

ROBERTO RODRÍGUEZ NÚÑEZ

**St. Paul**  
**A Biblical Model of Leadership for the XXI Century**

Prologue by

DR. ANGEL L. VELEZ OYOLA

July 22, 2011

## Introduction

This essay is a biblical reflection on Paul's leadership as addressed in the book of Acts and the Pauline letters. It will highlight the implications for today's Hispanic church leaders.<sup>1</sup> Of all the New Testament leaders, Paul is the one who has left an unparalleled legacy of leadership we can learn from. To see this, we must study the book of Acts and the Pauline letters to learn his leadership style and how it worked for him while preaching the gospel and establishing churches.

Paul's leadership comprises of a very broad spectrum and much has been written in many volumes, nevertheless; I want to highlight briefly some of the main principles of Paul's leadership style. He was an excellent religious leader, was and he affected a strong influence on church leaders throughout history. Mark Strom observes, "... he [Paul] is arguably *the* leader who forever changed our expectations of leadership. Such a claim only makes sense when we see him in his world. If we can see what he was doing, then, we might catch his spirit of wise leadership for now."<sup>2</sup> Paul's leadership style makes him a modern mentor we can look up to for guidance and wise counsel.

We live in a critical era in which the need for spiritual leaders is paramount. Kay Arthur, an international bible teacher and published author points out:

If sheep do not have the constant care of a shepherd, they will go the wrong way, unaware of the dangers at hand. They have been known to nibble themselves right off the side of a mountain... And so, because sheep are sheep, they need shepherds to care for

---

<sup>1</sup> This essay seeks to give a birds-eye view of Paul's leadership style; it does not pretend to present a broad discussion of leadership issues.

<sup>2</sup> Strom, Mark. "Paul and the Reframing of Leadership." *Stimulus Journal* 14, no. 2 (May 2006): 2.

them. The welfare of sheep depends solely upon the care they get from their shepherd, therefore, the better the shepherd, the healthier the sheep.<sup>3</sup>

This quote clearly illustrates what a spiritual leader does for his people and the care they provide to the flock. With this in mind, let us now turn our attention to Paul, a biblical model of leadership.

### **Birth and Early Life**

It is believed that Paul was born in the first decade of the Christian era. Luke in the book of Acts says that he was a Pharisee born in Tarsus, a Hellenistic city in the eastern part of Asia Minor (Acts 22:3, 6), having a Jewish name, Saul (13:9); and being a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). He was a Hellenized Jew of the Diaspora and was very proud of his Jewish lineage of the tribe of Benjamin. In Philippians 3: 5-6 we read, "...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless."<sup>4</sup> His letters reveal that he knew *koiné* Greek well (Acts 21:37), and Luke confirms he spoke Hebrew (Acts 21:40; 22:2), and some scholars suggest that he may have also known Latin.

The Lukan record asserts that he received his rabbinic training in Jerusalem at the feet of rabbi Gamaliel; the elder (Acts 22:3). Rainer Riesner points out, "Paul had not only received his 'academic' training in the holy city, but had also undergone his elementary schooling in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3)."<sup>5</sup> Paul makes mention of his Pharisaic zeal in his letter to the Philippi church. He tells them, "... in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church

---

<sup>3</sup>Kay Arthur, "Kay Arthur Quotes," oChristian.com, <http://christian-quotes.ochristian.com/Kay-Arthur-Quotes/> (accessed July 17, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> I will regularly cite from the New International Version.

<sup>5</sup> Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans , 1998), 268.

...” (Phil. 3:4). Katherine Grieb comments, “In the Philippians passage just quoted, Paul describes himself as someone who had been totally confident of his ability to perceive and carry out God’s will. Paul’s intemperate zeal led him to be a religious terrorist.”<sup>6</sup> His trip to the Damascus synagogue to root out the followers of Christ attest to this fact.

