



Reflections on Leadership



Solomon
OSOKO



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Reflections On Leadership

Reflections on Leadership

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PLEASE NOTE:

This book, **“Reflections on Leadership”**

is an excerpt from another book authored by Solomon Osoko titled, **“Faithfulness in Leadership”** which was published in 2011.

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INTRODUCTION

*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. **John 15:4-5***

Behind every great and fruitful organization are faithful people, committed to the pursuits of its vision unto the end. Just as faithful establishment in Jesus Christ is required for a fruitful Christian life is faithful establishment in an organization a valid requirement for fruitful existence. Only a planted tree can be productive. Until you are firmly rooted, you cannot be fruitful.

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.
Ps 92:13-14

Only a faithful leadership can build a loyal and fruitful organization.

The flourishing and fruitfulness of your organization is only based on those who share a mutual future with you. At the centre of such people are faithful leaders who have become the embodiment of shared values and exemplar of good conducts. They are like the train head pulling along the remaining coaches.

They are the horses at the front that those at the back follow.

They are the ladder to climb from the present to the future dream of the organization.

Everything rise up or go down based on this core leadership.

The truth of the matter is that some people are around you for a reason and some for a season. Only few are around you for a long time. Jesus Christ never wasted His time with everyone that wanted to be around Him. He strictly invested it in the twelve disciples who were faithful to the pursuit of same vision and future with Him.

That strategic move is the foundation of the ever increasing believers' family that has transcended two billion heads in this present generation alone.

This book has come to help you recognize this core group within your organization and protect them from diversion, deception, division and destruction of the enemy. This book will help your leaders to learn faithfulness to God and to man.

This book is sure to help you raise the seasoned leadership you need to go to the next level of exploit in your ministry. Do not just read it. Meditate it, apply it and stick with the principles taught there till you reap a great harvest that you really desire.

As you grow stronger and deeper in the Lord, may you remain fat and flourishing.

Keep winning to the very end for the glory of the Lord. Amen.

1. What is leadership?

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

Matt 20:25-27

Leadership is simply about service to your people.

A minister is a servant. A prime minister is the number one servant.

Somebody needs to remind the despotic leaders of this world that what they are practicing is antithesis to the notion of leadership.

Recently many African nations celebrated their 50th independent anniversary amidst confusion, depression and frustration. It is a sad sight to see people (who fought and risked their lives to secure independence) crying and mourning half a century after gaining independence. Many faced with the naked reality of living in wilderness of poverty, want and need have resolved to regretting, like children of Israel for being led from land of bondage into the land of freedom. Is there anything wrong with freedom? No. Like with the people of Israel in the Bible, the source of the problem is bad leadership. The problem of Israel was having majority of her leaders infected with grasshopper mentality rather than conqueror mentality. When you join that with having a followership who only cry, murmur and dream of the fresh meat and milk they had access to in the land of slavery, you end up with a redundant system lacking progress and direction in every aspect of governance.

Guess what? People can never be greater than their collective thought!

Explaining leadership.

Leadership is a relational act that evolves as soon as there are up to two people interrelating and it mostly revolves on the ability or right to render vital service concerning the object of their mutual relationship. For this discussion, I will define leadership as an act of rendering valuable service to your community within your area of influence through the efficient management of self, task and resources

1. Leadership is about rendering valuable services.

Leadership is about rendering purposeful service.

Leadership opportunity exists as soon as you have more than one person.

Servant leadership is not a pursuit of greatness or position but the pursuit of becoming person of great value. Your difference is what qualifies you for eminence. Only those who have found their values will be valuable. When you stop adding value to people's lives, you start losing value.

2. Leadership is about serving your gifts within your located area of influence. King David was a servant not a ruler (Acts 13:36)!

