

Research Article

Jethro's Mentoring of Moses (Exodus 18) and its Relevance to the Nigerian Clergy

ABSTRACT

This article examines mentorship among the clergy in Nigeria in the light of Ex 18. Ex 18 explores how Jethro mentored Moses near the mountain of God. He first had a close relationship with Moses. Secondly, he encouraged Moses and showed genuine concern for Moses's growth and development. Looking at mentorship in the Nigerian context, it was discovered that hatred, jealousy, pride, and lack of transparency on the part of the mentor and unwillingness to be mentored by the mentee are the problems bedevilling pastoral ministry. This has led to ministers engaging in diabolic combats and physical wrestling in and outside their worship centres. The question becomes: How can the problems of mentorship among the clergy in Nigeria be solved or reduced? It is believed that Ex 18 will speak anew to the problems in mentorship in Nigeria.

FAVOUR C. UROKO¹

¹ Favour C. Uroko is a Post Graduate Student at the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.

Email: favour.uroko@unn.edu.ng

Manuscript

Received 19th January 2020,

Accepted 8th March 2020,

Published online 24th March 2020.

Keywords: Mentorship, Jethro, Moses, Nigerian Clergy, Pastoral Ministry

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring in Nigeria is filled with jealousy, hatred, pride, witch-hunting and suspicion.² Mentoring is defined by Kate Tucker as a "supportive, learning relationship between an individual—the mentor—who shares his or her knowledge, experience and insights with another less experienced person—the learning associate (mentee) - who is willing and ready to benefit from this exchange."³ The job of the mentor is to support and teach the mentee. successes. On another note, mentoring occurs when one person extends help and uses his or her resources in helping another person, with the end result of growth.⁴ From the definitions above it could be seen that mentoring is a systematic measure adopted by the mentor to assist the mentee to see growth in his life and career.

This article explores pastoral mentoring in Nigeria. This is done through a study of the light of Jethro's mentoring model in Exodus 18. Pastoral mentoring in Nigeria is deficient of the features of Biblical mentorship such as transparency, genuine mindset, helping mentees to maximize their potentials and develop their skills.⁵ Mentors develop unnecessary jealousy towards their mentee.⁶ They view their mentee as threats to the sustainability of their office. Some of the causes include: a more effective and comprehensible preaching from junior pastors more compliments are given to junior ministers by members of the faith community; junior pastor is better skilled in counselling than senior pastor.⁷ These reasons could lead to suspension of the junior pastor or withholding of support to him by the senior pastor. when they discover that their mentee is trying to reach a particular level and they feel threatened. Furthermore, pastoral

² Ilesanmi Oladele Ayodeji, "Role of Mentoring In Business Development In Nigeria," *Global Journal of Human Resource Management* 3, no.3(2015):17- 38; Odukoya, Jonathan Adedayo, "Challenges of Mentoring in the 21st Century Amongst Staff and Students of Covenant University and University of Uyo," 25 January 2020, <http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/4577/1/Challenges%20of%20Mentoring%20in%20the%2021st%20Century%20-%20Paper.docx>.

³ K. Tucker, *Establishing a mentoring and coaching programme*, (Randburg: Knowres Publishing, 2007), 1.

⁴ F.E. Freeks, "Old Testament Figures as Possible Current "Mentors": Exploratory Pastoral-Theological Reflections," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*. 30, no. 2 (2016): 236.

⁵ Parsloe, E. & Wrag, M., *Coaching and mentoring to improve learning*, (London: Kogan Page, 2000), 35.

⁶ Steve Adekanbi, "Efficacy of Mentoring Young Ministers for a Sustainable Healthy Church in Lagos East Baptist Conference," February 25, 2020, <https://www.grin.com/document/358451>

⁷ Andrew Schank, "Jealous Pastors," January 25, 2020, <http://www.theworkingpastor.com/archives/155>.

mentors tend to frustrate plans of their mentees when mentee have access to the well to do members of their churches.⁸ This is why their mentee does not see them as role models.⁹ Most times the mentee sees this hatred and tries not to fall into the trap of his mentor by responding in an unhealthy way. Mentees, on the other hand, are unteachable. Due to pride, they show disrespect to their mentors. In fact, this is one of the major reasons for the proliferation of so many churches today.¹⁰ It is unfortunate that these developments are going on among members of the clergy in Nigeria. Based on the theses above, Ex 18 has a lot to contribute towards preferring solutions to these challenges.

Exodus 18 recounts a story of mentorship accorded to Moses by Jethro the priest of Midian. Jethro had a close relationship with Moses. The relationship between both was cordial and based on transparency. Jethro desired the best for Moses's life and career. Jethro encouraged, motivated, taught and respected Moses his mentee (Ex 18:1-27).¹¹ He advised Moses concerning leadership through his wise counsel as is evidenced in Exodus 18, and what Moses learned enabled him to focus on more important issues that were often critical.¹² Also important to note is the fact that Moses was willing to be mentored. It is strongly believed that this pericope (Ex 18) will speak anew to the mentoring problem that has besieged the pastoral ministry in Nigeria.

This essay will be using the narrative analysis as the lens towards a proper interpretation of the mentoring in Ex 18. Narrative analysis is a genre of analytic frames whereby researchers interpret stories that are told within the context of research and/or are shared in everyday life.¹³ Narrative analysis is very useful in interpreting stories and histories due to the close observation of the plot, characters, setting, time, mood, point of view among others. Data were gotten from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include oral interviews and group discussions. The informants are mentees and mentors who willingly gave their own understanding of mentorship among the Nigerian clergy. The secondary sources used include textbooks, journals, and internet sources, among others.