### **His Conversion and calling**

I had often asked myself, where did the Apostle Paul acquire his successful leadership style? I found the answer in the pages of the book of Acts starting from chapter 9 and his own letters. Before his dramatic encounter with Jesus, Paul was an ordinary individual carrying on his business as usual, but everything changed forever when Jesus Christ came calling in his life. Homer Kent comments, “As Saul and his companions neared the end of their long journey, a blinding light from heaven felled him, and a voice from heaven addressed him. It is clear from other Scripture that he also saw Jesus at this time (Acts vrs. 17, 27; 22:14; 26:16; I Cor. 9:1; 15:8).”<sup>7</sup> Paul’s rise to ministry and a position of leadership in the Christian community was a result Jesus’ claim upon his life. He later on tells the Galatian church that he received his call “through a revelation [*di’ apokalypseōs*] of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12). Grieb points out, “Paul knows firsthand of God’s disrupting grace revealed and administered through the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ: it changed his life to the point where he can say that he has been crucified and dislocated (risen) from the world he knew before.”<sup>8</sup>

On his way to Damascus, he experienced a vision of Christ, which radically transformed him completely for the rest of his entire life (Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11; 26:12-19). It turned him from

---

<sup>6</sup> Katherine Grieb, “The One Who Called You: Vocation and Leadership in Pauline Literature,” *Interpretation* 61, no. 1 (2007): 157.

<sup>7</sup> Homer A. Kent and Jr, *Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in the Book of Acts*, (Washington,: Baker Academic, 1974), 83.

<sup>8</sup> Grieb, 155.

a persecutor to an apostle (messenger) of Jesus Christ. Later in his life, he writes to the Roman church, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God...” (Rom. 1:1). Christ himself commissioned him to witness to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-11 Gal. 2:7). At that time, followers of Christ were part of Judaism and in reality Paul switched from Pharisaic Judaism to Christian Judaism. He reports that he immediately went to Arabia (Gal. 1:17-24). Three years later, he visited with Peter in Jerusalem for fifteen days and saw James the "brother" of the Lord (Gal. 1:18-24); subsequent to this visit, he went “... to Syria and Cilicia” (Gal. 1:21). Parting from this time, Paul becomes the main force behind the propagation of the Gospel.

### **His vision for ministry**

While in Damascus, the Lord gave Ananias a vision in which He gives him some instructions to go to Paul and pray for him to restore his sight. Ananias at first objects, but the Lord told him, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (9:15, 16). The latter part of this verse encapsulates the mission Jesus gave to Paul to carry out; to testify of Jesus Christ unto "the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel." This mission was the overarching purpose Paul had as he journeyed on to accomplish what he was called to do. Paul's vision was the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles so that they might be saved (in essence, the Great Commission).<sup>9</sup> George Barna notes:

Paul was an individual driven to fulfill a vision for ministry that God had entrusted to him. Paul gives us glimpses of his comprehension of the vision for ministry that God had prepared for him. In 2 Timothy 1:11, he indicates the nature of his calling: His work is to be a "preacher, an apostle, and a teacher" (NKJV). In other letters, Paul outlines aspects

---

<sup>9</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing a Vision For Ministry in the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 185.

of his vision of ministry. It is in the Acts of the Apostle, though, where we gain the clearest insight into God's vision for Paul's ministry.<sup>10</sup>

After being blind for three days as a result of the luminous light then having fasted, he was filled with the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands by Ananias (v. 9:17); the first miracle Paul experienced was when he first received his sight back.

Paul wasted no time; he immediately launches forward on his missionary ministry starting in Damascus. Luke testifies, “[A]t once he began to preach in the synagogues, that Jesus is the Son of God” (v. 9:20). He devoted his entire life to the missionary work God had called him to carry out. In fact, in Galatians 1:17-21 he says that he went to Syria and Cilicia; no doubt to establish churches. Then he returns to Damascus, but after learning that the Jews had conspired to kill him, Paul did not waste any time and immediately goes to Jerusalem. He had the courage and character forged in him by the perilous circumstances he encountered early on in his ministry.

### **Paul’s First Missionary Strategy - (Acts 13-28)**

#### **The call to Missions**

Starting from chapter 13 through chapter 28 of Acts, Paul is inexhaustibly in action proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Luke concentrates his attention on Paul’s missionary journeys. He points out that he was guided, moved, warned, and protected by the Holy Spirit during all his journeys. Paul’s principal focus—after his conversion—was first to preach the gospel (Acts 14:23; 15:36, 41; 1 Cor. 11:1-34; 2 Cor. 11:28; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1), then to establish churches wherever he went.

---

<sup>10</sup> George Barna, *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan For Your Life and Ministry*, 3rd ed. (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2009), 17.

