

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR TRANSITION LEADERSHIP

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LEADERSHIP can be understood as “a process of facilitating the goal achievement of an individual or of a group in a particular situation.”¹ Biblical leadership is a Bible-based, God-centered, Christ-focused, Spirit-led, Mission-oriented, People-focused character and lifestyle. Biblical or Christian leadership are different from secular leadership mainly because of divine dimension manifest in the first and not in the latter.² When considered from its empowering perspective, leadership is “one important component of making disciples.”³ Also, “effective biblically-based leadership is needed.”⁴ Interestingly, the whole Bible can be viewed as the exposition of the character and lifestyles of leaders at various stages of biblical history. One of these stages is transition leadership. Private and public shelves abound with publications on leadership both secular and biblical. Most book outline strategies to become an efficient leader.

A few if not none addresses the issue of transition leadership. Transition leadership is a leadership that happens around major changes of a people’s history. Transition leadership is the period that levies a people into new dimensions different from a specific dispensation. It may imply (1) a new environment; (2) a new leadership; (3) a new mission and (4) new challenges.

¹Charles J. Keating, *The Leadership Book* (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 16.

²Keating, 126, posits that Christian leadership is “different from secular leadership in that it is expected to have a faith vision, a specific mission or influencing the activities of an individual in efforts toward accomplishing goals that contribute to the coming of the Kingdom of God.”

³Christopher Berger, *Empowering the Saints: Seven Principles of Biblical Leadership to Fulfill His Mission* (Pakchong, Thailand: Somchay Press, 2011), 11.

⁴*Ibid.*

This paper attempts to sort out biblical principles that are needed in times of transition leadership. The Bible, Old and New Testament, is replete of examples of transition of leadership. While considering other relevant transition leadership examples in the Bible, this study will mostly concentrate on the Moses-Joshua and Saul-David biblical transition leadership models.

1. The Moses-Joshua Transition Leadership Paradigm

The first case-study to be considered in this study is that of the Moses-Joshua transition leadership paradigm dated by most scholars during the Late Bronze Age.¹

1.1. Background Considerations

At the time of the Moses-Joshua transition, the international scene was one of general socio-political unrest as well as "great" economic prosperity. David Howard identifies three main power centers that competed for supremacy namely Mesopotamia under the Babylonians, Asia Minor under the Hittites and Egypt under the Egyptians.² This was the time of the political decline of Egypt, fall of the Hittites and rise of Assyria and of the religious decay in Canaan.³ This providential stage of religious degradation, power struggle and power vacuum left in Southern Canaan opened a way for the settlement of Israel in the Promised Land.⁴

Conversely, the national scenery of Israel at this time was a calm and reflective socio-politico-religious atmosphere.⁵ The main internal features at this time were first a new generation "who had

¹See for example Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary 4 (NAC) (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 23.

²David M. Howard, *Joshua*, NAC, 5, 46.

³John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), 115.

⁴See Howard, *Joshua*, 47.

⁵At this stage of Israel's history, the biblical text records no internal strife but rather the reading of God's laws to the people by Moses in the foreground of the preparation for the conquest of Canaan.

grown up in the wilderness"¹ and were different from that which came out of Egypt. With the exception of the two veteran survivors Joshua and Caleb, all other Israelite people were born and raised in the wilderness (Numbers 26:65; 32:12). Secondly, forty years after the Exodus Israel had developed a clearer national identity gradually transforming from a simple band of recently freed slaves to a fairly well structured nomadic nation ready to settle definitively in the Promised Land. Bruce confirms this analysis when he states that, "The undisciplined body of slaves which left Egypt under the guidance of Moses had to spend a generation in the wilderness before a nation could be fashioned to invade the land of Canaan as conquerors and settlers."² It can be said that from Moses, Joshua inherited a fairly well structured leadership with a fairly well organized religion, structured army and the executive and judiciary powers all operating under a codified constitution named the Book of the Covenant.³

1.2. Biblical Principles for Transition Leadership from the Moses-Joshua Paradigm

Worth noting is the fact that the Moses-Joshua transition leadership happened under the ideal theocratic paradigm. In this paradigm, both the outgoing and the incoming leaders are in perfect harmony with God and His revealed will. At the same time, both enjoy a healthy and cooperative relationship in leadership. The God-Moses-Joshua transition leadership paradigm might be termed as the God-Forerunner-Successor ideal model for biblical transition leadership.⁴ In this case, all three components concur in purpose and goals during the entire process of transition leadership. Hence, a first general principle toward biblical transition leadership is the principle of the Ideal God-Forerunner-Successor.

