LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2018

Opening Presentation: Dr David Henry

Developing Effective Men's- Ministry
Leadership – The Ethos of the Male Dimension
September 15, 2018

This is a Men's Leadership conference which gives focus to developing effective men's ministry.

I have been asked to speak in this opening session on Leadership – the ethos of the male dimension. I understand the organizers to be asking me to provide some insights on how we may more effectively lead (reach (evangelize), disciple and empower) males to fulfil their God- given potentialities, having regard to the ethos (characteristics) of manhood.

The word ethos means, the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations.

The ethos (characteristics) of the male dimension is therefore a huge and complex subject. It includes among other things historical, sociological, psychological, socio-economic, political and spiritual dimensions. What is maleness and what is involved in leading men biblically?

In my presentation I will seek to offer insights regarding biblical leadership. I shall seek to provide some reflections on manhood and in particular ideas which shape black Jamaican masculinities. My approach will be largely from a sociological and biblical perspective informed by research I have conducted in trying to understand why "Jameikan man tan suh," and how the church may more effectively reach, disciple and empower males.

I believe it is vital that we understand what shapes the masculine soul in order to more effectively reach and disciple males.

Let's firstly define: **Who is a leader and what is leadership?**(Some definitions)

Leadership(is technically defined as) -**a dynamic process over an extended period of time in which a leader influences the thoughts and activities of followers, toward accomplishment of aims – usually mutually beneficial for leaders and followers and the macro-context of which they are a part. (Dr. Robert Clinton**)

Leader – **In the biblical context, a leader is a person with a God-given capacity and a God-given responsibility to <u>influence</u> a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group. (Dr. Robert Clinton)**

Leadership is <u>influence.</u>   (John Maxwell)

You may have noticed the use of the word influence in several of the definitions. I believe influence is at the guts of leadership. I like Maxwell's favourite leadership proverb which is: *"He who thinketh he leadeth and hath no one following him is only taking a walk."*

Usually when we think of leadership the focus is on others whom the leader influences. One writer (Hybels) however made the compelling observation that to be an effective leader you must firstly learn to lead yourself well. To develop effective men's ministry therefore I would submit must start with effective self-leadership. This proposition has strong biblical foundations. Leading ourselves is our toughest leadership challenge.

I submit that it is our inability to appropriately lead ourselves, which is at the root of the breakdown in our lives, in families, institutions and society in general. **Leadership flows from who we are - character.** In leading therefore the most vital consideration has to do with our character.

What is character?

Os Guinness tells us that "as traditionally understood by the Hebrews and the Greeks onward character is the inner form that makes anyone or anything what it is - whether a person, a wine, or a historical period. Thus character is clearly distinguishable from such concepts as personality, image, reputation or celebrity. Applied to a person, it is the essential "stuff" he or she is made of, the inner reality in which thoughts, speech, decisions behaviour and relations are rooted." **Character is the inner form or core of a person**. It manifests itself in consistency –"the habits of the heart" (de Tocqueville), "A long obedience in the same direction" (Nietzsche)

This consistent core character according to Guinness is normally formed best and revealed most clearly in the crucible of testing. Hence it costs.

We live in an age however where "image makes the man." Appearances are often time more valued than reality. An interesting quote from Vreeland (a Vogue editor) captures this:

"Fake it, fake it…never worry about facts. Project an image to the public." The art of success is to create a world "as you feel it to be, as you wish it to be, as you wish it into being."

On this subject of image/style I like Guinness' statement that: "Style is the art of skillfully packaging illusions and projecting them with confidence as we walk down the corridors of image that make up modern society." Through all of this the casualty is character.

What is the biblical view of character? Put simply I would again quote from Guinness.

"Character matters supremely because God has character and from his own character, He both says what we should be and sees clearly what we are. Our **character is** therefore **"who we are when no one sees - but God." Os Guinness**

What our society needs at this time are men and women who are leaders of noble character. Noble character is rooted in integrity. There is an absence of double standards, deceit or hypocrisy; no guile or impurity. You are single (integer) what you see is what you get. You are authentic, real, honest, genuine and consistent. Pause to observe that men are seeking authentic male leadership – people they can trust and respect. More on this later

Existing models of leadership focus on matters of style and form. Competence, skill and charisma are important ingredients of leadership however godly character is of superior value. This is the biblical position and when one examines the biblical criteria for leadership one will note an emphasis primarily on character. (See 1Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.) The measure of a man - above reproach, moral purity (husband of one wife), temperate, prudent (demonstrating wisdom); respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine, not self-willed (centred); not quick tempered; not pugnacious; gentle; peaceable (peacemaker); free from love of money (generous); manages his own household well; loving what is good (loving God wholeheartedly); Just (and upright); devout (holy); self-controlled (disciplined).

