

ON SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNDERSTANDING SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Godfried Asamoah*

School of Social Sciences, Kingdom philosophy Research & Human Development Institute, Accra, Ghana, West Africa.

Email: *go4df4@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Jewish Philosopher and Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth is the first to have asserted and literally demonstrated the servant leadership model. Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus demonstrated that true leaders are servants of others and slaves to their Divine purposes. Servant leaders live with a set of characteristics that make them radically different from all other types of leaders. Such characteristics include, *Agapao love, humility, altruism, Vision, Trust, Empowerment and service*. The greatest demonstration of servant leadership is the giving of one's life. This is the ultimate application of that theory and we see it perfectly illustrated by the theory's first and main proponent-Jesus Christ of Nazareth. In effect, servant leaders lay down their life for their followers.

Keywords: *Servant leadership, Agapao love, humility, altruism, Vision, Trust, Empowerment, service.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ever since humankind appeared on planet earth, the quest to dominate and control their external environments and to bring order into chaotic circumstances has been a perpetual challenge. From one civilization to the other, one could observe, that this inherent nature of the human species to lead, manage and subjugate the resources of its natural environments and foster harmonious social relationships have always remained issues of crucial significance. From the earliest African civilizations in Egypt, through the Phoenician, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires up to the 21st century, the concept of leadership has always remained not only the most momentous but also very elusive. This is because human history is replete with evidence of the impact of leadership and leaders on society, albeit, in both positive and negative ways. In some cases, for instance, in Nazi Germany, under the rule of Adolf Hitler, conflict in leadership ideologies between himself and other leaders of his day, resulted in the loss of numerous innocent lives. Hitler's tyrannical rule led to the slaughter of nearly 6million Jews in what is popularly known as the Holocaust. In other jurisdictions, the emergence of great leadership and leaders has brought solutions, prosperity, advancement and hope to millions of followers. For example, the Babylonian and Egyptian empires under Nebuchadnezzar I and Ramses II, respectively, were very wealthy and scientifically advanced societies which became epitomes of great civilizations. Some of their achievements, to mention but a few, were the construction of the "hanging gardens" in Babylon and the famous "Egyptian pyramids"- both of which even by contemporary scientific estimations, represent outstanding and astonishing feats for which reason they are classified as under the "Seven Wonders of the World".

Great philosophers and religious leaders have conjectured in its several ramifications, the concept of leadership since the earliest civilizations, through medieval times to the 21st century information technology age. Yet, the concept of leadership seems to have several applications, definitions and most importantly, it appears to be underpinned by diametrically opposed philosophical ideologies. Therefore, there is no universal consensus on the concept of leadership.

1.1 Origin of Servant Leadership Concept: Jewish Rabi, Jesus Christ

Concerning the origin of the servant leadership concept, the literature, to a large extent, seems to a point to the teachings of the Jewish Philosopher, Professor and Leader of Christianity, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He made this profound statement when there arose an argument amongst his students about the leader-follower dyadic relationship and the ideal leadership model (Luke Chapter 22: 25-27):

*25 Jesus told them, "In this world the **kings and great men [Leaders] lord it over [manipulate, oppress]** their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.'*

*26 But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, **and the leader should be like a servant.** [Emphasis added].*

27 Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

The implication of Jesus' exposition is that ideal leadership is about servant hood. In other words, authentic leaders are servants. This statement of the Philosopher at that time and even today, seems to challenge classical leadership styles and theories such as ; great man hypothesis, situational leadership; path-goal theory; contingency leadership; leader-member exchange;

charismatic leadership; transformational leadership; democratic leadership; autocratic leadership style and, totalitarianism etc.

However, the subject of leadership, and for that matter, servant leadership, has been studied in academic circles. Although servant leadership appears to be a novel concept today, it could be asserted that it was contemporaneously birthed with the appearance of the human species on the planet. Servant leadership could be classified as a type of leadership, or arguably, the ideal model of leadership. Hence, to understand servant leadership requires one to at least appreciate the general concept of leadership. Unfortunately, the concept of leadership lacks universal consensus and this has resulted in a plethora of theories and apparently mixed empirical findings.

1.3 A Universal Definition of Leadership?

Highlighting the daunting and elusive nature of seeking understanding of the “leadership” concept, Bennis (1959), retorted years ago:

“Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it ... and still the concept is not sufficiently defined”. (p. 159).

The lack of a single, universally acceptable definition of leadership appears to be fueled by the rapid emergence of divergent leadership ideologies and philosophies and this view is further buttressed by Neuberger (2002).