Leadership is about serving not ruling. Great leaders do not oppress people. They just offer their services with grace and distinction. Think of Barack Obama, Mother Theresa, Benny Hinn, Bill Gates. These are all leaders in their fields and they do not need to coerce or terrorize people. Your education, experience, training, relationship, status and passion, among many other things have prepared you to influence some particular group of people than others. Seize the moment and serve the best way possible!

3. Leadership is about efficient management of self, task and resources.

Leadership begins with efficient management of self. For if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? (1 Tim 3:5.) Leadership also has to do with efficient management of tasks. All God's appointed leaders distinguished themselves already in one duty before they were elevated into a public field. Lastly, good leadership is also about efficient management of resources. Bad leaders are poor managers of vision, resources and tasks. And sooner than later, wasters and sluggards would end up as beggars.

Are you a leader?

Leadership is more than title, status or position. A leader is not necessarily the head! King Saul was heading Israel for many years while the true leader, David, remained an unrecognized shepherd boy. Leadership is not about superiority but responsibility. Kingdom leadership isn't a pursuit of position but a passionate pursuit of becoming person of great value. How faithful are you in the duties you are handling today? Those who are faithful in little are already considered to be faithful in much. Your performance today will determine if you can be trusted with greater responsibilities tomorrow. Do not just be a leader. Be a good leader that is committed to adding great values to your community.

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Everything rises and falls on leadership. John Maxwell

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2. What leadership is not?

As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good managers of the grace of God in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10 (WEB)

Leadership is about effectively managing your skills and resources in the service of your people. Bad leadership has often led to collapse of families, businesses, ministries and vital organizations.

Yes, we need change!

Countries are at war and various tribes and races ensue in loggerheads as poor leaders wrongly guide their followers to avoidable troubles. To solve our leadership problems, we first have to change our notions about leadership. Only then can we manage to put the right people in the right position. Let's see some of the wrong views we need to dump on the wasteland of history, never to be resurrected again.

1. Leadership and oppression

No office or leader has the right to lord it over other people (especially God's people-the church.) Mankind is given dominion over animals and not over people. Matt 20:26-28. Your authority is rooted in finding area of service that the Lord has given you to operate. You should exercise your authority over your skill and gift.

Dominion is about mastering something not people. When you master a thing, people will seek you out. You are meant to be a benefactor of your service. When you help a man to get what he wants, you will always get what you need. As your service attracts compensation over compensation, the one who serves will become the greatest of all.

2. Leadership and extremism.

Many extremists for lack of in-depth Bible knowledge like to make doctrine out of every word and line in the Bible. One extremist group says that because Jesus' disciples and people worshipped him and called him Lord, leaders are meant to be despotic figures. The other extremist group misquoted Jesus Christ's washing his disciples' feet as a doctrine for leaders to become shoe cleaners for their people.

No leader can claim to be Jesus, neither can anyone attach Jesus' greatness to his once in a lifetime washing of disciples' feet. That feet washing act was not meant to be a doctrinal principle otherwise he would not just have done it only once in his lifetime but would have daily practiced it as a part of his creed. Kingdom leadership needs not be despotic or subservient but productive!

3. Leadership and position

Being a servant (leader) is however more than what you serve.

It concerns much more how you serve.

It is your service with passion that will set you up for promotion not position.

Have you seen a man that is diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men (Prov. 22:29.) You do not need a title or position to serve your gifts and skills.

Only what you need is passion and a platform to serve. David moved from being a shepherd boy to becoming a king because he was a servant not a ruler (Acts 13:36.) He was a man obsessed with serving rather than ruling.

Can you become a leader?

Every greatness in the kingdom starts small (Matthew 13:31-32.)

Though virtually every man has the potential to become a leader, only very few can become one due to tests and processes that must be endured and prevailed upon.

Like everything in the kingdom of God, becoming a leader is a process that requires persistent and patient training. Kingdom of God grows mightily from a small seed. The youngest one shall become the leader. That implies that the one who humbly serves like a child among others will be the greatest. A child serves without asking question or waiting for rewards. A child is willing to serve others at no cost and doesn't think of title or position. A child sees in every situation an opportunity to learn. Can you submit yourself under other people to learn?