"Externally character provides the point of trust that links leaders with followers. Internally Character is the part- gyroscope, part –brake that provides the leaders deepest source of bearings and strongest source of restraint. In many instances the first prompting to do good and the last barrier against doing wrong are the same - character". Guinness

Having briefly defined leadership and qualifications for a biblical leader let's explore:

The Ethos of Manhood

I have been deeply troubled, burdened and disturbed by the dysfunctional behaviours of males in our society (Jamaica) evidenced in among other things, fatherless homes, (**46.6% of families in Jamaica are female headed**; 59% in Swallowfield; **over 80% of our children born out of wedlock**); abusive behaviours towards women, children, perpetuating and escalating violence, murders, drug abuse, lack of commitment to monogamous relationships, poor work ethic, high unemployment, poor educational performance, illiteracy, scamming etc.

In my doctoral research I therefore investigated the issues and factors contributing to distorted male identity and dysfunctional behaviours among inner city males giving particular focus on our community of Swallowfield in Kingston, Jamaica.

Why Man Tan (stay) suh?
In doing this research, I was interested in understanding how black males in a general sense, constructed their ideas of masculinity/what it means to be a man? I therefore reviewed constructs

of masculinity in Africa (parts of Zambia, Ethiopia and South Africa), as well as North America (period of rap Nationalism- black power movement and rap development era) and also in the Caribbean in general and Jamaica in particular. My review revealed striking similarities in the construction of black masculinity as follows:

Man Must Rule and Dominate "tings"
The sophisticated way of saying this is that black male identity is rooted in hegemonic masculinity. In this construct there is quest for economic power, male privileging, and domination of women, which may include violence. (Pause to observe that this construct does not only relate to black males but to males in general).

Historical factors, including slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and present day globalization, have all served as instruments of subjugation and exploitation of the Jamaican black male. Despite political independence in Jamaica 1962, inner city communities have remained poor and black inner city males (JICM and their families) are at the lowest rung of society.

Disempowered Men – Assert Power in Negative Ways
In the absence of economic power, I observed that males have sought to assert their masculinity in ways that are dysfunctional and damaging – The JICM has sought to restore his manhood and self-esteem through amplified and exaggerated masculinities.

Some of the ways of asserting manhood include the use of his phallus, aggressive domination of women in promiscuous relationships, and strong anti-male homosexual detestation. He will engage in whatever activity he can to make a living whether legitimate or unlawful (drug trafficking, extortion, scamming and/or other criminal activities) and makes a living through his extended phallus – the gun, which provides power, in a context of economic powerlessness. Substance abuse is also prevalent, which includes excessive alcohol consumption, normative smoking of marijuana, and the use of other mind-altering drugs.

The Jamaican dancehall culture, which offers elaborate shows/events where lyrical mastery of potent messages are communicated via microphone, is perhaps a poignant example of phallic power on display as the mike becomes the instrument of power through which males primarily, but not exclusively, impregnates and punctuates the culture via the airways.

In the dancehall culture 5 tropes/patterns of male expressions of masculinity espoused (See Donna Hope - Masculinity in the Jamaican Dancehall):

Bad Man; (Gunman /Don
Ole Dawg; (Promiscuous male)
Bling Blinger; (Materialistic- Bling)
Anti- Male Homosexual; and
Fashion Ova Style

These images of masculinity and behaviours are not confined to inner city males. Males with privilege and economic power also assert their masculinity in negative ways; as bad men (corrupting influence and behaviours); Ole dawgs (promiscuous lifestyles); bling blingers (materialistic); etc. **Men abuse money, sex and power.**

For the inner city male the experiences of oppression, injustice, poverty and a deep sense of disempowerment have fostered a sub-culture which seeks empowerment through dysfunctional means (including "badness"), abuse of women to obtain the hegemonic **markers of success**, which are, consumptive **wealth, recognition and status**.

Leo-Rynie cites Christine Barrow who reports considerable sexual antagonism in Caribbean families because of the perceptions men and women have of each other. **"Women see men as authoritarian, dishonest, irresponsible and unreliable, while men consider women to be calculating, grasping, greedy and materialistic – the embodiment of Eve, Delilah and Jezebel – the Trinity of Treachery."**[1]

The Church Is Unappealing to Many Males
In light of the legacy of (slavery, colonialism etc.) the imposition of "Europeanized" Christianity is unappealing, repulsive, and stoutly resisted. Dr. Samuel Vassel did seminal research on Understanding and Addressing Male Absence from the Jamaican Church.

Vassel's research revealed that for many Jamaican males, the Church was a "womanish" institution, that is, a place for women. The ethos of most Church worship was reflective of the fine arts with which many Jamaican men are uncomfortable. Men too are suspect of emotional unmasking, which is encouraged in the church. Church then is perceived as for the soft, not the tough man. Men have difficulty with an institution whose sexual ethic is counter the image of sex-fame, where men receive accolades from other men for their sexual exploits. "Sexual prowess has been one of the very important if not the chief means of attempting to bolster self-esteem for the Caribbean/Jamaican man."[2]

Jamaican men have a strongly negative cultural taboo against homosexuality and if the church is perceived as womanish and for the 'soft' man then the matter of homosexuality raises its head as an issue in the church and men do not want to be numbered among this group.[3]Some men on the other hand struggle with homosexual desires and behaviour and are confused as to how to resolve this conflict and express their masculinity. Men also perceive the Church as a 'childish' institution. Women take the children to church. It is a place for children and there is a perception

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[1] Christine Barrow quoted in Leo-Rynie.