As soon as the call came from the Holy Spirit (13:1-4a), Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church to launch out and win the world for Christ. They traveled to Cyprus, Perga, and Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe preaching the gospel. In Lystra, Paul is stoned and left as dead, but “he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe” (14:20). At Derbe, “they preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples” (v. 21-23). Evidently, nothing could keep Paul down; his passion and love for Christ were so intense that he was unstoppable. Once they reached Derbe, they reversed their travels, returning through the cities they had evangelized, back to their commissioning church in Antioch in Syria. Thomas Lea and David Black observe:

Although we call Paul’s trips “missionary journeys,” we would be mistaken to view them as hasty dashes from one city to the next. Paul’s missionary policy involved entering a city, establishing a foundation among the residents who responded to his preaching, and moving to another city only under pressure from local authorities or other evident signs of divine leadership.<sup>11</sup>

Then Paul and Barnabas, moved by the love of the missionary work, made a return trip “strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith” (v. 22). On their return trip, they appointed elders to take charge of the young church. When they returned to Antioch in Syria, they reported all the wonderful things the Lord did throughout their ministry. They remained there for a long time.

### **Second and third mission trips (15:36-21:16)**

#### **Timothy Joins the Missionary Circuit (16:1-5)**

On his second missions’ trip, Paul took Silas with him since he was unable to come to an agreement with Barnabas on taking Mark with them on this trip. Paul, instead, launched out with Silas and traveled through Syria and Cilicia. He journeys to Lystra where he meets a

---

<sup>11</sup> Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black, *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2003), 305, 306.

disciple named Timothy, “whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was Greek. At Lystra and Iconium, the brethren spoke well of him” (vrs.1, 2). Timothy came from a Christian family and was versed in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15). He immediately joins Paul in the missionary circuit. However, before going with them, Paul had him circumcised. Lea and Black comment on this, “to facilitate his acceptance in ministry among the Jews, Paul (probably through the resources of a synagogue) had Timothy circumcised. Whenever doctrinal issues were not at stake, Paul was willing to be flexible to encourage the spread of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-22). However, if any practice endangered the truth of the gospel, Paul was adamant in his refusal to yield (Gal. 1:6-9).”<sup>12</sup> Timothy helped to confirm the churches in the faith in their growth (Phil. 2:19-23). Timothy was a great asset to Paul’s ministry. Kenneth Gangel reminds us:

As we follow Paul’s trail it doesn’t take us long to come to Timothy, the quintessential disciple, the end result of modeling and mentoring. How much of what we know about church leadership is embodied in this young man because of Paul’s two letters! In looking at the life of Timothy we learn that biblical servants avoid false doctrine; they aim toward godly living they activate and use their spiritual gifts; and they accept the challenge God has placed before them in whatever leadership role He has prescribed. From family preparation to pastoral problems, Timothy provides a brilliant example of how leadership is learned behavior.<sup>13</sup>

### **Paul’s Leadership Strategies**

What characterizes Paul’s missionary strategy? In my studies of his missionary circuit in the book of Acts, I noticed there are several features unique to the mission strategy he uses. These strategic characteristics are:

- First be guided by the Holy Spirit

---

<sup>12</sup> Lea and Black, 311.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision*, rev. ed. (Ventura, Calif.: Moody Publishers, 1997), 62.



- Maintain focused on his mission
- Be flexible to God's direction
- Make Disciples
- Practice delegation of work

### **Be guided by the Holy Spirit**

First, the Apostle Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit working under His direction and control (Acts 13: 2, 4, 16: 6, 20, 23). His *modus operandi* should not interfere with the guidance he receives from the Holy Spirit. His obedience to the Holy Spirit is evident when the call came to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:9). He went to where he did not plan to go, but the Spirit took him there because God had a church to be planted there.

It is wonderful to see Paul's immense desire to go on a second journey to visit the churches he had established. Along that journey, the Holy Spirit guides, gives him insight, encourages, and warns of impending danger. We noticed that they do not stay in any specific area for too long (Acts 15:35, 36). Paul's initial strategy was to plant a new church and stay there long enough to name a few local leaders (Acts 14:23).