Scholars have written a lot on mentoring and its impact on the mentee from academic and management point of view. For instance, mentoring according to Aremu & Adejoju "is a situation in which a junior staff member is distinctly enchanted by the personality, status, and record of achievement of a senior colleague in the same organisation".¹⁴ Aremu and Adejoju laid emphasis on what mentoring is in the Nigerian police force, a paramilitary institution in Nigeria. Another study conducted by Okurame and Balogun reveals that mentoring has these advantages to an institution or organisation: development of skills, easy access to organisational resources, career satisfaction and clarity of goals for the protegee'.¹⁵ Okurame and Balogun were interested in mentoring from the managerial point of view. Furthermore, Okurame research shows that mentoring covers all premeditated undertakings encouraged by firms to develop its employees (which may be family members in the case of family-owned businesses) in order to sustain and improve the firm's competitive advantage.¹⁶ Okurame thesis was based on the economic and educational viewpoint Literature on Biblical mentoring as a model for the Nigerian Clergy is scanty. Furthermore, literature on mentoring from pastoral-theological perspective is rare. These are the reasons why this study is important. Looking at the contemporary challenges the pastoral ministry in Nigeria, clergies are at logger heads with themselves.¹⁷ The senior clergy (mentor) sees his mentee (junior clergy) as someone who must continually be under him. This has turned the pastoral ministry in Nigeria into a conflict zone. Jethro's advice and closeness to Moses in the pericope is a very important narrative for the clergy in Nigeria.

This essay, first of all, looks at mentoring in Ex 18. Second, the article looks at the attributes of Jethro's mentorship of Moses. Third, mentoring in pastoral ministry in Nigeria is explored. The problem of lack of cordial working relationship between clergies (mentor and mentee) is also discussed. Thereafter, Ex 18 is applied in the Nigerian context which enables practical and theoretical recommendations to be drawn.

⁸ Chris Irekamba, "Why Do Envy, Jealousy Exist In God's House?," 22 November 2015, *The Guardian*, p.11

⁹ Matthew Ogune, "Nigeria Lacks Role Models to Mentor Youths – Clergy," *The Guardian*, 02 June 2019.

¹⁰ Ibiyinka Olusola Adesanya, "Environmental effects of Church proliferation: the Redeemed Christian church of God as a case study," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 15 (2011):177; Ngozi N. Iheanacho, "A critical look at contemporary Nigerian Christianity," *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition* 1 (2009): 104.

¹¹ Osai, O. Jason, Lucky UM Eleanya, Justin M. Orukwogu, and Nelson VC Okene, "Jethro as the patriarch of administration and management: An analysis of his works," *Journal of Social Sciences* 18, no. 3 (2009): 157; David Baron, *Moses on management: 50 leadership lessons from the greatest manager of all time*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 114.

¹² Jansen van Rensburg, M. & Nicolaides, A. "An analysis of theological and strategic management perspectives of Moses as a leader ", *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 96(2015):9

¹³ Mike Allen, "Narrative Analysis," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, February 12, 2020, <https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-communication-research-methods/i9374.xml>

¹⁴ Oyesoji Aremu, A. and Adeola Adeyoju, C. "Job Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Gender as Predictors of Mentoring in the Nigeria Police," *Policing: An International Journal* 26, no. 3 (2003):378

¹⁵ Okurame, David E., and S. K. Balogun. "Role of Informal Mentoring in the Career Success of First-line Bank Managers: A Nigerian Case study." *Career Development International* 10, no. 6-7 (2005): 513.

¹⁶ Okurame, David E. "Mentoring in the Nigerian Academia: Experiences and Challenges." *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring* 6, \ no. 2 (2008):45

¹⁷ Joel K. Biwul, "A paradigm shift in pastoral ministry in twenty-first century Nigeria: An examination of the trends, causes and its implications," *Stellenbosch – Theological Journal*, 4, no 1, (2018):91

Historical context of Exodus 18

Jethro (Ex 2:18) is also called Reuel (Ex 3:1) in Exodus. The name Reuel means “friend of God.”¹⁸ The fact that in the Bible (Gen 36:4), he was first called by this name could be putting emphasis to his relationship with the Most High God, whom he served as His priest, rather than a pagan deity.¹⁹ He also measures as the priest of Midian. The book of Numbers 10:29 reveals that Jethro was the father of Zipporah and also a Kenite shepherd. After Moses fled Egypt due to the death threats he received from the Pharaoh, he found himself in Midian. In Midian he was able to defend the seven daughters of Jethro against the shepherds.²⁰

Jethro was happy when his daughters told him of Moses’s kind gestures to them (Ex 2:17-20). He invited Moses to his house and gave him a job as his herdsman (Ex 2:20-21). Furthermore, he also gave him Zipporah for a wife. (Ex 2:21). Moses had a son from Zipporah whom he named “Gershom” which refers to the fact that Moses had been a stranger in a foreign land.²¹ Moses worked as a shepherd for Jethro for forty years (40) before God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses left his wife and his son to carry out the instruction of God who had called him from the burning bush (Ex 3:1-12:42).