Table 1 below is a brief but insightful comparison between Moses and Joshua.

¹Arthur Pink, *Gleanings in Joshua* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1964), 11.

²Frederick F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations: From the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple* (Great Britain: Paternoster, 1965), 16.

³By then, almost all elements needed for the functioning of a nation were set: the Constitution, the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Army, the Judiciary, etc.

⁴Among many other similar biblical transition leadership examples worth considering are the God-David-Solomon, God-Elijah-Elisha, God-Jesus-Disciples, God-Paul-Timothy relationships.

Features	Moses	Joshua
Individual Background	Born a slave and raised a prince in Egypt Trained a military in Egypt	Born and raised a slaved in Egypt Trained a military in the Wilderness
Divine Mission	Lead Israel out of Egypt into the Wilderness	Lead Israel from the Wilderness into the land of Canaan
Executive Leadership	Triadic Administrative (Moses)–Religious (Aaron)–Prophetic (Miriam)	Dualistic Administrative (Joshua) –Religious (Eleazar)
Peripheral Leadership	70 Elders, 12 Princes, Captains of thousands, hundreds, fifteens and tens, Officers	70 Elders, 12 Princes, Captains of thousands, hundreds, fifteens and tens, Officers
Leadership Setting	Mostly in the wilderness	Mostly in the promised land

Table 1. A Comparison between Moses and Joshua

The aforementioned Table highlights interesting similarities and striking dissimilarities. First, both Moses and Joshua were born as slaves in Egypt, were trained soldiers, received a complementary divine mission, maintained the same decentralized Leadership, worked closely with the high priest and enjoyed decade's long close collaboration in leadership. Second, Moses and Joshua differ in that they had different missions and a different leadership setting. Whereas Moses had to bring Israel "out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10-12) Joshua was commanded to lead them into the Promised Land. Moreover, Moses' leadership setting was mostly the wilderness. Joshua led mostly in the Promised Land. In addition, Joshua's highest level of leadership was dual while Moses' was triadic. Under the ideal theocratic leadership model, the Moses-Joshua collaboration facilitated a smooth leadership transition between Moses and Joshua in spite of the differences in setting, people and mission. The previous analysis unearths two fundamental and complementary principles in biblical leadership namely, the principle of continuum leadership and the principle of spiritual mentoring.

Spiritual mentoring is an aspect of leadership, a learning relationship¹ in which a mature spiritual leader deliberately and purposefully guides his/her protégé in the discovery and development of his/her God-given potential "to stand in the place of his mentor to eventually fulfill God's greater purpose."² White affirms spiritual mentoring by positing that "ministry comprehends far more than preaching the word. It means training young men as Elijah trained Elisha, taking them from their ordinary duties, and giving them responsibilities to bear in God's work—small responsibilities at first, and larger ones as they gain strength."³ Other biblical examples of spiritual mentoring are the Elijah-Elisha, Paul-Timothy and Jesus-Disciples relationships. They reinforce the significance of spiritual mentorship as a biblical foundation of transition leadership.

From the mentor's standpoint, a study of the twenty-six occurrences of the name Joshua in the Pentateuch shows that Moses mentored Joshua first by the use of collaborative delegation as in the battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:9-14), then by fostering a close ministerial relationship in bringing Joshua with him on the mount of divine revelation (Exodus 24:13),⁴ third by corrective assertions (Exodus 32:17; Numbers 11:28), fourth by private and public trust of current and future issues of the nation (Numbers 32:28; Deuteronomy 31:3), fifth by personal public support (Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:21) and sixth by heeding to God's direction in selecting his successor (Numbers 34:17; Deuteronomy 3:28; 31:14). In other words, Moses mentored Joshua by heeding to the divine guidance.