### **Maintain focused on its mission**

Second, Paul was very focused in his approach; he left the newly established churches with leaders who would provide the leadership after the apostles (Paul and Barnabas) departed for another mission (Acts 14:23). Moreau, Corwin, and McGee comment, "Although his ability for evangelism is evident, his main aim was not only to win souls and leave them up, but

the establishment of Christian communities in all regions visited.”<sup>14</sup> He worked with developing leaders to leave in the newly established church as elders that would continue his work .

### **Be flexible to God’s direction**

Third, Paul is flexible and adapts his message base on the audience. He realizes that to get people to listen, you must adapt your message to the level and understanding of your audience. He was not dogmatic about his message; rather he focused his message to the needs of the people listening to him preach the gospel.

### **Make Discipleship**

Four, another founding principle of building any strong church is discipleship. Paul is very effective in the development of disciples who would work in the church he had established; that way a process of continuity was in place to keep the church growing. This is evident "... [w]hen he had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they praised the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14: 23). Paul’s discipleship approach was effective because, “although the churches he planted had a relationship with him, the elderly and the disciples had to be independent of their presence.”<sup>15</sup> These four strategic characteristics enable Paul to fulfill God's call and become more effective in mission of establishing Christian communities. These characteristics are a strategic pattern for us to emulate and continue. He told the Philippian church, “[w]hatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:9).

---

<sup>14</sup> A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: a Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 62.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

## **Paul's Coworkers**

Many of us are not aware of the huge amount of coworkers (*sunergos*)<sup>16</sup> Paul had in his ministry. When we study Paul's leadership, we cannot be one dimensional because Paul was not a one-man show. He had many fellow-workers by his side sharing his burden for the church and its growth. As we study Acts and Paul's letters, we find out that the amount of helpers around the apostle is huge. E. Earle Ellis in his article, "*Paul and His Coworkers*," pointed out, "in the Book of Acts and the canonical literature ascribed to Paul some 100 names, often coupled with assorted titles, are associated with the Apostle."<sup>17</sup> This is an excellent strategy Paul maximized to spread the Gospel. He deployed his team to many parts of the Empire when he was not able to go himself. Toward the end of his ministry, this was Paul's strategy to maintain a link with the churches.

## **Paul's coworkers as envoys**

During Paul's ministry there were three ways by which Paul could make his apostolic instructions and leadership influence reach the churches:

1. His own presence
2. A representative (normally a trusted associate) in his name,\
3. The letters he so often wrote

Paul was not tied to any particular modes of communication. For the most part, he used his letters to address and deal with issues (ex. 2 Cor. 1:23-2:9) in the church. Mitchell suggests, "that Paul sent envoys not as mere substitutes for himself but also with the understanding that

---

<sup>16</sup> *Sunergos* (συνεργούς) which means "helper, fellow-worker."

<sup>17</sup> Agosto, 121.

they could perform special functions that he himself could not perform even if present.”<sup>18</sup> Evidence of this is when he sent Titus (2 Cor. 7:5-16) to mediate the breakdown in the relationship between Paul and the Corinthian church. At first, Paul tried to remedy the rift himself, but was unsuccessful. However, being a realist and an effective leader, he sent Titus to straighten out the situation. By using this strategy, he showed that he knew how to use his coworkers for the benefit of the church and not to gain an unfair advantage over them.

### **Practice delegation of work**

Finally, Paul delegated some of his work to his associates. Efraín Agosto observes, “When Paul cannot himself travel to visit one of the churches, his associates, like Timothy, Titus, and Phoebe can (cf. 1 Thess. 2:17-3:6; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11; 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-7; Rom. 16:1-2).”<sup>19</sup> Romans chapter 16 outlines many other brethren that helped Paul in his missionary work.

### **Paul’s example**

Another personal strategy Paul used effectively was to influence his coworkers (*sunergos*). This is outlined in Philippians 4:9 based on his life being the example for the Philippians to follow. The main idea in this verse is “follow my example (v. 9).” He does this by offering himself as a spiritual role model they can look up to and emulate. González-Tejera comments, “Paul follows the pattern of Greco-Roman commendations of enhancing status and the common literary device of exemplification (mentioning someone as a model or example) to

---

<sup>18</sup> Margeret M. Mitchell, “New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111, no. 4 (1992): 641-62.