News later reached Jethro that Moses had been used by God to deliver the Israelites from the land of slavery. Jethro then set out with the family of Moses to meet Moses at the Mountain of God (Ex 18:5). Moses was happy to see Jethro and he told him of all that God did for him and the Israelites (Ex 18:10-12). Jethro was happy he rendered burnt offering to the Lord in the wilderness (Ex 18:12).²²

Literary context of Exodus 18

Jethro presented Zipporah and the two sons (Gershom and Eliezer) of Moses to him. Moses had sent Zipporah and their sons back to Midian, rather than take them to Egypt, perhaps due to the dangers he would face in leading an entire nation out of slavery. Moses clearly trusted Jethro to take good care of his family and use wisdom in knowing when to reunite them.²³ Following the good news of the great deeds of Yahweh through Moses, Jethro officiated at a sacrifice to God that was attended by Aaron and the elders of Israel.²⁴ Aaron and all the elders of Israel came and joined Jethro in praising Yahweh and they ate bread with Jethro before the Lord (Ex 18:12). The next day Jethro observed that Moses sat from morning until evening judging the people. He felt very sorry for the stress that Moses was passing through. He advised Moses that carrying out this responsibility all alone is not good. He further mentored him to share the responsibilities of judgment.²⁵

He told Moses to look for men who fear the Lord, who spoke the truth, who hated covetousness and make them rulers and judges of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens as the case may be (Ex 18:21). He further instructed Moses that these men would oversee all matters within the jurisdiction allocated to them. However, he told Moses that if there is any great matter that cannot be handled by the judges, the matter would be brought to Moses. God leaves much to Moses figuring out how to find solution to the people’s problems which shows that God sometimes answers prayers indirectly.²⁶

Moses as the mentee gladly welcomed the advice of Jethro. He divided the Hebrews into thousands, hundreds and fifties and placed rulers over them to settle small disputes that came up. Jethro offered wise counsel to Moses, stepped in to help when needed and then got out of the way so as not to develop unnecessary control over Moses.²⁷

Pastoral Leadership and Mentorship: Themes and Lessons from Exodus 18

A critical analysis of Ex 18 could offer some important lessons for Christian communities on leadership and mentorship of and among pastoral ministers. A study of the pericope with reference to salient themes and issues embedded in for mentorship is key to this paper.

Theme One: Strong Relationship (Personal Friendship)

According to Henry Spence-Jones, Friendship is nothing else than a perfect concurrence on all subjects divine and

¹⁸ Beatrice J. W. Lawrence, “Jethro and the Jews: Jewish Biblical Interpretation and the Question of Identity,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, 42, no. 1 (2018):205.

¹⁹ Gotquestions Ministry, “Who was Jethro in the Bible?”, viewed on 23 December 2019 from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jethro-in-the-Bible.html>.

²⁰ Philo, A. & Charles D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 1; R. J. Rushdoony, “Exodus: Volume II of Commentaries on the Pentateuch,” (Vallecito: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2014).

²¹ James Rosenberg, “The Story of Moses’ Second Son”, February 2, 2017, 25 January 2020, <http://www.jewishrhody.com/stories/the-story-of-moses-second-son,6119>; Ismar Schorsch, “Stranger in a Foreign Land,” December 28, 2002, <http://www.jtsa.edu/stranger-in-a-foreign-land>.

²² Bob Deffinbaugh, “The Law of Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:1-17),” May 18, 2004 <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-law-burnt-offerings-leviticus-11-17>

²³ Who was Jethro in the Bible? 12 December 2019, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jethro-in-the-Bible.html>

²⁴ The Editors, “Jethro” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 23 December 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jethro>

²⁵ Charlie Garrett, “Exodus 18:1-12 (Jethro, the Priest of Midian),” 25 January 2020 <http://superiorword.org/exodus-18-1-12-jethro-the-priest-of-midian/>.

²⁶ Jon Bloom, *Why Jethro? The Wisdom of What God Doesn't Say*, 23 December 2019 <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-jethro-the-wisdom-of-what-god-doesnt-say>.

²⁷ Gotquestions ministries *Who was Jethro in the Bible?*, 12 December 2019, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jethro-in-the-Bible.html>.

human, accompanied by a feeling of kindness and attachment.²⁸ In other words, friendship requires a relationship that is healthy and based on good-will. Friendship also requires willingness to be in the company of each other. The text of exodus 18 portrays Jethro and Moses to have such a relationship. Two reasons accounts for this assertion. Firstly, sharing of joy with strong willingness to be in each other's company. This is seen through the account of how Jethro reacted to the news about what God had done through Moses. His reaction was to reach out to see and rejoice with Moses (Ex 18:1-9). This action is in accordance with oriental ideas of politeness. In oriental understanding, a polite sign of being welcoming to a visitor or of honouring someone require such a movement (see Genesis 18:2; Genesis 19:1; Genesis 32:6; Genesis 33:1; Luke 15:20; etc.).²⁹ Jethro demonstrated interest in the well-being and success of Moses. He thus rejoices in greatness of God's work through Moses and for the people of Israel became known to surrounding peoples, especially those with an interest in Moses as Jethro (Ex 18:1).³⁰ Secondly, reciprocity of trust, care and commitment could be seen. Notwithstanding the human differences, Moses and Jethro had a smooth working relationship. This was a relationship that allowed Jethro to entrust his daughter Zipporah in the hands of Moses. It was also a close relationship that allowed Moses to entrust the lives of his wife and two sons in the hands of Jethro his mentor. The existence of love, trust, humility and mutual commitment in their relationship is indicative of the good-will towards each other. The theme of friendship with strong relationship is pivotal in the text. Trust created the welcoming atmosphere that allowed for exchange between Moses and Jethro. This is an exchange in which an advice is given and taken. This indicates that the role that trust play in relationships is to eliminate fear. Following the existence of the trust and interest for the success of the other, Moses did not hesitate to heed to the piece of advice from Jethro. Likewise, Jethro did not hesitate to offer a piece of advice. Thus, strong bonding paved the way and sustained the mentoring of Moses by Jethro. Even though Moses was raised in all the wisdom and education of Egypt, Moses learned more about real leadership and mentoring from the priest and shepherd Jethro – whose flocks Moses tended until his call at Sinai.³¹