From the mentored point of view, Joshua demonstrates the judiciousness of God's choice through different qualities. Joshua had the Spirit of God which symbolizes consecration (Numbers 27:18). Also, he is described as one who "wholly followed the Lord" which hints at his total dedication to God (Numbers 32:12). Third, Joshua accepted the role of "assistant" (Exodus 24:13; 33:11; Numbers 11:28) and called Moses "lord" showing his humility. Furthermore, Joshua never relented to go to battle (Exodus 17:9-14), follow

¹Mary Connor and Julia Pokora, *Coaching and Mentoring at Work* (Berkshire, England: Open University Press, 2007), 11.

²Larry Kreider, *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring: Nurturing Younger Believers Toward Spiritual Maturity* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2008), 15.

³Ellen G. White, *The History of Redemption*, 363.

⁴The Moses-Joshua relationship in the Old Testament appears to parallel the Jesus-John relationship in the New Testament.

Moses on the mountain (Exodus 24:13) or go on the Lord's errands (Numbers 13:1, 8) as a demonstration of his diligence in service. Again, Joshua never grumbled at Moses' frontal corrections (Exodus 32:17; Numbers 11:28-29) highlighting his willingness to be corrected. In tearing his clothes and in defending truth during the rebellion at Paran (Numbers 14:6-7), Joshua exhibited his radical dedication to God's cause. In siding with Moses both in the golden calf episode (Exodus 33:11) and the rebellion at Paran (Numbers 13:6), Joshua demonstrated and his support for God's servant even in crisis. Joshua's patience comes to light when he waited for Moses first on the mount for forty days before the episode of the golden calf (Exodus 24:16-18) and then at the tabernacle after the episode of the golden calf (Exodus 33:11). White comments, "During the six days, Joshua was with Moses, and together they ate of the manna and drank of 'the brook that descended from the mount' ... devoting himself to God by searching heart, meditation, and prayer."¹

It is hereby worth noting that though acknowledged as "full of the spirit of wisdom" (Deuteronomy 34:9) while indirectly tagged as of a 'lesser value' than Moses by God Himself (Deuteronomy 34:10), Joshua exhibited no ill feelings like pride, discontentment, blackmailing or jealousy. Though only a "young man" (Exodus 33:11), Joshua was part of Moses' "choice men" (Numbers 11:28). He was also known by God as a worthy man among His people (Numbers 14:30, 38). He stood as a spiritual giant both before God and before the Israelite throngs of idolaters, grumblers and backsliders. Interestingly, Joshua displayed spiritual weaknesses twice. First, he mistook Israel's revelry to "a noise of war" (Exodus 32:17) out of lack of spiritual discernment. Then, he exhibited a John and James like intolerant² and misplaced zeal³ by asking Moses to forbid Eldad and Medad to prophesy in the camp (Numbers 11:28). Though imbued with outstanding spiritual qualities and unique leadership skills, Joshua was not without weaknesses. Joshua was godly but not flawless. It can thus be said that spiritual mentoring does not happen in a vacuum. Both the mentor and the mentored must exhibit godly character of honesty and integrity in line with their God-appointed mission. In other words, spiritual mentoring

¹White, *The History of Redemption*, 121.

²James A. Brooks, *Mark*, NAC 23, 151.

³Philipp J. Budd, *Numbers*, Word Biblical Commentary 5 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 129. See also Mark 9:38-40 and Luke 9:49. Herein is another hint to the idea earlier expressed that the Moses-Joshua relationship parallels the New Testament Jesus-John relationship.

targets both the wise exhibition of strengths and the diligent suppression of weaknesses in a godly way.

Corollary to the principle of spiritual mentoring in an ideal theocratic environment is the principle of continuum leadership; the ideal recipe for stability. An adequate spiritual mentoring fosters a complementary leadership transition by the reinforcement and improvement of the strengths of the previous leadership as well as the minimization of reforms. The incoming leadership surfs more on innovations and brings less drastic reforms. This was the case of the Moses-Joshua transition leadership. Joshua maintained most of the leadership foundations and structures laid by Moses mostly because he himself was part of the building process.