<sup>19</sup> Efraín Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2005), 99.

encourage his audience to imitate his coworkers' behavior, their laboring hard for the gospel."<sup>20</sup> This strategy has always been Paul's *modus operandi* in his ministry. He repeats it in Philippians 3:17 when he says, "Join with others in following *my example* (italics mine), brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." He writes to the Corinthian church, "[f]ollow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Clearly, the apostles gave them a practical strategy for them to follow in order to be mature Christians who follow Jesus Christ. Gonzalez-Tejeras adds, in antiquity, such "calls to imitation often assumed a very special and close relationship between the mentor and his followers."<sup>21</sup>

He uses four excellent verbs to urge the Philippians to practice what he is exhorting them to do. He said, "The things which you **learned** and **received** and **heard** and **saw** in me..." (emphasis mine) (NKJV). These four verbs reflect the all-around concept of leading by example. They encompass the overall principle of teaching by modeling your lesson. There was no hypocrisy in the apostle's plea for them to follow his example. Paul urged Timothy to be an example as a pattern for others to emulate. He told him, "... but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). Then in 2 Timothy, again he exhorts his young protégé, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:2).

---

<sup>20</sup> Awilda Gonzalez-Tejera, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad, *Global Voices On Biblical Equality: Women and Men Ministering Together in the Church (House of Prisca and Aquila)*, ed. Aida B. Spencer, William D. Spencer, and Mimi Haddad (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008), p. 130-49.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 137.

The practical application of Paul's strategy for ministry is what Dan Mitchell calls "the forms in which the message may be manifest."<sup>22</sup> Paul had a subject matter, an environment, life experiences, and he was the teacher (model). Thus, Paul's strategy for ministry has been applied throughout church history to develop disciples. Its effectiveness has been proven again and again.

### **Paul's Style of Leadership in ministry**

I subscribe to the school of thought that leaders are made not born, but in this unique biblical personality, I have found a dual component of a leadership framework consisting of innate abilities and God-given attributes; all for the sole purpose to build God's kingdom. It is God who endowed Paul with the leadership gift, but it was also Paul's training as a growing leader who gave him the opportunity to learn.

### **Training and willingness to learn**

Paul was trained by the greatest rabbi of his generation, Rabbi Gamaliel. His leadership experience started early in his life as he trained to be a rabbi and a leader in the Jewish community. First, we find the tenacity of courage and character forged under death-defying circumstances. Once looked from this perspective, all questions are about his leadership style are answered. He was determined to learn and to grasp any opportunity afforded him to grow into the stature for which God intended him to be.

His willingness to learn and grow is unmatched by any of his peers. Although young, his brash bravado coupled with an unbridled faith in the God of Israel, finds him in the heart of Jerusalem learning to be a rabbi and a leader. These were signs that this young man was going

---

<sup>22</sup> Michael R. Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples: World-Class Christian Education in the Church, School, and Home* (Kansas City: CrossBooks Publishing, 2010), 286.

to higher places. His decisiveness and unwavering passion gave him the forte and catapulted him into the stratum reserved for leaders bound for glory and advancement. On the other hand, Paul was not concerned with this; instead, he was more focused on fulfilling his ministry to the fullest.

Shakespeare said of greatness: "Be not afraid of greatness; *some* are born great, *some* achieve greatness, and *others* have greatness thrust upon them..." Paul was an unknown at the beginning of his career, but his revolutionary encounter with Jesus and his subsequent successes establishing churches certainly had greatness thrust upon him. Virgil's famous maxim, "fortune favors the bold" describes the life of this intrepid leader because he was rising faster than any man of his time.

### **Meekness and unselfishness**

Paul never let any recognition he got fazed him. In fact, he says "What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8). This attitude of meekness and unselfishness characterized the leadership attributes of this man of God. Christopher Jeffries asserts, "Paul is a personification of inspired leadership and an excellent example for all leaders to follow."<sup>23</sup> Paul expresses his heart's desire, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth nothing I desire besides you" (Ps. 73:25). Strom points out:

Paul left no room for personal power or office. Again, in a world where leadership was rank, and only rank, Paul was *anti*-leadership. This is difficult for us to grasp. He exerted a profound influence. He founded communities. He taught and modeled a reordering of relations that would eventually reshape the social order. We are accustomed to calling all of this leadership. Yet he did not employ the vocabulary of

---

<sup>23</sup> Christopher N. Jeffries PhD, *Inspired Leadership: The Apostle Paul's Example For Today's Leaders* (Lexington: BookSurge Publishing, 2009), 2.