The question therefore is, what is leadership? While it is conceded that there are no universally acceptable definitions of leadership, it is also worth stating that there are a few definitions of leadership that are, perhaps, worth noting;

International Leadership Consultant, Myles Munroe (2014), defined leadership as, "the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by a passion, generated by a vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose" (p. 49). Munroe's (2014) definition of leadership suggests that leadership essentially involves;

- *Capacity to influence* –the leader needs to possess some intrinsic ability to affect and change the attitudes and behavior of followers.
- *Leadership influence is the result of inspiration*- leaders employ the power of inspiration, not manipulation or oppression, to change the behavior of their followers.
- *Leadership inspiration is derived from a passion*- Leaders are passionate about their visions and their passion is the latent driver of and motivation behind their behaviors and actions.
- *Leadership passion is produced by a vision*- Leaders always possess a vision, that is, a clear mental portrait of where they want to be as individuals. Leaders also have a clear picture in mind regarding the future destination of their organization.
- *Leadership vision is generated by a conviction*- Leaders possess unique belief systems, values, ethics and principles that strongly influence their attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles.

- *Leadership conviction is contingent on purpose*- Leaders live their lives for a higher purpose which may be derived from their beliefs and sometimes religious inclinations and philosophical orientations.

According to Sharma and Jain (2013, p.310), "Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent". They go further to present an analogous definition of leadership presented by Northouse (2007, p3) — "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal". The definitions of Sharma and Jain (2013) and Northouse (2007) point to some essential ingredients of the leadership concept:

- *Leadership is a process* – this implies that leadership takes place over time and might require some effort on the part of both leaders and followers.
- *Leadership involves influence*-there must be a leader who changes the behavior of a follower through influence. Both leaders and followers are involved together in the leadership process. Leaders need followers, and followers need leaders (Burns, 1978; Jago, 1982).
- *The goal of leadership is achievement*- the purpose of a leader's influence on a follower is to drive the followers' passion, skills and energies towards the achievement of specific objectives.

The definitions of Sharma and Jain (2013) and Northouse (2007) emphasize the significance of process in leadership development and in this sense are synchronous with Jago (1982) who

asserted that leaders carry out the process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills, a phenomenon he described as *Process Leadership*. However, the loophole in the views of Sharma and Jain (2013) and Northouse (2007) on leadership are quickly revealed when one considers the *Trait Leadership* (Jago, 1982) argument- While leadership is learned, the skills and knowledge processed by the leader can be influenced by his or hers attributes or traits; such as beliefs, values, ethics, and character. Knowledge and skills contribute directly to the *process* of leadership, while the other attributes give the leader certain characteristics that make him or her unique. From this perspective therefore, leadership, could be described as being influenced by certain inherent values, beliefs, ideologies and philosophies of the leader, which arguably, are still learnable.

The above definitions of Sharma and Jain (2013) and Northouse (2007) coupled with the arguments of Jago (1982) makes the concept of "servant leadership" very crucial to contemplate and study. The question is whether servant leadership should be, at least normatively speaking, construed as a leadership style, theory, or a mere manifestation of latent leadership paradigms. In order to gain a formal understanding of the servant leadership concept, it is important, at this juncture, to look at the origin of the concept in academic literature.

Like it has been argued above, the concept of servant leadership was first taught by the Judeo-Christian Philosopher Jesus of Nazareth. But it could also be said that His teaching was more informal as it was at the time, addressed to His disciples and ordinary people of His day. Moreover, Jesus' principles of servant leadership were probably not based upon a systematic mode of scientific enquiry but most likely on intuition and observation. However, in tracing the origin of

the servant leadership concept as a formal concept, it is worth noting that the term was first proposed by Greenleaf (1970), who was the first, perhaps, since Jesus of Nazareth mentioned it, to provide a much more concise and precise definitions and descriptions of the concept.

1.4 Greenleaf and the Evolution of Servant Leadership Theory

In 1970, in the essay entitled, *The Servant as Leader* (Spears, 2002), Greenleaf first unveiled this concept of servant-leadership. Servant leadership, in the view of Greenleaf, alluded to a unique leadership type that may be classified under the democratic/participatory style. This theory advocates (Greenleaf, 1970) that a leader's primary passion, motivation and role is to serve and meet the needs of others, which optimally should be the prime motivation for leadership. According to Russell and Stone (2002) and McMinn (2001), servant leaders develop people, helping them to strive and flourish. In the view of Stone, Russell and Patterson (2004), servant leadership is a belief or conviction that organizational goals will be attained in the long-run only by first enhancing the growth, development and general well-being of the individuals who constitute the organization. It is, therefore, a leadership style that emphasizes the need for leaders to be responsive to the needs and concerns of their followers, empathize with them, take care of them and nurture them (Northouse, 2007). Servant leadership theory argues that the acid test of the leader is whether those being served end up experiencing growth and development as persons and whether while being served they become healthier, wiser and with a greater capacity in themselves, to become servant leaders (Wheeler, 2011). In effect, servant leaders can indeed pioneer, build and develop and stimulate organizations to a high level of achievement but this would usually not happen until after the servant leader has successfully developed the