However, it must be pointed out that Joshua's leadership was not a mere replication of Moses' leadership style but rather its complement. For example, if Moses' mission was to bring Israel out of Egypt, Joshua's duty was to conquer and settle Israel in the Promised Land. This leads to a third more general biblical principle of leadership which is the situation-oriented leadership. Each situation is unique in time, space and circumstances. The cause of God needs a specific kind of leader and leadership for each situation. For example, it may be argued that the toilsome conquest of the land would better fit the younger and more energetic Joshua than the old Moses.

From the outgoing leader(ship) of Moses, we learn that history and covenant matter in the passing of the baton of command to the new leader(ship). Before leaving the scene, Moses reviewed past history (Numbers 33:1-49), revisited future history (Numbers 33:50-56; 34:1-15; 16-29) and renewed the Covenant (Deuteronomy 1:1-8) with Joshua and in the presence of the congregation. Johnson adequately notes that "Moses' last act of leadership was reading to Israel the entire law and explaining the blessings and curses it contained. Joshua's first act after the conquest of Ai was the same."¹ Hence, biblical leadership transition may be construed as a transmission of character, a perpetration of covenant and a building of history. In other words, future and past history, character and covenant are core considerations in biblical transition leadership.

In addition, Moses insured the public coronation of the new leadership in Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:1-8) which he ended by pronouncing a blessing on the people (Deuteronomy 33:1-29). Moses here secures a safe transition by a public acknowledgment of

¹Glenn Johnson, *Leadership that Builds: Nehemiah a Biblical Model for Our Times of Crisis* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature, 1996), 179

Joshua's election and good wishes for the people. Expressed public recognition of the new leadership and good will for the people are two other key principles towards meaningful transition leadership.

On the other part, we learn from the incoming leadership attitude of Joshua that vision, authority and territory have a say in transition leadership. Before succeeding to Moses, Joshua was able to get acquainted with Canaan, his incoming leadership territory (Numbers 13:21-25), renewed and embraced God's vision (Joshua 1:1-9) and boldly laid hold of the command baton (Joshua 1:10-18). In transition leadership, the baton of command goes to one who knows the territory, masters the vision and is bold in taking and exercising authority. Hence, knowledge of territory, vision and authority are significant keys to biblical transition leadership.

Numbers 27:12-23 records a critical scene in the transition leadership between Moses and Joshua. Therein Moses is divinely summoned to climb Mount Abarim and "see the land" in prelude to his death. There Moses petitions God to "set a man over the congregation." God's answer to Moses' request is to take Joshua, lay his hand on him, set him before Eleazar and before the congregation, inaugurate him in their sight and give him a portion of his authority. Two additional principles can be drawn from this narrative. First, that the forerunner needs to "show concern for the future leadership of the people"¹ by privately praying God to personally assign his successor. Then, that the forerunner must publicly acknowledge his successor by transmitting his authority on him "so that the transition will be smooth."² These two principles are reflected in other biblical transition models. For example, the transmission of Elijah's mantle to Elisha in 2 Kings 2:13 can be seen as a symbol of transfer of authority. Also, Jesus' nightly prayers both in Luke 6:12 and in John 17:6-18 for His disciples confirms the importance of prayer for succession in leadership. Hence, both private prayer and public conferral of authority are key elements for biblical transition leadership.

¹Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Numbers," *Journeying with God: A Commentary on the Book of Numbers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

²R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, NAC 3b (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000).

2. The Saul-David Transition Leadership Paradigm

2.1. Background Considerations

The second case-study to be considered in this study is that of the Saul-David transition leadership paradigm dated by most scholars during the Iron Age.

Worth noting here is the fact that the international scene during the Iron Age is marked by a general socio-political instability. Then was the time of the decline of Mycenaean, Egyptian and Hittite powers, the emergence of city-states and tribal confederation and the rise of the Assyrian and the Babylonian empires.¹ Especially significant was the persistent Philistine threats and invasions which sapped Israel's morale² to the core and formed "the background to Saul's elevation to the monarchy."³ In the face of the "well-trained, well equipped Philistines ... Israel feared ... and it was from them that there arose a clamor for a king."⁴

Further, the transition leadership between Saul and David happened during a peculiar national backdrop. Saul rose to power after the leadership of Samuel that followed the socio-politico-religious chaos of the period of the Judges. During the period of the Judges, Israel's national fate dwindled between the pendulum of foreign oppression and momentary stability under the leadership of "charismatic"⁵ God-ordained judges. The situation by then has been summarized by the refrain "no king in Israel in those days; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25).⁶

¹For a comprehensive discussion on the International Situation during the Iron Age, see Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 216-232. See also David F. Hinson, *Old Testament Introduction 1: History of Israel* (London, Great Britain: S.P.C.K, 1973), 65-66.

²Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *A History of Israel From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 206

³See Noth, *History of Israel*, 168.

⁴Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Old Testament History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973), 245.

⁵See Noth, *History of Israel*, 221.

⁶See also Judges 18:1 and 19:1 where only the first part of the statement occurs "there was no king in Israel."

Butler considers this as "the most important verse in the book"¹ which points either at a need, a test or a hope on the part of Israel that showed "the social, religious, military, and political chaos in which Israel finds itself."² The tragic end of the permissive rule of Israel's high priest and judge Eli with his household (1 Samuel 14:11, 18, 19-21) appears as the culmination of the "anarchy which preceded the careers of Samuel and Saul."³ This echoes a leadership crisis in Israel. In other words, Israel was ripe for a transition in leadership.

As an echo to Israel's desire, 1 Samuel 8:1-22 records a major shift in biblical narrative history. There, the people through the voice of "the elders of Israel" are recorded demanding "a king" to judge them "like all the nations." Israel's crave for a leadership found no satisfaction in the outstanding ministry of Samuel.⁴ They rather expressed their rejection of "the principles of theocracy [in favor of] a monarchy."⁵ They indicate their dissatisfaction with the leadership by pointing at Samuel's old age and the corruption of his two sons Joel and Abijah. In spite of Samuel's reluctance and God's disagreement, Israel is permitted by God to have a king not without being forewarned of the abuses they will incur under the rule of a king.

This is a sharp contrast with the ideal God-Moses-Joshua theocratic leadership earlier studied in this paper. The sequence of events then follows suit as the choice of Saul of the tribe of Benjamin as the incoming king of Israel (1 Samuel 9:1-26), the anointing of Saul as king of Israel (1 Samuel 10:1), the proclamation of Saul as king over Israel at Mizpah (1 Samuel 10:25), Saul's coronation in Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:15) and Saul's sin and rejection (1 Samuel 15). Craigie notes that, "With respect to the larger history of Israel, Saul's reign was very much a transitional period."⁶

¹Trent Butler, *Judges*, WBC 8, 468.

²*Ibid*, 468, 471.

³Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 6A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 256..

⁴White, *The History of Redemption*, 234, describes Samuel as being "Divinely invested with the threefold office of judge, prophet, and priest." Under his leadership, "Order had been restored, and godliness promoted, and the spirit of discontentment was checked for a time."

⁵White, *The History of Redemption*, 234.

⁶Peter C. Craigie, *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1986), 272.

2.2. Biblical Principles for Transition Leadership from the Saul-David Paradigm

Unlike the Moses-Joshua paradigm, the Saul-David leadership transition happened in a non ideal setting. In other words, the transition between Saul and David was marred by the bitter jealousy and murder-driven attitude of Saul against David. In the triadic God-Forerunner-Successor biblical model of transition leadership, Saul was the faulty part. However, though not ideal, the Saul-David leadership transition confirms the idea that transition is God-determined. Though rejected by God, Saul continued his rule long after the selection and anointing of David as his successor to the throne. In other words, God operates with the principle that there is a specific kind of God-ordained leader(ship) adapted for each situation in time and terrain.

The study will proceed with a comparison between the leaderships of Saul and David. Table 2 below is a brief comparison between Saul and David.