leadership. He described himself with simple, demeaning metaphors like slave, servant, or gardener.”<sup>24</sup>

As I was writing how the world would describe a leader as Paul, a quote from Stephen R. Covey’s book, *Everyday Greatness*, came to mind. He quotes, “As Maya Angelou learned on graduation day, you cannot wait upon the world for success, you must take action, go out and hunt it down, exhibiting initiative every step of the way.”<sup>25</sup> That is exactly what Paul did. He carried out his leadership ever so skillfully by strengthening his relationship with his followers and thus building a faithful following. He explains it this way, “to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). Christ warns us that, “you know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all” (Mark 10:42-44). Jeffries affirms, “Like the Apostle Paul, inspired leaders adhere to scripture in guiding others. Inspired leaders rely on God and his direction in managing others.”<sup>26</sup> We think of a leader today and are not surprised that they are following the normal conventional way of thinking that leadership equal rank; even so, not for Paul, as he learned from the example of Jesus. He states clearly, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being

---

<sup>24</sup> Strom, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *Everyday Greatness: Inspiration For a Meaningful Life*, Reprint ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 81.

<sup>26</sup> Jeffries, 3.



found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!” (Phil. 2:6-8). This is the antithesis of the conventional way of leadership.

### **Paul the mentoring leader**

Paul’s church planting experiences were the life lessons that would eventually lead him to mark another milestone in his growth as a leader, to become a mentor to many co-laborers in his ministry.

### **Enduring hardship**

The lessons learned in the school of hard knocks had brought him to the humble abode of the brethren and to the halls of royalty. No, he was not a wandering preacher or the marooning apostle without an aim. He proved himself worthy of his calling during the many years of laboring in the ministry. David Forney notes:

Paul believes that the very struggles he endures are opportunities for resilience rather than occasions to judge, find fault, and assign blame. In the Greek, Paul uses the word *hypomonē* to express the way he can endure the hardships that accompany ministry. This type of endurance, *hypomonē*, is no submissiveness, where a person simply receives the hardship with resignation. Rather, endurance for a minister of Jesus Christ is the ability to bear all things in such a way that the hardship becomes transformative, even to the point of becoming a blessing.<sup>27</sup>

Although his enemies continued to harass him and even some of his fellow laborers have deserted him, he did not let any of them prevail over him. Demas was one of those who abandoned him. Dag Heward-Mills quotes from 2 Timothy and notes, “For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). Demas was in full-time ministry with the Apostle Paul. Yet he forsook Paul and returned to his old life. Paul explained why this had

---

<sup>27</sup> David G. Foney, “A Calm in The Storm: Developing Resilience in Religious Leaders,” *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 4.

happened: Demas had loved this present world.”<sup>28</sup> Eventually, Paul forgives them and continues on with the ministry.

### **Inclusive ministry**

The journey has been long, hard, and wrought with many battles, but the reward will be sweet and warranted. He tells his young protégé, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

The last point in Paul’s leadership style that I want to briefly mention in this essay is “that Acts record of the early converts in Philippi also reveals that women come to play a significant leadership role in the expansion of Christianity in the city.”<sup>29</sup> González-Tejera points out “The way Paul refers to these women is the model for the contemporary church to have in esteem and be recognized as equal for the labor and roles of men and women who work hard for the gospel”.<sup>30</sup> In his letters, we find that the Apostle Paul equally worked with his coworkers and was inclusive of women in his ministry.<sup>31</sup> One thing is clear; the leadership principles outlined in this essay gleaned from the Apostle Paul are not androcentric in scope, rather they are all inclusive.

---

<sup>28</sup> Dag Heward-Mills, *Church Administration and Management* (n.p.: Xulon Press, 2011), 376.

<sup>29</sup> Awilda González-Tejera, *Filipenses, Colosenses, 1 y 2 Tesalonicenses, Filemón (Conozca Su Biblia)* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2009), 9.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>31</sup> For a broader discussion on Paul’s inclusion of women in his ministry, see Dr. Awilda González-Tejera essay, *Biblical Equality and United States Latino Churches in Global Voices On Biblical Equality: Women and Men Ministering Together in the Church (House of Prisca and Aquila)* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008), 130-49.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this was a most enlightening essay; I was challenged to comb through the book of Acts, Paul's letters, and the writings of some of the best scholars in the subject of leadership. I have learned that God is the maker of leaders. It does not matter where you find yourself; God reaches out to you and makes you an effective leader just like Paul that will fulfill the purpose He has for you before the foundation of the world. Jesus came to Paul's life at a time when he was bent on persecuting the church and cause harm to the body of Christ. However, God reached out and called this very remarkable servant to be the leader par excellence.