members of the organization. The servant leader, therefore, believes in organizational development and performance. However, their approach to stimulating organizational performance is usually through people development.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Literature Review

In the view of Stone, Russell, & Patterson (In Press) servant leadership is about focus. Here the focus of the leader is on followers and his/her behaviors and attitudes are congruent with this follower focus. This, they argue, is in sharp contrast to the idea that servant leadership is merely a subset of transformational leadership where the focus of the leader is on the organization, or organizational objectives. Servant leadership stands alone in regard to this follower focus.

The question has been raised as what exactly servant leadership is. In responding to this question, Patterson (2003) asserts that servant leadership is a virtuous theory. A virtue, in this regard, is qualitative characteristic that is an inherent component of part of one's character, something within a person that is internal, almost spiritual (Whetstone, 2001); a characteristic that exemplifies human excellence (Yu, 1998). Most notable in the field of virtues is Aristotle, who is credited with establishing the framework for virtue definition (Kennedy, 1995).

The word "virtue" comes from the Greek word *arête*, meaning excellence. The Aristotelian virtue is defined as comprising three elements: (a) good habits, (b) the middle ground between the extremes of too much and too little, and (c) a habit that is a firm and settled disposition

toward choosing good (Kennedy, 1995). According to Kennedy (1995), virtue theory alludes to the idea of doing the right things with a focus on moral character. Virtue does not answer the overall question of right or wrong, but rather, it seeks to do the right thing in a particular situation or circumstance.

Virtue theory is deemed as the oldest tradition in Western philosophy with its origin deeply embedded in Greek civilization, most notably in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Arjoon, 2000). In modern times there has been a resurfacing of the issue of ethics, albeit, with renewed concentration on the rights of others, or, rather, with an emphasis on other people, bringing focus back to the investigation into virtue theory.

Arjoon (2000) preaches that virtue theory is valuable to leadership due to the focus on the common good, rather than of profit maximizing, therefore earning a place in leadership. Virtue theory allows leadership to be concerned with the dynamic interactions among organizational members. As explained by Whetstone (2001), a virtue is a qualitative characteristic that is part of one's character, something within a person that is internal, almost spiritual; and further, that servant leadership is the preferred paradigm because servant leaders serve according to highly principled means.

Patterson (2003) describes servant leadership as encapsulating seven virtuous constructs, which work in processional pattern. These are (a) agapao love, (b) humility, (c) altruism, (d) vision, (e) trust, (f) empowerment, and (g) service. These constructs are virtues and become illuminated within a servant leadership context. See Figure 1. The following provides a discussion of each of the constructs of servant leadership. Servant Leadership Research Roundtable – August 2003.

i. **Agapao love**

Love is mysterious, a concept that in some circles has been mystified for centuries and eluded a true conceptual definition (Myers & Shurts, 2002). Greenleaf (2002) points out that love is indefinable, yet, it has manifestations that are infinite. As a sophisticated idea, love is constrained by multiple definitions and an assortment of typologies; however, the interest in the subject matter is nothing less than a 'psychological preoccupation', according to Myers & Shurts (2002). Love is the foundation of the servant leadership/follower relationship, specifically *agapao* love. According to Winston (2002), *agapao* love, comes from the Greek term for "moral love", meaning to do the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons. *Agapao* love means to love in a social or moral sense and includes "embracing the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety" (p. 5).

This type of love applies to today's leaders, in that leaders must consider the needs of their followers. This love is shown by leaders who consider each person as a total person -- one with needs, wants, and desires. *Agapao* love is alive and well in organizations today and it is the foundation for what Winston (2002) calls the "platinum rule" (or do unto others as they would want you to do). *Agapao* love is consistent with servant leadership to the extent that servant leaders must have such great love for the followers that they are willing to learn the gifting and talents of each one of the followers. The leader that leads with *agapao* love has a focus on the employee first, then on the talents of the employee, and lastly on how this benefits the organization.