Features	Saul	David
Individual Background	Born in Canaan to Kish "a powerful and wealthy chief" from the tribe of Benjamin Raised as a "husbandman"	Born in Canaan to Jesse "a Judahite" living in Bethlehem Raised as a shepherd
Divine Mission	Deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines and rule over Israel	Shepherd and rule over Israel according to the perfect will of God
Executive Leadership	Triadic Administrative (Saul)–Religious (Samuel/Ahimelec)–Military (Abner)	Triadic Administrative (David) – Religious (Abiathar/Zadok) – Military (Joab)
Peripheral Leadership	Elders, Princes, Chiefs, Captains, Officers	Elders, Princes, Chiefs, Captains, Officers
Leadership Setting	Mostly in Gibeah	In Hebron and mostly in Jerusalem

Table 2. A Comparison between Saul and David

A careful analysis of Table 2 above highlights striking similarities between the Moses-Joshua and the Saul-David models of transition leadership. First, despite the troubled period of

the Judges that separated them from Moses and Joshua, both Saul and David inherited and maintained the Mosaic formula of centralized leadership combined with a well structured peripheral administration. This is a strong support to the value of proper transition leadership that can generate a lasting impact and produce far reaching benefits to a people. Secondly, both Saul and David were divinely chosen and appointed with a clearly defined mission; Saul was to deliver Israel from the Philistines (1 Samuel 9:16, 17) and David was to shepherd and rule Israel in God's will (1 Samuel 16:1; Acts 13:22; 2 Samuel 5:3). Interestingly, each leader was given a specific and unique mission by God. In other words, a well defined mission forms part not only of biblical leadership but also of biblical transition leadership. The underlying principle here is that a biblical transition of leadership also involves a transition of mission.

Interestingly, just like Moses and Joshua, both Saul and David share an identical birth land namely, Canaan. Moreover, they belong to the same people namely Israel. All shared the same history, culture and faith. The implication here is that transition leadership cannot take place between two individuals with different historical, religious and cultural backgrounds. All leaders of Israel originated from Israel. In other words, biblical transition leadership takes into account the commonality of the cultural heritage of both the outgoing and the incoming leadership.

Our next endeavor is to compare the leaderships of Moses and Saul. Table 3 will help in that regard.

Moses	Saul
Chosen and appointed by God to deliver Israel from the Egyptians	Chosen and appointed by God to deliver Israel from the Philistines
Enjoyed a pictorial experience of God's power through mighty victories	Enjoyed a pictorial experience of God's power through mighty victories
Worked with his potential successor by the name of Joshua	Worked with his potential successor by the name of David
Rebelled and made God's people to sin	Rebelled and made God's people to sin
Was denied entrance to Canaan after he rebelled against God	Was denied kingship over Israel after he rebelled against God
Witnessed the divine designation of Joshua as his successor	Witnessed the divine designation of David as his successor
Humbly accepted Joshua's designation	Proudly rejected David's designation

Peacefully facilitated transition with Joshua	Violently opposed transition with David
Died with dignity	Died tragically
Model of transition leadership	Counter model of transition leadership

Table 3 A Comparison between Moses and Saul¹

As apparent in Table 3 above, both Moses and Saul were chosen and appointed by God to deliver Israel from foreign foes. Furthermore, both experience God's power in vivid ways, worked with and were made aware of the identity of their potential successor, rebelled against God and lost their leadership roles. Interestingly, whereas as Moses humbly accepted Joshua's appointment as his successor, Saul violently rejected David's designation; the former ended up facilitating the transition while the latter opposed it. Moses died with dignity as a model of transition leadership. Saul died tragically as a counter model of transition leadership. All evidence points to the fact that the difference between Moses and Saul lied not in their calling, nor with their experiences of successes and failures but rather in their contrasted attitudes towards the God-ordained transition of leadership.

The comparative analysis of the leaderships of Moses and Saul hints at the principle that transition leadership should be incorporated in each leader's experience. In other words, a good leader leads having in his/her mind the time he/she would have to step down for another to continue where he/she left the work. Examples of such leaders abound in Scripture. David blazed the trail for Solomon (1 Kings 1:32-35). Elijah paved the way for Elisha (2 Kings 2:1-18). John the Baptist decreased so that Christ could increase (John 3:30). Paul prepared Timothy to take over after him (2 Timothy 3:1-4:8). Jesus Himself is the best example of transition leadership. From the beginning of and during His entire ministry, He persistently reminded the Twelve of the transient nature of His work on earth (Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22) and pointed to the fact that they should prepare to succeed Him (Luke 22:29). Furthermore, He laid the foundation for the Holy Spirit to replace Him on earth when He declared "if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). The capital principle here derived is that transition must never divorce

¹This table is a summary of Moses' and Saul's stories as recorded respectively in Exodus 2:1-Deuteronomy 34:12 and in 1 Samuel 9:1-31:13.

the mind of a leader during his/her entire tenure. In other words, a Christian leader must constantly think of, plan for, pray for and work towards a smooth and meaningful God-ordained transition.