From a persecutor of the church to a preacher and church planter, God most certainly can do great things. We cannot underestimate the potential we have in store for greatness; just let go and let God. To become one of God's great leaders; we must follow and emulate the principles Paul practiced. Below I will outline what the Hispanic church leaders can learn and put into practice in order to be effective leaders in their communities with the help of the Holy Spirit and Paul's leadership style their ministry will be transformed.

## **Paul's leadership and Hispanic<sup>32</sup> Leaders**

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so

---

<sup>32</sup> I want to clarify that the term Hispanic I use in this essay is to refer to the unity of various U.S. communities that have ties to Latin America or with the Spanish speaking world.<sup>32</sup> I do not want to get into any sociological discussion of who is a Latino (a) or Hispanic. I just want to share my thoughts with that portion of the United States population that is considered Hispanic and is currently growing rapidly. We have a lot to learn from the Apostle to the Gentile. For a broader discussion on this subject see, Juan Francisco Martinez, *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008).

that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:20-21).

This is the mantra of the Hispanic leader. The apostle Paul speaks of reaching both Jews and non-Jews—that is, Gentiles. In these verses from 1 Corinthians, the apostle argues that he was willing to become all things in order to win some to Christ. He was willing to forego any Jewish customs to reach out to a different culture. He grew up in a multi-culture environment and was not afraid to reach out to them in their environment. As Hispanics, we can relate to this. Many of us come from cities where the conglomerate of ethnicities is a daily experience. I lived in New York many years and I rubbed shoulders with Dominicans, Mexicans, Panamanians, Cubans, you name it. They were from all over South American, the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico; even from Spain. This melting-pot of cultures taught me the meaning of diversity and how they all contribute to the betterment of society.

Because Paul grew up in a Jewish family and in a Greco-Roman environment, he was a polyglot. He never compromised his faith to conform to other cultures, but he conducted himself in such a way so as to identify with the people he was trying to reach for Christ. At times, he spoke Greek, and at times he spoke Hebrew. All his letters are written in the common Greek language; the book of Acts and his epistles attest to this (Acts 20:21; Eph. 3:6-7). My point is that as Hispanic leaders, we are called to reach out to our multi-ethnic culture and win them to Christ. Many of us speak Spanish and English; but not only is that, the different hues of Spanish found in these entire cultures is mind boggling. One of the strategies Paul used was the different languages he knew. We have the Spanish language as a common factor, the other ethnic diversities can be learned and applied to our ministry. I am originally from Puerto Rico and speak English, Spanish, and some German, but I can get into the Mexican accent and culture

with relative ease. We need to incarnate ourselves totally in the community. Their needs should consciously in our hearts.<sup>33</sup>

The Hispanic culture is a multi-ethnic group of people that come to this country looking for a better life. We must, as Paul, extend our ministry outreach announcing the gospel with a deeper level of identification with the people and living cross-culturally for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor 9: 23). Paul adjusted well to the cultural rhythm of different cultures in order to reach different people groups. Whenever you and I interact at deeper levels with those from other racial and ethnic backgrounds, our cultural understanding deepens and grows. We are challenged to speak to different people and embrace diversity in our ministry. In the church where I worship we have people from different Latin American countries and we get along very well.

Another thing that we notice in Paul's leadership strategy was that he travelled extensively. We live in a very mobile society. Paul too lived in a very mobile society. He took advantage of this by being on the go himself. He was an itinerant missionary. One thing we practice in our ministry is to teach our people very well the word of God that way when they move back, travel, or share with other cultures, they can be effective in sharing their faith.

Immigration has provided a field for the harvest that continues to grow day by day. This requires the development of cultural competency that will give us a better understanding of the differences [among Latinos].<sup>34</sup> In North Carolina, we get an influx of farm workers and the need to minister to them is dire. One of our churches is working hard to reach these immigrants. Many of them go back to their country with their new-found faith.