Good leaders are good learners!

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Leadership is action, not position. Donald H. McGannon

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3. Faithfulness and Leadership

*Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager **must** be faithful. 1 Cor. 4:2 (NLT)*

More than skill, faithfulness is the most important requirement for a manager. Behind every great and fruitful organization are faithful people. Unfaithfulness is the source of major confusion, division and destruction in organizations. The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ can have a disloyal person among his team of twelve disciples should show you the commonness of that behaviour. That means whoever you are and whatever you do, there could always be a disloyal person in your organization.

Are bad associates bred by bad leaders?

Jesus Christ prayed all night and sought divine direction in selecting His disciples yet one of them turned out to be a traitor (Luke 6:12-16.) Contrary to what some might like to think, disloyal people are not necessarily a reflection of their leaders. Judas was never a reflection of Jesus' weakness or attitude. Judas was just a Judas and there will always be a Judas. All that an organization can do is to prepare itself ahead to discover disloyal people, disempower them and neutralize any negative influence such may have on the progress and continuity of their organisation. It takes healthy dose of faithfulness and loyalty in any organisation to establish sufficient degree of unity and togetherness required for growth. There are clues to help you notice loyal people in your organization.

1. They are positive

Faithful people are positive people.

They are able to look through a dark cloud and see sunshine. They take personal responsibilities to troubleshoot challenges and provide solutions. They see every opposition as a means for promotion.

Because their minds are with the organization, they are always seeing greater possibilities in every situation to triumph, increase and progress. They are not only motivating but are also encouraging to both leaders and colleagues alike. There is positive aura around such. Check out for the twinkling in the eyes and the genuine smile in their face. This group of, "Let us do it right, right now" has the key to the growth of every organization. The more of such people you have in your midst the better.

2. They are far- seeing

Faithful people are visionaries and believers. They are not just living for immediate gratification but rather daily aspire towards the realization of a future in their vision. This way, they are willing to invest energy and endure obstacles to reach there.

Many organizations waste resources in training and retraining unstable people who quit their roles before they can start bearing fruits from various investments made on them. What a colossal waste when you put the cost together across organizations in a nation. Why join a cause when you know you are not going far? Taking a look at past records can save you from wasting precious resources on unstable and unproductive people.

3. They are finishers

A finisher is someone that is committed to reaching his destination regardless of opposition s/he meets on the way. No excuse or adversary can stop him or her from finishing with excellence.

A finishing attitude however has to be cultivated not just desired. It takes practice, discipline and commitment to get results. In life you will have resistance and opposition. After you have performed all you need to do and prayed, you need to have a heart of a "more than conqueror" to press on to the very end. Only a committed spirit can convert opposition to promotion. Future is a process, decide to complete it!

Your problem has an expiry date. Darkness may be allowed to operate in your life, but it is only for a season. After that, it must give way; and light must come.

Are you a winner or a finisher?

All winners are finishers yet finishers are more than winners!

It is easy to be a winner when the going is good. It is when the going gets tough that a finisher is distinguished from a winner. While a winner lives in the realm of conquerors, finishers dwell in the realm of more than conquerors. Either he wins or loses, a finisher never quits. He keeps going on!

What distinguishes finishers from both winners and losers is not that they always win or that they always lose. It is just that finishers never give up under any circumstances. They win and sometimes they fail. They just don't give up. No amount of success or failure can take the "finisher's mentality" from them.

The reason many organizations do not grow is because there are not many finishers there. Many just want to win alone and when it gets bad, they do not want to finish up. Think for a minute? Are you a winner or finisher?

Remember, a big oak tree was once a tiny seed that refused to give up.

Only a finisher can harvest the fruit of her or his labour.