Ferch & Mitchell (2001) present love as a goal for leaders, whereby the leader is emotionally, physically, and spiritually present for the follower. In addition, they point out that this relationship

is reciprocal and includes the premise of challenging any behavior that is inconsistent with love. Crom (1998) agreed that servant leaders genuinely care for others and are interested in the lives of followers. Winston (2002) also advocated this approach in his work on the Beatitudes, specifically stating, "The call of *agapao* love in the organization is to go far beyond the seeing people as 'hired hands', to seeing them as 'hired hearts'" (p. 9). Servant leaders demonstrate love by leading with feeling; this fosters understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion (Gunn, 2002). This love leads to serving the best interests of others, illuminating the corporate culture, and freeing the leader from self-doubt, self-criticism, and self-imposed limitations.

Servant leaders love unconditionally, genuinely appreciate followers, and care for their people (Russell, 2001; Russell & Stone, 2002). With this love, which stems from the servant leader's personal values—or virtues—servant leaders inspire hope and courage. Furthermore, the servant leader seeks to esteem and honor people. Wagner-Marsh and Conley (1999) stated that servant leadership teaches that humans have value in their own right.

As noted by Patterson (2003), servant leaders demonstrate love in numerous ways. They exhibit more care for the people than the organization's bottom line, are genuine and real without pretense, show appreciation, celebrate milestones, are sympathetic, listen actively, communicate and are empathetic.

ii. Humility

Another essential characteristic of servant leader is humility. Humility has been construed as a paradoxical concept, in that humility is often viewed as low-regard, meekness, or permissiveness;

however, humility ought to be regarded as the non-over-estimation of one's merits, which is fitting for leaders who, within their organization, may have the greatest temptation to think themselves superior (Hare, 1996). While some consider humility a weakness, for Hare it is a virtue that means *not* over-valuing one's self; thus, it is a virtue that better enables its practitioners to respect the worth of all other persons. The peculiarity of the virtue of humility is that if one is truly humble then one *cannot* esteem oneself (Bagger, 2002).

Humility is the capacity to keep one's accomplishments and talents in perspective, which includes self-acceptance, and further includes not being self-focused but rather focused on others (Sandage & Wiens, 2001). Therefore, humility represents a person's ability to strike a fair balance between egocentrism and altruism. Humility connotes a peaceful virtue that rejects self-glorification (Lawrence, 2002). Bower (1997) linked servant leadership with the unassuming behavior of being humble; he believed that humility is a necessity for chief executives, or leaders. The virtue of humility causes one to consider moderation, to listen to the advice of others, and to come with the realization that the right use of power means rejecting the dictatorial (Harrison, 2002).

Pielstick (2000) opines that the servant leader is fair and humble and this assertion is in tandem with Swindoll (1981), who stated a major characteristic of servant leaders as being their capacity to be vulnerable and humble. Servant leaders do not center attention on their own accomplishments, but rather on other people. Fairholm and Fairholm (2000), concur, with their

statement that the servant leader's concentration on service limits the negative effects of self-interest, and humility counteracts that self-interest.

Servant leaders exhibit humility in their eagerness to listen willingly, feel accountable to those served and openly receive criticism and advice as a welcomed opportunity to better serve (Blanchard, 2000). Story (2002) notes that humble behavior of this type builds consensus with followers. Collins (2001) adds that humility is characterized by compelling modesty, by shunning public adulation and not being boastful, by demonstrating calm determination, relying on inspired standards, setting up of successors for great success, and looking to the people of the company to appropriate that success.

Servant leaders are not arrogant (Crom, 1998), see things from another's perspective and show appreciation and respect for leadership within the organization. The servant leader is not interested in their image or in being exalted, but in being more accountable (Swindoll, 1981) and useful to their followers. Servant leaders intentionally create the opportunities to enable them serve with authentic desire to help others and they constantly search for ways to serve others by staying in touch with people. Collins (2001) sees humility as a test of leadership, differentiating the good from the great.

Servant leaders realize they do not have all the answers. One of the greatest gifts a servant leader can give the follower is the gift of the self; this shows care and takes place with reverence, respect, and humility (Covey, 2002). Swindoll (1981) who stated that the giving of the "self"

illustrates humility of the servant, also pointed out that this humility is not to be equated with poor self-esteem. In the view of Swindoll, humility is consistent with a healthy ego. For this reason, servant leaders can be both confident and unassuming, maintaining a healthy self-image but not being haughty, arrogant, or pretentious (Bower, 1997).