Theme Two: Openness and Honesty

Trust leads to willingness to share. Due to the trust that Moses had earned from Jethro, Moses was open in telling Jethro what was going on, how the Lord had used him in special ways to deliver the people of Israel. He was also opened to share with Jethro the encounters he has with the large crowds of people and the content of their gathering. Furthermore, he was open in telling Jethro about his fears (vv.25-16), his weakness and mistakes (v.8). This shows that there was transparency in the mentor-mentee relationship between Jethro and Moses. Moses gave Jethro an honest report, describing both the hardships and the deliverance.³² No word of reproach or blame seems to have been uttered on either side. No discord marred the perfect harmony. Over the still tendered meeting of the husband and father with his wife and children, the sacred historian, with a wise reticence, draws the veil.³³

Theme Three: Genuineness

Genuineness is a strong theme in Exodus 18, especially as it relates to the role of the mentor. Jethro was not Jealous on hearing of the great things that Moses has done (v.9); he considered Moses' successes as that of his (vv. 9-12). He was happy with how God had dealt with Moses. This made him sacrifice to God to show how he desired the best for Moses. Jethro was not content with mere words of joy and gratitude—not even with a solemn ascription of praise and blessing to Jehovah (Exodus 18:10). He must show his feelings by an act; so, in accordance with the ritual of the time, he took a burnt-offering and sacrificed.³⁴ It could be recalled that he was the one that came to Moses in the mountain of God; ordinarily if he was not genuine he would have considered it as an insult to come to Moses instead of Moses coming to him. Genuineness here gives room for humility to play out. The fact that Jethro desire the success, good and wellbeing of Moses, he, the father-in-law rather moved to Moses. Jethro genuinely desired the best for Moses, his mentee.

Theme Four: Positive investments

Jethro took the time to explain to Moses how to succeed in the area of his weakness (vv.13-23). He observed the way Moses alone was judging the thousands of Israelites and he saw this as detrimental to the health of Moses. As a good mentor, he called Moses and told him the implications of overworking oneself. He taught Moses the strategy of delegating responsibilities. Moses was advised to share the population of the people in into thousand, hundreds,

²⁸ Henry Spence-Jones, "Exodus 18," *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol 1, (Harrington Delmarva Publications, 2015), 1.

²⁹ Joseph S. Exell, Henry D. Spence-Jones, "Commentary on Exodus 18:4," *The Pulpit Commentary*, 14 December 2019, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tpc/exodus-18.html>.

³⁰ David Guzik, "Exodus 18 – Jethro's Counsel to Moses," 12 November 2018, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/exodus-18/>

³¹ David Guzik, "Exodus 18 – Jethro's Counsel to Moses,"

³² David Guzik, "Exodus 18 – Jethro's Counsel to Moses,"

³³ Joseph S. Exell, & Henry D. Spence-Jones, "Commentary on Exodus 18:4," *The Pulpit Commentary*, March 2, 2020, viewed on 14 December 2019 from <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tpc/exodus-18.html>.

³⁴ Joseph S. Exell, & Henry D. Spence-Jones, "Commentary on Exodus 18:4," *The Pulpit Commentary*, March 2, 2020, viewed on 14 December 2019 from <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tpc/exodus-18.html>.

fifties and tens and place men with the fear of God, with honesty, and men that were not covetous to judge over them (v.21). The advice of Jethro was not that Moses was unfit to hear their disputes; it was not that he did not care about their disputes; it was not that the job was beneath him, and it was not that the people did not want Moses to hear their disputes, it was simply because the job was too big for Moses to complete efficiently and effectively (his energies were spent unwisely, and justice was delayed for many in Israel).³⁵ Moses was very happy that Jethro was interested in his affairs notwithstanding the length of time they had lived apart..

Theme Five: Willingness to learn

Moses was willing to be mentored by Jethro. He was not stiff-necked trying to rub shoulders with Jethro. Notwithstanding how much and how far God had used Moses, the great number of people that he was leading, the command of respect he received from the people, he did recognise the place of Jethro in his life. He was open-minded to take heed to the pieces of advice from Jethro (vv. 24-26). Though Moses was the leader of a nation, he honoured Jethro as his father-in-law, a legitimate priest of God and his mentor not allowing his position of leadership to make him proud which is very typical of eastern courtesy.³⁶ Furthermore, Moses was teachable. This is deduced from the fact that when Jethro told him that the practice of handling all cases alone was not good for him (Ex 18:17), he listened and accepted it as godly counsel from a man like Jethro.³⁷ Moses could have decided to abandon Jethro's advice but since he was willing to learn and be better, he did not.

Theme Six: Freedom for the Mentee to develop

Jethro was learned enough to know when to leave the stage for Moses to be in charge of his own affairs. After giving his pieces of advice to Moses he “went his way into his own land” (v.27). He did not try to show authority as the mentor of Moses before the Israelites. After his encouragement and teaching (vv.13-23) he exited the stage for Moses to continue his leadership. This shows that he had accomplished his job as Moses' mentor. This also showed that Jethro knows demands of a good mentor.

From this backdrop, it is evident that the mentoring of Moses by Jethro involved motivation, advice, encouragement, constructive criticism and the “practice of mutual respect”.³⁸ Jethro was willing to provide mentorship even without the request of Moses. Moses was willing to be mentored not withstanding how great God had made him.

Mentoring among clergy in Nigeria

Nigeria is a very religious society which is evident in the number of worship centres found in all her nooks and cronies. Nigerians are, like other African, are “notoriously religious.”³⁹ Mentorship is found in most Nigerian churches. Some of these churches include, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church, the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and also Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA).⁴⁰ This shows that mentorship is a driving factor in pastoral ministry in Nigeria.⁴¹ Pastoral ministry in Nigeria is hierarchical in structure and composition. This is situation where there is a senior and junior clergy in the ministry. Hierarchy among the clergy is a systematic arrangement of power and duties among the pastoral ministers of a particular faith community in Nigeria. In the hierarchical structure, each priest at the helm of affairs in a diocese, zone, group, district or church has a priest or priests who are under his tutelage and mentorship.