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*Loyalty means nothing unless it has at its heart the absolute principle of self-sacrifice. **Woodrow T. Wilson***

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4. Key requirements for Leadership

*And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. **Luke 6:39-40***

An organization's performance is highly attached to the performance of its leadership. A person that cannot discipline or lead well himself cannot lead others! No matter how great an organisation is, her progress would be affected by the maturity, passion and corporate anointing of her leaders. I have had the privilege to serve in the leadership of student organization, corporate world, private business and spiritual organization and I can tell you, the situation is the same. Incompetent leadership is disastrous to every organization. There are three general areas you should appraise potential member of your leadership before allowing them to join your staff.

1. **Spiritual maturity**

People who are spiritually deficit are mostly morally bankrupt.

A man without moral principles can hardly be expected to be faithful to anybody or organization. Such are mostly selfish and self centred.

Do not appoint untested and immature people to your leadership (1 Tim 3:6-8.)

The on- going world's economic problem was greatly worsened by corrupt conducts of some greedy elements who defrauded their clients in various illicit ventures.

We will continue to suffer this type of avoidable loss so long we continue to rate skills above character. What use is a fraudulent banker, adulterous spouse, violent parents, lying lawyers, demonic preachers and corrupt president? At least every form of religion lays hold to good conducts and moral decency. Perhaps we need to look again at the way we frame our job advertisements and in addition to required skills, also make room for people with proven moral and spiritual excellence.

2. **Physical fitness**

By taking a careful look at people's fitness, way of moving the body and so on, you can make a good guess of their attitudes towards self discipline.

What in the world do you need an undisciplined person for in your leadership?

Discipleship begins with discipline! Do not appoint rude, weak and lazy people to demanding position.

Is your potential leader available and willing to physically attend organization's functions and duties? Is he punctual and regular in meetings? A leader should be ahead of others. I will prefer to appoint a person with good health and healthy lifestyle to my leadership than a man whose unhealthy lifestyle can kill any moment. Work that body

and make it healthy. Keep it clean from greedy eating, drunkenness, poisonous smoke and other excesses.

3. **Social competence**

Behind physical shabbiness and rudeness mostly hide moral deficiencies. Rude character is just a tip of an iceberg- signifying high potentiality of social incompetence, disorderliness and disobedience. Watch how your leaders relate with each other and with other people. What is their relationship with people like? Are they creative listeners who can understand people's problems? Are they focussed speakers who respond effectively to people's question or are they just distractive babblers, dribbling words everywhere without making any direct connection to issue at stake? Leaders need to train themselves to be relevant and interesting when discussing with other people. You need to know a bit about what is going in your city and in the world by listening to news.

You need to be up to date with what is going on in your field or career.

Don't sound ignorant in every issue and expect people to listen to you.

Leadership and expectation management.

A good leader should be able to manage well the expectation of his people.

The perception of a messenger affects greatly how his message is received.

A leader, seen to be morally excellent, physically fit and socially competent has a better platform to effectively marginalise his skill than one perceived to be spiritually bankrupt, physically weak and socially deficient. It is worth it to pay diligent attention to leadership recruitment process from onset.

While skill can be acquired easily and speedily nowadays (thanks to technological advancement), excellent character is becoming scarce commodities in our world. Only an organization that pay great value on good character can consciously seek and find long lasting leaders, excellent in character and conducts. Are we truly tired of kleptomaniac leaders in our society?

Then let us get our recruitment requirements right!

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Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character.

*But if you must be without one, be without the strategy. **Norman Schwarzkopf***

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5. Assessing Your Associates

*You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. **Matt 17: 16-18 (NLT)***

Throughout your existence, people will walk in and out of your life.

Not all those you come across will leave a footprint in your life.

That is why you need to examine the commitment level of your associates before you commit yourself to them. The people that can easily disappoint us are those we appoint into a great place in our heart.

What you see is what you get

Take people as they come. Do not force people to be what they are not!