***iii.* Altruism**

The third characteristic of servant leaders is altruism. Scholarly interest in altruism dates back to the early 1800's, with debate and discussion as to a clear definition of the term and discussed widely in varied disciplines. In general, this research into altruism, according to Kaplan (2000), has been undertaken in the literature in order to understand motives and behaviors; thus altruism has been understood, in general, as a connection between good motives and good behavior and has been explored on the individual level and as a human quality, yielding a general definition of altruism as helping others just for the sake of helping. Monroe (1994) and Kaplan (2000) believe altruism is that which benefits another person, however, often a risk or sacrifice is involved, and often this risk or sacrifice is against one's own personal interests.

Altruism, from the perspective of Monroe (1994), alludes not merely to having good intentions or being well-meaning; altruism is more about concern for the welfare of another. DeYoung (2000) also concurred with the traditional view of altruism as an unselfish concern for others often involving personal sacrifice; however, he believed that the personal pleasure derived from helping others should also be included in our understanding of altruism. In contrast, Hattwick (1986) placed altruism at one end of the spectrum with personal self-interest at the other end. Altruism

seeks the fulfillment of others with behavior directed toward the benefit of others and identifies this behavior as consistent with servant leadership. Bishop Desmond Tutu, Sam Walton, Mother Teresa, and Princess Diana are among Sosik's (2000) examples of altruistic people.

According to Berry and Cartwright (2000), servant leaders seek *radical equality* in the treatment of all people, which is an altruistic approach to dealing with and managing human relationships. Servant leaders embrace an attitude of humility and modesty along with selflessness and altruism, an approach which seeks what is best for others rather than for the leader himself (Patterson, 2003). This altruistic approach is imperative to the servant leadership mentality.

***iv.* Vision**

The classical understanding of vision normally relates to organizational vision, or a vision of the future destination of the organization. However, Patterson (2003) thinks that the servant leader's focus is on the individual member of the organization and the vision component is about the organizational members' future state. This vision refers to the idea that the leader looks forward and sees the person as a viable and worthy person and seeks to assist each one in reaching that state. Harvey (2001) saw this same ability as inherent in Greenleaf's (1977) formulation of servant leaders as healers, making the person whole by helping that person. The vision of servant leadership is to equip others to attain the larger vision or purpose than they otherwise might be able to attain for themselves. Being visionary is a way of looking at what one wants to be, or rather how we should be (Swindoll, 1981). Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999) explain vision as a fundamental aspect of servant leadership, as did Greenleaf (1977) who spoke of the primary question leaders must ask themselves, "Do the people they serve grow?" The futuristic state was

very important to Greenleaf and asserted that servant leaders must also be preoccupied with the future (Buchen, 1998).

Servant leaders serve their people by fully concentrating on where things are headed, the future, and asks the difficult question if the constituents are being served with the end in mind. Servant leaders, in other words, should be able to see the handwriting on the wall and seek to serve the future, understand and listen to followers, and provide stewardship guided towards the future (Buchen, 1998). This visionary aspect also provides the means towards empowerment, knowing what is needed and why.

Patterson (2003) demonstrates that servant leader's vision for others is about faith, seeing and speaking things as though they are or will be, which represents a dream that is only meant for the future (Bennett, 2001). This allows for the servant leader to cultivate a forward-looking atmosphere within the organization (Wis, 2002). This looking ahead, according to Melrose (1995), involves the servant leader to have faith and vision of not what is, but what can be, fostering a great capacity for growth on behalf of followers. A servant leader who is visionary senses the unknowable; the follower's potential and is able to help followers see the same thing, within the bigger picture (Wis, 2000).

This visionary process includes seeing each person's unique gifts and influences the decisions of the leader and helps the leader shape a plan for the future, while asking if the people are being served. Patterson (2003) states that servant leaders learn to know people's abilities and see

where they are headed in order to serve them. The visionary servant leader also possesses the capacity to know the followers and to equip them develop a clear sense of purpose, dignity and direction (Batten, 1998). Servant leaders enrich lives, build better human beings, and encourage people to become more than they ever believed, and that this is more than a job; this deep-rooted leadership is about mission, the mission to serve (Melrose, 1995).

v. Trust

Collins (2001) is convinced that leadership is essentially about vision, but also it is equally about trust. Trust, as observed by Franta (2000) has been studied in a variety of disciplines, and has complicated the task of operationalizing a definition due to the constrained research and the varied approaches and the wide array of definitions on the subject. Thus, the making of an operational definition has become quite a momentous task. Franta (2000), however, has recognized the importance of trust in the organizational environment and identifies that integrity and showing concern for others are imperative in the trust relationship.

