lack of communication • Not treating church members as individuals • Blind submissions • Little time orientation • Preference for own ethnic group • Little education

Figure 5.2

In terms of strengths and weakness, the major differences between Westerners and Tanzanians are *task* versus *people* orientation, *direct* versus *indirect* communication, and *equality* versus *hierarchy*. When both groups perceive the strengths and weaknesses of each other's approach to leadership, they realise in which areas their own leadership needs to be formed in order to more closely resemble Christ-like leadership.

Conclusion

The results of this research demonstrate that culture is interwoven in all aspects of leadership. From the literature and empirical data it became clear that there are major differences between the two leadership styles, due to different cultural values.

With respect to *character and Christian values,* it was shown that Westerners are often just and faithful. They recognise the importance of love and talk a lot about it, but they do not always practice it in how they relate to others. Because justice is highly valued in the West, there is less mercy. This is influenced by the high value of individualism. Western leaders stress what is right or wrong, without necessarily considering the consequences for the relationship or the other person. Thus, they underemphasise the value of love. On the other hand, because Tanzanians emphasise the values of love and mercy, they are much more concerned about the relationship and the consequences than with what is right or wrong. Even though love is the core value in Scripture it could be said to be over-emphasised by Tanzanians, in that justice and faithfulness are neglected. In essence, what is required by both groups is a better balance of these different values.

In terms of humility both groups need to continue to learn what it truly means to be a humble servant leader.[9] The interviews indicated that humility in Tanzania tends to be an external cultural behaviour to show respect. Hence, it may be perceived as superficial. At the same time there is a huge power distance between leaders and followers, which makes it difficult for a leader to show humility. In contrast, Western leaders may be expected to practice humility in such a way that they can no longer exercise appropriate authority.

Power is central to leadership. Because there is such a large power distance in Tanzania, certain groups within the society such as those with less education, women and children are oppressed. Once a leader reaches a position of power, it is easy to misuse it. Some Tanzanian leaders misuse power because they try to protect their position and also seek personal benefits in terms of status or money. Because Westerners are assertive it is easier for them to exert power, and their egalitarianism mutes the way in which they exercise it, particularly now that they are operating in a post-colonial context.

Regarding *conflict* there is no one biblical way of dealing with conflict. Jesus promoted both approaches of conflict resolution individually (Matthew 18:15) and as a group (Matthew 18:16-17). The key principle is that no matter which approach is used, the conflict should not escalate and the people reconciled with each other. Because of their individualism, Westerners deal with conflict on an individual basis rather than as a group. Tanzanians, on the other hand, because of their group orientation, prefer a mediator and expect a public act of repentance and reconciliation.

The aim of this study was to identify positive and negative aspects of both cultures and to unlock cultural chains so that necessary transformational cultural change could take place on the basis of Christian values. Leaders need to both build on positive cultural values and to challenge those values that are in conflict with Christian values. These differences

---

[9]   In his book *Cross-Cultural Servanthood* Elmer (2006) describes the process and the challenges of how to implement servanthood in a cross-cultural context.

can be an opportunity to learn from each other. Western leaders need to be more culturally aware and learn from Tanzanians to be more people oriented, since this is an expression of love and mercy. Both the person and the task are important. Tanzanians can learn something from Westerners such as time orientation, work performance, planning, honesty, faithfulness, accountability, justice, and how to relate to subordinates. Through this learning process, strong personal relationships and spiritual unity can be built so that joint visions and genuine partnerships, which glorify God, can be developed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adeney, BT 1995. *Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

Bennett, DW 2005. A Call to Develop Christ-like Leaders. *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 41*. Lausanne: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and its National Committees around the world.

Brown, C 1998. *Crash Course on Christian Ethics*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Dale, RD 1986. *Pastoral Leadership: A Handbook of Resources for Effective Congregational Leadership*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Elmer, DH 2006. *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

Guba, EG & Lincoln, YS 1994. Competing Paradigms in Qualitative research, in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by NK Denzin & YS Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 105-117.

Hampden-Turner, C & Trompenaars, F 2000. *Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to create wealth from conflicting values*. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Hesselgrave, DJ 1991. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An introduction to missionary communication*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

Hofstede, G 1997. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. UK: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G 2001. *Lokales Denken, globales Handeln: Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit und globales Management*. 2nd edition. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

Käser, L 1998. *Fremde Kulturen: Eine Einführung in die Ethnologie*. 2nd edition. Bad Liebenzell: Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission; Erlangen: Verl. der Ev.-Luth. Mission.

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization 1978. *The Willowbank Report: Report on a Consultation on Gospel and Culture*. http://www.gospelcom.net/lcwe/LOP/lop02.htm.

Lewis, RD 2003. *When Cultures Collide: Managing successfully across cultures*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Mason, J 2002. *Qualitative Researching*. 2nd edition. London: Sage Publications.

Mayer, C, Boness, C & Thomas, A 2003. *Beruflich in Kenia und Tansania: Trainingsprogramm für Manager, Fach- und Führungskräfte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Mhogolo, GM 2004. Oral communication at a bible study on 7 April. Dodoma.

Mwombeki, FR 2004. *Uongozi wa Usharika*. Arusha: Scripture Mission.

Parsons, T, & Shils, EA 1951. *Towards a General Theory of Action*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Rodrigues, C 2001. *International Management: A cultural approach*. 2nd edition. Ohio: South-Western College Publishing.

Schroll-Machl, S 2003. *Doing Business with Germans: Their perception, our perception*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Schubert, Ralph Ipyana 2007. A Christian-ethical comparison of leadership styles in the West and in Tanzania and their impact on cross-cultural partnerships, unpublished Master's degree in Theology. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Transparency International. Corruption Perceptions Index 2007. http://www.transparency.org/layout/set/print/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2007

Trompenaars, F & Hampden-Turner, C 2002. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding cultural diversity in business.* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.