Unlike Moses, Saul's treatment of transition leadership failed in the mentoring aspect. Aside from the timid tentative he exhibited by inviting David to soothe his trouble soul with heavenly music later making him his "armor bearer" (1 Samuel 16:19-23), Saul spent the rest of his office seeking to secure his leadership by eliminating David (1 Samuel 18:8-9). In jealousy, anger and fear, Saul attempted to destroy David through direct physical attacks (1 Samuel 18:11; 19:10), marital traps (1 Samuel 18:17, 21) or risky assignments (1 Samuel 18:25). Interestingly Saul's rivalry against David sharply contrasts with the Baptist-Christ friendship¹ and "transition"² at "the crossing point of history"³ recorded in John 3:30. White asserts that by then, John the Baptist "had risen to the height of self-abnegation"⁴ without which one "cannot discern the character of God."⁵ Fascinatingly, Numbers 12:3 describes Moses as "very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth." Self-abnegation results in a transition leadership that is not half-baked but complete. For example, Arnold notes that David rose to power historically, sociologically, psychologically and theologically.⁶ In other words, David experienced a complete transfer of leadership authority. From this analysis, we derive the principle that self-abnegation and discernment are two other key elements needed by a leader in order to facilitate a meaningful and complete transition leadership.

It falls into place at this point to compare the leadership experiences of Joshua and David. To this effect, Table 4 below will help.

¹George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36, 53.

²Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Evangelical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 138.

³Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, NAC, 25A, 192.

⁴White, *The History of Redemption*, 559.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 451.

Joshua	David
Chosen and appointed by God to lead off Israel into the Promised Land	Chosen and appointed by God to shepherd Israel inside the Promised Land
Enjoyed a pictorial experience of God's power through mighty victories	Enjoyed a pictorial experience of God's power through mighty victories
Worked lastingly with his forerunner by the name of Moses	Worked briefly with his forerunner by the name of Saul
Humbly and boldly accepted the divine call to succeed Moses	Humbly and boldly accepted the divine call to succeed Saul
Received cooperation from his predecessor	Received hostility from his predecessor
Showed empathy to his predecessor at and after his death	Showed empathy to his predecessor at and after his death
Made mistakes during his leadership	Made mistakes during his leadership
Facilitated a peaceful transition with his successors the elders of Israel	Facilitated a peaceful transition with his successor Solomon
Died with dignity and full of days	Died with dignity and full of days
Model of transition leadership	Model of transition leadership

Table 4 A Comparison between Joshua and David¹

According to Table 4 above, the leaderships of Joshua and David show almost perfect similarity. Both were chosen, appointed and commissioned by God to lead Israel into/in Canaan. In addition, both Joshua and David had a pictorial experience of God, worked with their respective forerunners, accepted the challenge to lead, empathized with their forerunner at and after their death, experienced failure, secured a smooth transition to their successors and died with dignity and full of days. Also, both leaders stand as models of transition leadership. Moreover, from the successor's standpoint, three key elements stand. First, that transition leadership requires a humble and bold acceptance of the authority by the successor. Though divinely appointed, prepared and trained to succeed, both Joshua and David had to privately

¹This table is a summary of Joshua's and David's stories as recorded respectively in Exodus 17:9-Joshua 24:33 and in 1 Samuel 16:1-1 Kings 2:12.

and publicly show their agreement with the divine trust. For example, after receiving instructions from Moses and God, Joshua's first act was to command the officers of the people (Joshua 1:10) signifying his consent and commitment to the divine call. Also, David demonstrated his public approval of the divine appointment by making "a covenant with them [the elders of Israel] before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel" (2 Samuel 5:3). In other words, transition leadership requires the private and public manifestation of the volition of the successor.