Congruent thinking by Harris (2002) reveals that the virtue of trust is linked to integrity, respect for others, and service in the organization. According to Hunt (2000), trust is an essential component of the leader/follower relationship. And Fairholm and Fairholm (2000) add that trust is an essential element of organizational culture. Franta (2000) likewise acknowledges the importance of trust in the organizational arena and demonstrates that integrity and showing concern for others are crucial for building the trust relationship. Leadership, specifically servant leadership, is based on trust and this view is well argued out by Fletcher (1999).

In adding his perspective to the “trust debate”, Patterson (2003) notes that trust is a building block for servant leaders, one, which according to Wis (2002), is an integral component for the servant leader. The reason for this is the belief of the servant leader in trusting in others, which produces a standard of excellence for the entire organization. Respect for and goodwill towards others is the foundation on which trust is built (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000). Further, without trust, discord and disharmony exist (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000).

Fletcher (1999) also advocates that servant leadership’s underpinning is trust. His view is further buttressed by Kezar (2002) who described servant leadership philosophy as helping people to feel comfortable and creating an open environment where everyone has a voice, and everyone works collaboratively and collectively while using skills such as truth telling. Russell (2001) amplifies the argument by stating that trust is essential for servant leaders and that the values of integrity and honesty build interpersonal and organizational trust and leads to credibility. Patterson (2003) offers that trust is a building block to work from for servant leaders, a trust in the unseen potential of the followers, believing they can accomplish goals, a self-fulfilling prophecy. Story (2002) agrees with Patterson’s (2003) assertion and points out that trust is an essential hall mark of the servant leader.

Servant leaders lay the foundation of trust, do what they say they are going to do, seek to instill trust rather than fear and focus on being trustworthy (Melrose, 1995; Patterson, 2003). As indicated by Melrose, servant leaders know that when mistakes are made, people learn and grow together and that this can create confidence and trust, a bond that ties the organization together.

The trust bond nurtures teamwork, confidence, self-esteem, and even self-actualization for the followers. Patterson (2003) highlights that servant leaders nurture environments of trust allowing truth, an open door and for clarity in communications, both upwards and downwards. He also adds (Patterson, 2003) that the trusting leader is one who empowers followers and the empowered workforce is a workforce that has the freedom to serve the organization as well as the people who form the organization.

vi. Empowerment

Greenleaf has been referred to as “the father of the empowerment movement” because empowerment is one of the most important characteristics of servant leadership (Buchen 1998; Russell & Stone 2002). Veronesi (2001) elucidated that there is no servant leadership where there is no sharing of power. Empowering people, with the best interest of those served in mind, is at the heart of servant leadership (Veronesi, 2001). Empowerment is entrusting power to others, really giving it away (Patterson, 2003); and involves effective listening, making people feel significant, putting an emphasis on teamwork, and valuing of love and equality (Russell & Stone, 2002). Moreover, servant leaders also empower by teaching and developing people (Russell & Stone). Servant leaders' derive their satisfaction from the growth of others and that they are willing to hold themselves accountable for the results (Blanchard, 2000). Bennett (2001) notes that servant leaders need to know their followers and understand their needs for the knowledge and experience that they acquire through empowerment.

According to Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999), servant leaders empower followers in accordance with acting on their values and that this relationship is transforming. The idea of empowerment and servant leadership move concurrently, in that servant leadership puts an

emphasis on service, a holistic approach to work, personal development, and shared decision-making (Lee & Zemke, 1993). Empowering followers is a major goal of servant leaders, who desire to create many leaders at all levels (Russell, 2001). Melrose (1995) is convinced that servant leadership involves affording people the opportunities to move into new and more powerful roles by preserving their roots, respecting their value, and preserving their dignity.

In this empowerment model of servant leadership, the leader equips followers to discover their own paths, and they, in turn, are inspired to help others find their best paths. Empowerment encapsulates helping clarify expectations, goals, and responsibilities, and even more importantly it means letting people do their jobs by enabling them to learn, grow, and progress, and it means allowing for self-direction and freedom to fail; all of this multiplies the followers' strengths and trust (Melrose, 1995).

By empowering followers, servant leaders are allowing them freedom to proceed toward their goals, helping them make dreams reality. Empowerment is giving up control and letting the followers take charge as needed. Throughout this process, the servant leader is channeling followers, is balancing the growth of followers, and is aware of what is best for the follower. This empowerment allows the follower to bloom and grow.