---

<sup>33</sup> Francisco Martinez, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 47.

Paul had a vision to reach others for Christ no matter the race or culture (Rom. 2:11-16). Hispanic leaders must not let popular fads substitute for the gospel of salvation. The need is great and time is short. Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few (Matt. 9:37). Paul multiplied his efforts by developing leaders to leave in the churches he established. He appointed elders to take care of the new church. In the same manner, the Latino church must encourage people to be leaders who care for the church. God has chosen the Latino church to evangelize the world. Proof of this is the growth of the Latino church in the United States and throughout Latin America.<sup>35</sup>

The point Paul's life conveys to Hispanic leaders is that the gospel is about reaching out to people and not hoarding wealth as if that is our goal in this life. Learning new-century strategies to communicate a timeless message is critical to evangelize effectively the Hispanic community. We notice that Paul used different strategies to reach out, to resolve church issues, to develop leaders, and to deploy them to the field.

One area that we as Hispanic leaders must work on is to be inclusive in our ministry. I have seen it many times in my years of ministry where we as ministers discriminate against gender, especially women. As we have seen, Paul was inclusive in his ministry. The barrier must be broken, and the ministry must be gender blind. Paul acknowledged his co-workers as hard-working individuals who labored and suffered with him in carrying out the spreading of the gospel through their world. He was willing to be open to diversity in ministry thus making it possible to propagate the message of Christ on the different stages of the globe.

This subject of leadership is of paramount importance in our Hispanic leaders' formation. We have a model to look at and to emulate. God provided us with an individual who even

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 51.

though he was a Jew, he became all things to win someone to Jesus. We as leaders have a huge challenge before us. There is an influx of different Hispanic cultures converging in our cities, and we like Paul must be willing to become all things to win someone for Christ. Of course, we must not compromise our Christian values and convictions, but we can be very effective if we follow the model God gave us in Paul. Every time, there is doubt, open the book and see how the Apostle Paul handled the situation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agosto, Efrain. *Servant Leadership: Jesus and Paul*. St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Pr, 2005.
- Barna, George. *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan For Your Life and Ministry*. 3rd ed. Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2009.
- Covey, Stephen R. *Everyday Greatness: Inspiration For a Meaningful Life*. Reprint ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009.
- Foney, David G. "A Calm in The Storm: Developing Resilience in Religious Leaders." *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 4
- Gangel, Kenneth. *Team Leadership In Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision*. Revised ed. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1997.
- González-Tejera, Awilda, *Filipenses, Colosenses, 1 y 2 Tesalonicenses, y Filemón*. Conozca su Biblia. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Global Voices On Biblical Equality: Women and Men Ministering Together in the Church (House of Prisca and Aquila)*. Edited by Aida B. Spencer, William D. Spencer, and Mimi Haddad. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008.
- Heward-Mills, Dag. *Church Administration and Management*. N.p.: Xulon Press, 2011.
- Jeffries, Christopher N. *Inspired Leadership: The Apostle Paul's Example for Today's Leaders*. BookSurge Publishing, 2009.
- Lea, Thomas D., and David Alan Black. *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*. 2nd ed. Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2003.
- Katherine Grieb, "The One Who Called You: Vocation and Leadership in Pauline Literature," *Interpretation* 61, no. 1 (2007): 157.
- Kay Arthur, "Kay Arthur Quotes," oChristian.com, <http://christian-quotes.ochristian.com/Kay-Arthur-Quotes/> (accessed July 17, 2011).
- Kent, Homer A., and Jr. *Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in the Book of Acts*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1974.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Developing a Vision For Ministry in the 21st Century*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Martinez, Juan. *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States*. Abingdon Press, 2008.
- Mitchell, Dr. Michael R. *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples: World-Class Christian*



*Education in the Church, School, and Home.* Kansas City: CrossBooks Publishing, 2010.

Mitchell, Margaret. "New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 641-662.

Moreau, A. Scott, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee. *Introducing World Missions: a Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004.

Riesner, Rainer. *Paul's Early Period.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.

Spencer, Aida Besancon, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad. *Global Voices On Biblical Equality: Women and Men Ministering Together in the Church (House of Prisca and Aquila).* Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008.

Strom, Mark. "Paul and the Reframing of Leadership." *Stimulus Journal* 14, no. 2 (May 2006): 2.