A mentee is expected to be loyal to the mentor in pastoral ministry. As it regards the mentor, Tunji explains that:

Mentoring produces leaders that ensure continuity and maintain the culture and values of the institution because such leaders have not only been taught but also groomed and nurtured. They climb on the shoulders of giants and therefore are far more effective and visionary in administration. Mentoring is not to be confused with godfatherism which is exploitative and destructive in the long run and self-serving. Unlike godfatherism, mentoring is a power free relationship based on mutual respect and value for both mentor and mentee. Mentorship is ‘earned’ by reputation and integrity of purpose.⁴²

Unfortunately, mentorship has really gone sour amongst the pastoral ministry in Nigeria. The relationship between the mentor and the mentee has escalated to points where members are the ones that begin to settle their disputes.

³⁵ David Guzik, “Exodus 18 – Jethro’s Counsel to Moses.”

³⁶ David Guzik, “Exodus 18 – Jethro’s Counsel to Moses.”

³⁷ David Guzik, “Exodus 18 – Jethro’s Counsel to Moses.”

³⁸ Pelletier, C., *Mentoring in Action: A Month-by-Month Curriculum for Mentors and their New Teachers* (Boston: Pearson Education, Inc, 2006), n.p

³⁹ J.S Mbiti,., *African religions and philosophy*. (London: Heinemann, 1969), 1.

⁴⁰ Nathan H. Chiroma, “Mentoring: A sustainable means of developing Young leaders for the Church in Africa,” A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology to be presented at Stellenbosh University (December 2008):iv

⁴¹ Natasha Sistrunk Robinson, “Why Your Church Needs Group Mentoring” 26 January 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2014/october-online-only/why-your-church-needs-group-mentoring.html>.

⁴² Tunji Olaopa, “Mentoring Nigeria’s next generation for leadership,” *ThePunch*, 1 July 2018, 1.

For instance, at the Glory House Parish, on Oti Street, off Aka Avenue, Effurun, Delta State, some youths in support of a factional leader of the church came with two pastors to attack the church destroying signboard and other properties.⁴³ Members also escalate the conflict between the mentor and the mentee.⁴⁴ Mentors fail to live the type of life that they have been teaching to their members. Some spiritual mentors teach and point their mentees to character and requirements that one must possess that leads to eternal life, but they themselves do not showcase this character and requirements for external life they teach.⁴⁵ Mentorship among Christian ministers in Nigeria is marred by many accusations and counter accusations. Mentees accuse their mentors in the pastoral ministry of trying to frustrate their lives while others accuse their mentors of trying to subjugate and sabotage any efforts made for personal development. This is what Olowookere termed as exploitation, or egocentric behaviour on the part of the mentor.⁴⁶ There are those who want to be in the church leadership at all cost and are not prepared to share power.⁴⁷ They are ready to blackmail, kill or destroy those they consider as obstacles to achieving their goals.⁴⁸ Hatred, jealousy, pride, and lack of transparency on the part of the mentor and unwillingness to be mentored by the mentee are the problems bedeviling pastoral ministry.⁴⁹

These mentor priests also begin to hate their mentee when they discover that their mentee is performing more miracles than they are. They feel threatened that their mentee has begun to receive all the respect that is supposed to be accorded to them. In 1981, after the funeral ceremonies of Akindayomi, the senior pastors in Redeem Church in Nigeria fought against the emergence of Adeboye as the head of the church.⁵⁰ They felt that Adeboye was their mentee and above several hands who had functioned longer periods in the church. They begin by engaging their mentee in irrelevant assignments and postings just to frustrate them. To them, their mentee must always be under them spiritually and physically (pastoral ministry). They even resort to diabolic acts just to keep their position.⁵¹ They even go ahead in disgracing the person in their pulpit when preaching by telling the church how their mentee has been living in carnality until God himself decided to expose him.⁵² There is this unnecessary rivalry that mentors develop due to their canal lifestyle and hypocrisy.⁵³ Most of them entered pastoral work not for the edification of the body of Christ but for their self-glorification, hubris and avarice.⁵⁴

Also important is the fact that these mentors treat mentees who do not belong to their ethnic group with disdain. To them, no matter the mentee's gift and contribution, if he does not belong to their tribe, the mentee is as good as nothing and this development has assumed a pejorative and an anathematized dimension.⁵⁵ Thus, they refuse to give the mentee any beneficial assignments; they only give the mentee what will drain their energy and time which is based on hatred.⁵⁶ They tend not make their mentee to know the intrigues and strategies in the ministerial work success—spiritually and physically.⁵⁷ When the mentee tries to introduce something new in the church, his mentor will see it as trying to change the doctrine on which the church laid. Thus, the mentor describes this innovative act of the mentee as pride.

On the part of the mentee, some of them are not willing to be mentored. They will and can do everything to be successful after just a short space of time. Some of the mentees are anxious to take over the position of their mentors. This is because of the financial gains that the mentee has seen that the office of the mentor commands. Thus, some of the mentees castigate their mentors because they want to be appointed in his/her place.⁵⁸ Some of mentee also fail to realise that there are experiences which their mentors had that will be useful at every point of their lives. Some of them feel that once they are established in the pastoral ministry, they do not need the help, advice or anything from their mentor.

Impacts of mentor-mentee conflicts in ministerial work

The impact of the impasse between mentors and mentees in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. It has led to involvement

⁴³ John O. Nwachukwu, "Factions of Assemblies of God Church use soldiers to fight each other in Delta," *Dailyposts*, February 15, 2016.