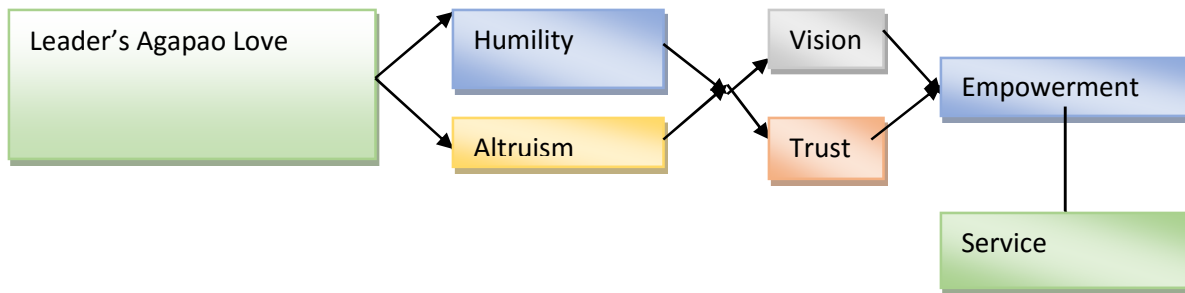
vii. Service

Another important attribute of servant leadership is service because the word "servant" is related to "service". A servant is one who has some unique service to deliver to a specific group of people. Service, as a virtue is displayed, according to Arjoon (2000), when one is doing something deliberately with a desire to perform as human beings ought, that is, in the proper way. Such is

the case with servant hood. Service is the heart of servant leadership theory; it is the primary function of a type of leadership that is not based on one's own interests but rather on the interests of others (Farling, Stone, & Winston 1999). Russell and Stone (2002) agree that service is the core of servant leadership and, further, that this service is a choice of the interests of others over self-interest. Servant leaders know that they are servants first (Greenleaf, 1977; Buchen, 1998). This calling to serve is seen as a life mission and induces an acceptance of the responsibility for others (Wis, 2002). Servant leadership (Guillen & Gonzalez, 2001) is an attitude of service, one which concentrates servant leaders on service (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000). The servant leader gives themselves in service (Swindoll, 1981) which involves personal involvement and authenticity. Service is giving of oneself and requires generosity which can mean giving of time, energy, care, compassion, and perhaps, even one's belongings.

Servant leaders exhibit service as they support the frontline, discover the uniqueness of each employee, unleash creativity in people, and contribute to the larger good knowing that this is bigger than themselves, and further, actually seek opportunities to serve others (Aggarwal & Simkins, 2001; Lyerly & Maxey, 2001; Wis, 2002; Smith, 2003; Patterson, 2003). The servant leader is a role model, in behavior and styles, showing others in the organization how to serve, setting the organizational climate (Lytle, Hom, & Mokwa, 1998; Lynn, Lytle, & Bobek, 2000). Melrose (1995) points out that when this type of example is set, service begets service, ultimately permeating the corporate culture.

Figure 1: Servant Leadership Model



Source: Patterson, K. (August, 2003). Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model. School of Leadership Studies, Servant Leadership Round table, p. 7.

2.1.2 Servant Leadership Attributes

In his seminal work, Greenleaf presents what he called “servant leadership attributes”, referring to the distinguishing character traits of servant leaders. These tenets of servant-leadership, according to Greenleaf, can derive only from the selfless, “others-directed” motivation that resides within the leader. This foundation is distinctive to servant-leadership. According to Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko, “Typically, models of leadership do not begin with an analysis of leader motivation, and Greenleaf’s concepts in this regard are unique” (2004, p. 82). Accordingly, aspiring servant-leaders must first scrutinize their personal belief systems and reasons for aspiring to lead. Strong leader ethics, principles and values lie at the core of the theory, and are seen as being key to the long-term interests of the organization being served.

Servant-leadership, therefore, emphasizes core personal characteristics and beliefs over any specific leadership techniques. This is seen throughout the writings of Robert K. Greenleaf, from his first, seminal essay on servant-leadership to his posthumously published writings. Behavioral theorists have identified 10 major leadership characteristics, or ‘attributes’ in Greenleaf’s writings (Russell & Stone, 2002, p. 146):