It is easy to force a camel to the stream; however you cannot force it to drink. Watch out for your associates' fruits and deal with them accordingly. To avoid unnecessary pain, simply permit everyone to determine the level of your relationship, commitment and trust.

Take note of the three major types of associates you may have to work with.

1. Engaged Associates

These are emotionally attached to their workplaces.

They are loyal, productive and record fewer days of absence at work. They have higher rates of safety and lower rate of fluctuation. These are sure to invest time in your organization. These are the people to invest resources on and spend quality time with. Such win-win minded people are able to build up institutions regardless of any opposition or inconveniency they may face.

2. Not Engaged Associates

These are "working just the minimum". They are less productive, have less emotional attachment to their workgroup. They recorded more days of absence and higher rate of fluctuation in performance. These are sure to stay a season in your company so watch out what you commit to them. They will disappear as soon as they find better offer or situation somewhere else.

3. Actively Disengaged Associates

These people are working against the interests of the company. Such are mostly unhappy with their company and relay this negativism to other colleagues. At work or in

Church service, they record highest days of absence, higher rates of safety incidents and will most likely leave the organization at any time. They are just around for a reason. Though this type of people are physically present, they are mentally away and emotionally detached from the organization. Never count on them!

Get it right!

Actively disengaged people will corrupt anyone that come across them. They are bad news for every organization. Try to make room for them to depart your office or group in peace. Not engaged associate may have certain issues troubling them. Always try to resolve such issues. Who knows, they may regain their passion for the company again. You can only trust engaged associates with high level information. Every good manager or leader should be sensitive to the need of the people. Showing true concern and love could resolve most of the problematic issues.

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*O wise man, wash your hands of that friend who associates with your enemies. **Muslih-uddin Sadi***

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6. Price of faithfulness

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. Luke 11:23

You cannot be loyal to everybody at the same time.

Your future is a product of your choice not your condition or circumstances.

Choosing to live in light means you need to move away from every form of darkness.

It will surely cost you something to live a life of faithfulness.

1) **Resources**

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt 6:21.)

Time is the currency of loyalty. Where you are loyal to is where you are found always. The amount of time you spend in your organization determines the measure of your commitment and passion. It cost time to grow in anything you do. It takes time to advance in any calling. Sometimes it cost you labour or money to persistently pursue your goal to prove your loyalty to a cause, a person or an organization.

2) **Relationship**

Choosing to be loyal to God's purpose will cost you some worldly relationships. For Nicodemus to embrace the truth of Jesus Christ as his saviour, he had first to sacrifice public acceptance of his peers. He knew that the only way to accept good is to reject evil. Are you fond of enjoying friendship with people disloyal to your organization? That shows who you are and what you could once become.

3) **Reputation**

Imagine how foolish great people like Daniel and Joseph should have looked in the face of their contemporaries who were willing to compromise their faith in God in order to progress in life? However whatever their holy lifestyle might have cost them among their peers were far less than what their righteous living brought their ways. Both men rose up to become great leaders in foreign countries. It is good to seek good report of the Lord and God's people over cheap popularity among sinners.

It will cost you your lifestyles

What has darkness gotten to do with light?

A friend of the world is already an enemy of God (James 4:4.) Being loyal to the thing of God may cost you worldly funs and past times. Moses choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb 11:25.)

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Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship. Anon

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7. Profits of faithfulness

Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

Heb 10:35-36

It takes time to grow. Despise not humble beginning!

It is common to see people despising great organizations in their early beginnings.

Faithfulness gives a man enduring spirit to complete his or her perfection process.

Bill Gates started Microsoft Company in a garage but with process of time turned it to one of the richest company in the world. You see, all great things started really small.

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It may start small but it will end big if you press on patiently and persistently. Do not despise the day of small beginning.

You see, spiritual things do not grow logically. It grows spiritually in leaps.

It takes quantum jump at God's timing!

Before you stop!

Before you stop that great organization, take a time to stop and think.

The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie.