⁴⁴ Lawrence Njoku, "Assemblies of God members fight over church property," *TheGuardian*, 27 February 2017 ; John O. Nwachukwu, "Factions of Assemblies of God Church Use Soldiers to Fight Each Other in Delta," *Dailyposts*, 15 February 2016 .

⁴⁵ Kpakpa Ndo, "Practical Spiritual Mentoring," 2 March 2015, <https://www.nairaland.com/2175607/practical-spiritual-mentoring>

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Olowookere, "Dysfunctional mentoring in Nigerian universities: implications for Effective academic development of faculty," 23 February 2020, www.m.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/content/download/file/Article+3

⁴⁷ Christian N. Anyanwu, "Creative Strategies for Conflict Management & Community Building," (Indiana: AnthonHouse, 2009) :55

⁴⁸ Peter O.Awojobi, "Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church," 21 December 2019 <https://www.biblicaltheology.com/www.biblicaltheology.com/AwojobiPO01>

⁴⁹ Carson Pue, *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 54.

⁵⁰ Femi Adelegan, *Nigeria's Leading Lights of the Gospel: Revolutionaries in Worldwide Christianity*, (Bloomington: WestBow Press, 2013):45.

⁵¹ Peter O.Awojobi, "Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church,"

⁵² Caroline Nwachinemere, Oral Interview, 13 July 2019.

⁵³ Femi Adelegan, *Nigeria's Leading Lights of the Gospel: Revolutionaries in Worldwide Christianity*, 45.

⁵⁴ Godspower Uroko, Oral Interview, 4 January 2019

⁵⁵ Pastor, M., *The Evil Of Tribalism In The Nigeria Church*, 09 February 2017, <https://www.nairaland.com/3619713/evil-tribalism-nigeria-church>

⁵⁶ Chris irekamba, "Tribalism and why it thrives in God's house," 5 May 2019, <https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/tribalism-and-why-it-thrives-in-gods-house/>

⁵⁷ An informant who is preferred to reveal this on condition of anonymity, 13 December 2019.

⁵⁸ Peter O.Awojobi, "Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church,"

in diabolic acts; it has led to assassinations; it has led to church division; it has led to physical combats in the church; and even churches have been destroyed as a result of these conflicts.

Mentors and mentees in the pastoral ministry have gone into consulting mediums and indulging in witchcraft just to see that they gather more powers for performing miracles than their competitor who is either the mentor or the mentee.⁵⁹ Most of them end up opening their own church with the blood and body of Human beings. This is in the bid to make the other person feel jealous and frustrated. In some instances, there have been suspicions of mentors and mentees even preparing charms and poisons to kill one another. For instance, Success Oni Onwaeze, the general overseer of her church, Salvation Solution Centre of All Nations in Warri, Nigeria was claimed to be poisoned by her junior pastor.⁶⁰ Awojobi reported that after the death of Pastor Bilewu Oshoffa, several law suits were filed by ministers in Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) who claimed to have received the blessing of the later leader to succeed him. There were allegations of using charms by rival claimants to suppress one another.⁶¹

It has also been observed that mentors and mentees sometimes engage in conflict with intent to eliminate each other. For example, in the context of mentoring relationship, the pastor of the Life House Ministry, Ojo Barracks, Benjamin Akinsanya, allegedly sponsored assassins to kill Pastor Janet Ogunshola, for becoming more popular than him in church ministry in the Ojo area of the state.⁶² It was reported that Akinsanya allegedly paid the suspects N500,000 to terminate the life of Ogunshola, who is the pastor of the Glorious Chapel Ministry on Adeleye Street, Ojo, so as to prevent her from becoming more popular than him.⁶³ That is, when they feel that the other is trying to outsmart or outdo them in the pastoral ministry, they use physical weapons and machineries to get them eliminated.

There is division in most Churches due to conflict between mentors and those who are supposed to be under their guidance to grow in pastoral ministry. This often occurs due to lack of understanding regarding how affairs of the Church should be run. A good example is Assemblies of God Nigeria chapter where the church has been divided into two sections. One section is for the general overseer who is seen as the mentor while the other is for the assistant general overseer who is seen as his mentee.⁶⁴ Also, in the church of God Mission under Archbishop Benson Idahosa, there was a leadership conflict after his death. Each of the mentees insisted that he was chosen by the late leader to replace him. His wife Margaret Idahosa was ordained as his successor which made some bishops and pastors in the church to float their own ministries.⁶⁵

There have been cases of physical combat in churches due to the fact that those loyal to the pastor engage in physical combat with those loyal to pastors under him. This thesis above was summarise by Young thus: “Many modern churches now face a leadership crisis because most church growth consultants (far too few of them pastors of local churches) lack a sufficient biblical theology of leadership training to navigate the cultural and technological shifts now challenging congregations.”⁶⁶

Most churches have met their demise since there are disagreements between the leader and those under him. Sometimes these conflicts end in security agents locking up the church. The reason given by the police was to prevent bloodshed, arson and wanton destruction of property.⁶⁷

Applying Exodus 18 for the benefits of Nigerian ministers

In the mentorship relation between Jethro and Moses, friendship was key. That is there was this close relationship that made them trust each other. Trust lead to a strong bonding between the mentors and mentees. This is not the case in Nigeria. Contrary to building trust, cheating seems to exist in the relationship between mentor and mentee. It makes it difficult in developing strong relationships. From this backdrop, one could say that neither the mentor nor the mentee is prepared to make sacrifices in order build and maintain healthy relationship. The story in Exodus 18, appeals to Christian leaders to build healthy relationships that allows for trust and openness to share with each other. This way, mentorship can be given to those who need it in a mutual and healthy manner Moses the mentee gave Jethro his

⁵⁹ Obinna Akukwe, Backslidden Pastors and their Patronage of a Port Harcourt Based Occult Woman, 11 December 2012, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/435243/backslidden-pastors-and-their-patronage-of-a-port.html>

⁶⁰ Simbiat Ayoola, “Colleagues Mourn Late Delta Prophetess as they Claim she was Poisoned by her Pastors,” viewed on 6 January 2020 from <https://www.legit.ng/1291993-colleagues-mourn-late-delta-prophetess-claim-poisoned-by-pastors.html>

⁶¹ Peter O.Awojobi, “Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church,”

⁶² Oluwatosin Omojuyigbe, “Pastor Sends Assassins after Fellow Cleric over Popularity”, *The Punch* December 4, 2019.