- 1. *Listening*** – A critical communication tool, necessary for accurate communication and for actively demonstrating respect for others. According to Greenleaf, “Only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first” (1970, p. 10).
- 2. *Empathy*** – The ability to mentally project one’s own consciousness into that of another individual. Greenleaf wrote, “The servant always accepts and empathizes, never rejects” (1970, p. 12), and “Men grow taller when those who lead them empathize, and when they are accepted for who they are...” (1970, p. 14).
- 3. *Healing*** – Greenleaf defined healing as “to make whole” (1970, p. 27). The servant leader recognizes the shared human desire to find wholeness in one’s self, and supports it in others.
- 4. *Awareness*** – Without awareness, “we miss leadership opportunities” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 19).
- 5. *Persuasion*** – The effective servant-leader builds group consensus through “gentle but clear and persistent persuasion, and does not exert group compliance through position power. Greenleaf notes that “A fresh look is being taken at the issues of power and authority, and people are beginning to learn, however haltingly, to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supporting ways (1970, pp. 3-4). Servant-leadership utilizes personal, rather than position power, to influence followers and achieve organizational objectives.
- 6. *Conceptualization*** – The servant-leader can conceive solutions to problems that do not currently exist (Greenleaf, 1970, pp. 23-25).
- 7. *Foresight*** – “Prescience, or foresight, is a better than average guess about *what* is going to happen *when* in the future” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 16).

8. Stewardship – Organizational stewards, or ‘trustees’ are concerned not only for the individual followers within the organization, but also the organization as a whole, and its impact on and relationship with all of society (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 31).

9. Commitment to the growth of people – A demonstrated appreciation and encouragement of others. Per Greenleaf, “The secret of institution building is to be able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be” (1970, p. 14).

10. Building community – The rise of large institutions has eroded community, the social pact that unites individuals in society. According to Greenleaf, “All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form...is for enough servant-leaders to show the way” (1970, p. 30).

Studies by behavioral scientists confirm these ten characteristics as being critical to servant leadership (Joseph & Winston, 2005, p. 10), while extending and clarifying this list to include many more leadership attributes. Russell and Stone (2002), for example, propose a list of 20 distinctive attributes observed in servant-leaders, as derived from scholarly literature. They further categorized these 20 attributes into 9 ‘functional attributes’ and 11 ‘accompanying attributes’. Functional attributes are defined as intrinsic characteristics of servant-leaders, while accompanying attributes complement and enhance the functional attributes:

Functional Attributes

Accompanying Attributes

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Vision | 6. Modeling | 10. Communication | 16. Persuasion |
| 2. Honesty | 7. Pioneering | 11. Credibility | 17. Listening |
| 3. Integrity | 8. Appreciation | 12. Competence | 18. Encouragement |
| 4. Trust | 9. Empowerment | 13. Stewardship | 19. Teaching |
| 5. Service | | 14. Visibility | 20. Delegation |
| | | 15. Influence | |

3.0 CONCLUSION

Jewish Philosopher and Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth is the first to have asserted and literally demonstrated the servant leadership model. Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus demonstrated that true leaders are servants of others and salves to their Divine purposes. Servant leaders live with a set of attitudes, traits and perspectives that make them radically different from all other types of leaders. Firstly, servant leaders demonstrate *Agapao love* by always taking into consideration the total needs of their followers-spiritual, emotional, psychological, material, socio economic etc. Secondly, servant leaders lead with humility. The virtue of humility causes the servant leader to consider moderation, to listen to the advice of his followers, and to come with the realization that the right use of power means rejecting the dictatorial. The third characteristic of servant leaders is altruism. Altruism is that which benefits another person, often involving a risk or sacrifice, with the risk or sacrifice often being against the servant leader`s own personal interests. Vision is the fourth characteristic of servant leadership. When it comes to vision, which normally relates to organizational vision, or a vision of the future destination of the organization, the servant leader`s focus is on the individual member of the organization and the vision component is about the organizational members` future state. The fifth characteristic of servant leadership is Trust, which is linked to integrity, respect for others, and service in the organization. Trust is about helping people to feel comfortable and creating an open environment where everyone has a voice, and everyone works collaboratively and collectively while using skills such as truth telling. The sixth attribute of servant leadership is Empowerment. Empowerment is entrusting power to others, and usually involves effective listening, making people feel significant, putting an emphasis on teamwork, and valuing of love and equality The last, but not the least

feature of servant leadership is service because the word "servant" is related to "service". A servant is one who has some unique service to deliver to a specific group of people. Service is giving of oneself and requires generosity which can mean giving of time, energy, care, compassion, and perhaps, even one's belongings.

The greatest demonstration of servant leadership is the giving of one's life. This is the ultimate application of that theory and we see it perfectly illustrated by the theory's first and main proponent-Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This is perhaps the final statement that summarizes servant leadership theory- Servant leaders lay down their life or their followers.

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