A second key element is that, in transition leadership the successor must show empathy and respect to the predecessor no matter the quality of their relationship. For instance, at the inception of his rule, Joshua gave tribute to his illustrious predecessor by admonishing the people to "remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded" (Joshua 1:13). Interestingly, the name Moses occurs fifty-seven times in all twenty-four chapters of the book of Joshua except in chapters one, five, six, seven, ten, fifteen, sixteen and nineteen;¹ a fact that buttresses Joshua's extensive respect for his predecessor.

Also, particularly insightful is David's empathy for his bitterest enemy Saul. Non content of choosing a fugitive's life instead of usurping the throne divinely promised to him (1 Samuel 22:1), David spared Saul's life twice on the basis that he was "the anointed of the LORD" (1 Samuel 24:6; 26:9). Furthermore, David exhibited love for his enemy Saul in the fear of God by mourning not only for him (2 Samuel 1:17-27) but also for his associates like his general Abner (2 Samuel 3:31-34) or his son Ishbosheth (2 Samuel 4:9-12). Again, David's kindness to Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, confirms his kind disposition toward the family of his bitter predecessor (2 Samuel 9:1-12). It here is clear that "David despaired of a reconciliation with Saul."² In this context, David is the living example of Christ's command to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:48). Joshua and David show us that genuine respect and loving magnanimity are key principles towards biblical transition leadership. In other

¹Eight over twenty-four chapters do not mention Moses in the book of Joshua; that is one third of the book. Moreover, the name is distributed throughout from chapter one to twenty-four. The significance here is that Joshua did not break with but rather paid due respect to his glorious predecessor.

²White, *The History of Redemption*, 260.

words, there is no complete biblical transition leadership without respect and empathy manifested toward the predecessor by his successor.

Finally, Joshua and David highlight the fact that securing peaceful transition leadership is not only intentional but also not optional no matter the quality of the leadership heritage received. At the end of his office, Joshua monitored a peaceful transition by giving a final address to the people reminding them of the covenant (Joshua 23:1-16) and by renewing the covenant with the people (Joshua 24:1-28). The colossal impact of Joshua's leadership and the great wisdom of his transition leadership management were so much felt that "Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua" (Joshua 24:31). Israel's stability outlived Joshua's leadership. David also secured a smooth transition by publicly proclaiming Solomon king in his lifetime (1 Kings 1:32-35) and by instructing Solomon in the way of wisdom and obedience to God (1 Kings 2:1-9). Based on this, Solomon ushered Israel into an unprecedented era of worldwide greatness and influence during which "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing" (1 Kings 4:20, 21) and enjoying a peaceful and warless time (1 Kings 4: 25). Joshua and David's passing of the baton of command demonstrates that, intentional and peaceful transition leadership is foundational to biblical leadership.

3. Summary and Conclusion

The study has unveiled two general principles. First, that there is an ideal God-Forerunner-Successor model for transition leadership in which all three parties share the same vision and goals. Second, that there is a specific kind of God-ordained leader(ship) adapted for each situation in time and terrain.

The study also highlighted that the principles of continuum leadership and of spiritual mentoring are fundamental to a meaningful transition leadership. In addition, that future and past history, character and covenant are core considerations in biblical transition leadership. Moreover, expressed public recognition of the new leadership and good will for the people are key principles towards meaningful transition leadership. Again, that accurate knowledge of territory, vision and authority are significant keys to biblical transition leadership. Another principle is the principle

of private prayer and public conferral of authority which are key elements for biblical transition leadership. Sixth, that a biblical transition of leadership also involves a transition of mission. Then, that biblical transition leadership takes into account the commonality of the cultural heritage of both the outgoing and the incoming leadership.

Furthermore, that transition must never leave the mind of a leader during his/her entire tenure. Also, that self-abnegation and discernment are two other key elements needed by a leader in order to facilitate a meaningful and complete transition leadership. In addition, that transition leadership requires both the private and public manifestation of the volition of the successor; that genuine respect and loving magnanimity are key principles to biblical transition leadership; that intentional and peaceful transition leadership is foundational to biblical leadership and that that securing peaceful transition leadership is not only intentional but also not optional not matter the quality of the leadership heritage received.