⁶³ Oluwatosin Omojuyigbe, “Pastor Sends Assassins after Fellow Cleric over Popularity,

⁶⁴ John Chuks Azu, “Two Factions Clash over Leadership in Assemblies of God,” 6 August 2018, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/two-factions-clash-over-leadership-in-assemblies-of-god-264441.html>; Emmanuel Nzomiwu, “Police Invade Assemblies of God Church with Armoured Tank, Disperse Members,” 6 January 2020, <https://www.independent.ng/police-invade-assemblies-of-god-church-with-armoured-tank-disperse-members/>

⁶⁵ Peter O.Awojobi, “Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church,”

⁶⁶ Douglas E. Baker, “The Church as Mentor: A Review of The Mentoring Church by Phil Newton,” 26 January 2020, <https://founders.org/reviews/the-church-as-mentor-a-review-of-the-mentoring-church-by-phil-newton/>

⁶⁷ Mojirola Eniola, “Kukah leads procession to protest against insecurity,” 27 February 2020, <https://thepentecost.com.ng/kukah-leads-procession-in-sokoto-to-mourn-deaths-from-insecurity/>

mentor an honest report of his ministry. He told Jethro about his experiences, his mistakes, and his weaknesses. He was transparent and confided in Jethro all he had experienced and achieved. This is because of the confidence he had on Jethro. Comparing this to the Nigerian situation, most ministers in Nigeria are not transparent to their mentors. They give dishonest report about their ministry and its progress. Mentees feel that if they tell their mentors their failures, they may not gain respect in their presence.

Jethro was a sincere mentor. He rejoiced with Moses having learnt of what God had done through Moses. With regards to Nigeria, some mentors feel uncomfortable when they hear of the strides their mentee is making in the ministry. They begin to nurse ill feeling about their mentee.⁶⁸ This is the reason they engage in unnecessary conflicts with their mentees.⁶⁹

Jethro saw the wrong method of administration that Moses was using in judging the people. He advised Moses to select people to the judging groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. In the Nigerian context, Mentors do not teach their mentee; they do not encourage their mentee; they do not admonish their mentee on what to do, how to do it and when to do it. This is the reason mentees make so much mistake in the Ministry. These assertions above are based on the personal experience of the researcher with the victims.

Moses was willing to be mentored by Jethro. The pieces of advice that Jethro gave to him, he followed and adhered to them. This indicates that Moses was teachable. In Nigeria today, mentees try not willing to take advice or orders from their mentors. In fact, some mentees see any decision and advice from their mentors as a calculated attempt to stop their progress, growth and development.

Jethro was so a perfect mentor that he knew when to allow Moses to take decisions on his own accord. In Nigeria, mentors have this inordinate domineering attitude like trying to continue to control, subjugate and intrude into the private affairs of their mentees

Recommendation

From the reading of the story of Jethro and Moses in Exodus 18, one finds some pivotal lessons that are relevant to mentoring process in pastoral ministry. Putting these lessons into perspective with the Nigerian pastoral mentoring situation, the following strategies may help in improving the relationship between mentor and mentee in pastoral ministry in Nigeria. They include:

1. A close relationship should be developed between the mentor and the mentee which could be accomplished by the mentors' guiding their mentees on the good path
2. The mentor and mentee should be transparent in their dealings. When mentees face challenges they should be free in telling their mentors what they are going through.
3. Mentors should be genuine in their mentorship. Mentors should not be jealous when they find out that their mentees are performing better than them in the ministry. Instead, they should see the success of their mentee as their own success.
4. Mentors should be ready to render assistance and give pieces of advice to their mentees when they see them commit or about to commit any error.
5. Mentees should be prepared to be mentored. That is, the need for openness to learn. They should know that for them to make a positive impact in the ministry they need mentorship to overcome certain mistakes.
6. Mentors should respect the capabilities, talents, and self-worth of mentees. They should know where to go with them, what extent to do certain things with them and the time to leave them to grow on their own.

CONCLUSION

Jethro encouraged, taught and mentored Moses. The key thing that characterised the learning process for Moses by Jethro was humility. Jethro was humble enough to even call on Moses to see how he was faring doing. He did not wait for Moses to come with his problem first. Jethro was not jealous about the great achievements that Moses had made compared to himself who had been a priest of Midian for a long time. Ministers in Nigeria should learn to show love amongst themselves. The mentee should be duly guided and mentored to be greater than them. They should not see the success of their mentee as a reduction of the respect the congregation gives to them. Mentees also should be willing to learn. They should be teachable. Ministerial or pastoral work is for the growth of the kingdom of God and not for competition. The primary responsibility of church leaders is to care for and nurture believers.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Peter O. Awojobi, "Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church,"