Though your vision delays; wait for it. It will surely come (Hab 2:3.)

Stop comparing your vision and your organization to another one lest you arrive in foolish conclusion. While gestation period for a chicken is just about twenty one days, it takes over twenty two months for an elephant to deliver. Yet, a baby elephant is bigger than many mother cows.

Some of the advantages of being a finisher include enjoying growth, expansion and ability to enjoy the fruits of your labour.

1. Growth

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man sowed in his field. But when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree big enough for birds of the air to lodge (Matt 13:31-32.)

The greatness of every organization is a process.

That is why we strongly need an atmosphere of faithfulness to grow.

Sometimes, good structures and projects are going on fine in your organization but only the time is not ripe for growth and explosion. Great things take time to manifest.

2. Expansion

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof (Eccl 7:8.)

Every growing organization, at a point in time, will also have to expand its presence and it takes only those loyal to the visions and principles of such organization to reproduce

the company. Sooner than later, the founder of every organization will leave, retire or die but it takes loyalty of members to continue the existence and growth of such organization. That is why teaching faithfulness is important to any organization that intends to stay long in existence and impact.

3. Fruitfulness

We need culture of faithfulness to reap fruits of our labour.

Only rooted and well established people can bear fruits.

Abraham was not blessed just because he was promised by God. So many people promised by God do not secure such promise due to disobedience and failure to take responsibility to manifest such promises. Abraham obtained the promise only because he took steps to claim the promise and patiently endured till it came.

With faithfulness well entrenched in an organization, it is easier to focus all energy on productivity rather than settling problems and healing wounds from avoidable crisis.

Learn from Chinese Bamboo

Refuse to destroy your future through impatience.

Learn from the story of Chinese Bamboo. While other bamboos, trees and plants begin to show forth after weeks and months of planting their seeds, the Chinese Bamboo never show anything for all your labour for the first five years.

However, within six weeks of clocking its fifth year anniversary, it can grow up till sixty feet. Imagine neighbours gaping at a sixty feet bamboo that grows behind your house just within six weeks. The fact however is it takes five years more than they see. The wisdom here is never to give up. Many people just give up too fast.

A Chinese Bamboo owner who gives up within its initial five years will never have the pleasure of seeing it grow to its mighty height.

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*Nothing is more noble, nothing more venerable than fidelity. Faithfulness and truth are the most sacred excellences and endowments of the human mind. **Marcus Tullius Cicero***

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Reflections on Leadership

The rise and fall of every organisation depends on its leadership.

Smite the shepherd and the sheep will scatter!

There is no place where this truth is more relevant than the Church of Christ where It requires the united efforts of a mature congregation and faithful leadership to successfully fulfil God's purpose for His church.

An unskilled and disunited leadership buried in personal issues and devoid of fruits of the spirit cannot offer the love and leadership needed to mobilize forward the congregation. An immature congregation starved of green insight and peaceful environment of a loving leadership cannot settle down to be productive. Only a faithful leadership, conscious of its responsibility, focussed on its duties and committed to fulfilling its calling can offer the sacrifice required to transform a mustard seed to a big oak tree. Only faithful people can be fruitful.

Is your leadership faithful enough to take your organization to the next level?

We need culture of faithfulness to reap fruits of our labour.

Only rooted and well established people can bear fruits.

With faithfulness well entrenched in an organization, it is easier to focus all energy on productivity rather than settling problems resulting from individual issues.

Only those who are established can bear fruits in the house of the Lord.

Remember that a big oak tree was once a tiny seed that refused to give up.

Only finishers can be "enduring" winners.



OSOKO SOLOMON (BSc., MSc., MBA) is the Senior Pastor of Christ International Church, Switzerland. His mandate is to spread the wisdom of God and the saving message of His kingdom through the word of faith, which works by love. Osoko Solomon lives in Switzerland with his wife Silvia, their two sons, Timi and Dani and daughter Joanna.



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