⁶⁹ Oral Interview with Glory Nwachinemere on March 25, 2018

⁷⁰ Peter O. Awojobi, *Church Management* (Ilorin: Kingdom Power Communications, 2011), 41.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aremu, Oyesoji A. & Adeyoju, Adeola C. "Job commitment, job satisfaction and gender as predictors of mentoring in the Nigeria Police." *Policing: An International Journal*, 26 No. 3 (2003):377-385.
- Awojobi, P. O. *Church Management*. Ilorin: Kingdom Power Communications, 2011.
- Awojobi, P.O. "Leadership Conflict in the Nigerian Church." Accessed 21 December 2019.
<https://www.biblicaltheology.com/www.biblicaltheology.com> > AwojobiPO01.
- Ayodeji, I.O. "Role of Mentoring in Business Development in Nigeria." *Global Journal of Human Resource Management* 3, no.3, (2015):17-38.
- Ayoola, Simbiat, "Colleagues mourn late Delta prophetess as they claim she was poisoned by her pastors." Accessed 6 January 2020. <https://www.legit.ng/1291993-colleagues-mourn-late-delta-prophetess-claim-poisoned-by-pastors.html>.
- Azu, J.C., "Two factions clash over leadership in Assemblies of God." *DailyTrust*, 6 August 2018.
- Baker, Douglas E., "The Church as Mentor: A Review of The Mentoring Church by Phil Newton." Accessed 26 January 2020 from <https://founders.org/reviews/the-church-as-mentor-a-review-of-the-mentoring-church-by-phil-newton/>
- Biwul, J. Tihitshak, "A paradigm shift in pastoral ministry in twenty-first century Nigeria: An examination of the trends, causes and its implications," *Stellenbosch – Theological Journal*, 4, no 1, (2018):91–111.
- Bloom, Jon, *Why Jethro? The Wisdom of What God Doesn't Say*. Accessed 23 December 2019.
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-jethro-the-wisdom-of-what-god-doesnt-say>
- Deffinbaugh, Bob, "The Law of Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:1-17)." Accessed May 18, 2004.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/2-law-burnt-offerings-leviticus-11-17>
- Farbiarz, R., "What Moses Learned from His Father-In-Law, The Midianite has concerns about the well-being of the Israelites and their leader Moses." Accessed 22 December 2019.
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/yitros-advice/>
- Freeks, F.E., "Old Testament Figures as Possible Current "Mentors": Exploratory Pastoral-Theological Reflections." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 30, No. 2,(2016): 236-248
- Garrett, Charlie, "Exodus 18:1-12 (Jethro, the Priest of Midian)." Accessed 25 January 2020.
<http://superiorword.org/Exodus-18-1-12-Jethro-The-Priest-Of-Midian/>
- Gotquestions Ministry, "Who was Jethro in the Bible?" Accessed 23 December 2019.
<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jethro-In-The-Bible.Html>
- Guzik, D., "Exodus 18 – Jethro's Counsel to Moses." Accessed 12 November 2018. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/exodus-18/>
- Henry Spence-Jones, "Exodus 18," *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol 1, (Harrington Delmarva Publications, 2015), 1.
- Ismar Schorsch, "Stranger in a Foreign Land." Accessed December 28, 2002. \ <http://www.jtsa.edu/stranger-in-a-foreign-land>.
- Mbiti, J.S., *African religions and philosophy*, London: Heinemann, 1969.
- Ndo, K., "Practical Spiritual Mentoring." Accessed 2 March 2015.
<https://www.nairaland.com/2175607/practical-spiritual-mentoring>
- Njoku, Lawrence, "Assemblies of God members fight over church property," *TheGuardian*, 27 February 2017
- Nwachukwu, J.O., "Factions of Assemblies of God Church use soldiers to fight each other in Delta." *DailyPost*, 15 February 2016.
- Nzomiwu, E., "Police Invade Assemblies Of God Church With Armoured Tank, Disperse Members." *Independent*, 6 January 2019.
- Odukoya, J. Adedayo, "Challenges of Mentoring in the 21st Century Amongst Staff and Students of Covenant University and University of Uyo" Accessed 22 February 2020.
<http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/4577/#.XmE7TfKjIU>
- Ogune, Matthew, "Nigeria lacks role models to mentor youths – Clergy." *TheGuardian*, 02 June 2019.
- Okurame, David E., "Mentoring in the Nigerian academia: experiences and challenges." *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring* 6, no. 2 (2008).
- Okurame, David E., & Balogun, S. K., "Role of informal mentoring in the career success of first-line bank managers: A Nigerian case study." *Career Development International* 10, no. 6-7 (2005).
- Olaopa, Tunji, "Mentoring Nigeria's next generation for leadership," *ThePunch*, 1 July 2018
- Pelletier, C., *Mentoring in action: A month-by-month curriculum for mentors and their new teachers*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc, 2006
- Philo, A. & Charles D.Yonge, *The Works of Philo* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub., 1993), 1;
- Robinson, N.S., "Why Your Church Needs Group Mentoring." Accessed on 26 January 2020.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2014/october-online-only/why-your-church-needs-group-mentoring.html>

Rosenberg, James, “The story of Moses’ second son.” Accessed 25 January 2020.

<http://www.jewishrhody.com/stories/the-story-of-moses-second-son,6119>;

Rushdoony, J., “Exodus: Volume II of Commentaries on the Pentateuch,”

Vallecito: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2014.

Schank, Andrew, “Jealous Pastors.” Accessed January 25, 2020. [Http://www.theworkingpastor.com/archives/155](http://www.theworkingpastor.com/archives/155)

Spence-Jones, Henry, “Exodus 18,” *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol 1, (Harrington Delmarva Publications, 2015).

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Jethro.” Accessed 23 December 2017.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jethro>

Tucker, K., *Establishing a mentoring and coaching programme*. (Randburg: Knowres Publishing, 2007), 1.

Young, “Shock As 2 Pastors And Church Members Fight Dirty In Public... You Won’t Believe Why.”

Accessed 6 February 2018. <https://www.informationng.com/2018/02/shock-2-pastors-church-members-fight-dirty-public-wont-believe.html>.