[2]Ibid., 12.

[3]Ibid., 13.

that Church is for the simple minded and emotionally weak; a place for the gullible who are manipulated by the pastor. (All pastor want is yuh money)

The iconography/images of the Church tend to affirm a foreign God. "God has been co-opted on the side of the power elite in terms of colour, class and the way he seems to operate, so God is white, powerful and rich."[4]

I am of the view that **the imposition of Europeanized Christianity is generally not appealing to the inner-city Jamaican male**. He interprets church as a vehicle for feminizing (castrating) the black male, controlling his natural sexual prowess, and perpetuating white rule. Ideas of a blue-eyed feminine looking Jesus are repugnant to the Jamaican black male who defines his masculinity in ways, which are the antithesis of these weak images and aggressively anti-male homosexual.

I paint this picture of what is "the worldview" so to speak of the Jamaican male and inner city males in particular for us to understand beyond mere surface knowledge what is shaping the lives of many males and their behaviours which impact them personally, as well as our (dysfunctional) families, communities and our nation(s) at large. **There is a crisis in masculinity.**

Jesus answers the crisis in masculinity and points us to how males may find and take their place as godly boys, men, brothers, husbands, fathers and citizens in society.

God's Ideal for Manhood - Imago Dei(Gen. 1: 26-28)

The church's theology should proceed from an understanding and articulation of humanity's created goodness in the image and likeness of God, rather than from the place of the fall. Inner city males (and men in general) are often labeled and stereotyped in negative ways. An accurate biblical perspective, however, sees God affirming humanity as inherently worthwhile, persons of dignity, and honorable. The cry for respect among inner city males is answered by the response of God that they are made in his image and likeness. This image, however, is broken at the fall with tragic consequences, curse, and death. (Gen. 3)

In light of the creation account men were not made superior to women. Also, in light of the differences between the genders, we may also rightly extrapolate that the genders in complement give best expression to God's image. (Males and females were made to complement each other and not to compete against each other). The solitary existence of the male is hence described in Genesis 2, as "not good" and human creation is only complete when woman is made and brought to the man. Woman is the pinnacle of God's creation. (I am not saying you're incomplete without a woman in your life but that God has made males and females to relate to each other in

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[4]Ibid., 15. Vassel cites William Watty who points to the historical roots of this, as the theological basis of the Colonial enterprise. Watty states: "What has never been fully explored, …are the theological presuppositions which underwrote the expansion of Europe overseas; for basic to this enterprise, as well as its inspiration was a European worldview of which the right, indeed the duty, of Europeans to impose themselves on other people was a natural and logical corollary."

such a way that we complement the other.)

The creation ideal is therefore one of equality in gender relationships. Both male and female are delegated God's authority over all of creation with co-responsibility in community (together) and in dominion. This ideal is marred by sin and it is after the fall that one for the first time sees a supremacy/subjugation relationship between man and woman. (Genesis 3)

Having regard to the creation account, it is clear that true masculinity has its genesis in a man rightly relating to God his creator. Some thoughts re ministry to males in light of the narrative of creation:

- **The church must present Christ and serve the community in biblical and culturally relevant ways affirming male identity and dignity.**

- **Males need to be taught, socialized and discipled to understand their true identity as males made in the Image of God and what this means.** As a corollary, **they should be helped to understand women as co-sharers in the image of God and as their equals who play complementary roles to them in co-responsibility over creation.** Men should be taught to relate to women accordingly and appropriately. Male liberation and female liberation are inextricably interwoven.

- I note that the expression of the Imago Dei in the inner city Jamaican male is threatened by the socio-economic realities in which he is situated. As such **Male powerlessness by reason of his economic plight needs to be addressed if he is to blossom in the Imago Dei.** (Note implications of kingdom theology which reverses injustice and advances equality)

The Shape of the Masculine Soul
Richard Rohr in his book Adam's Return, in a chapter titled "What is the shape of the masculine soul," says this: "Images of a king, a warrior, a lover and a magician or wise man seems to be four parts of every man, his primary fascinations, the major quadrants of his soul...They challenge him, they fascinate him, they threaten him and he seems unable to totally ignore them. He often over-identifies with one of them, which invariably takes on a dark and compulsive side, but the mature man honours and integrates all four parts of his soul. They seem to naturally balance and regulate one another, and they make a man both whole and holy. It could be called the very shape of male holiness." Put simply, **there is a king, warrior, lover and wise man in everyman.** I agree.

It is only in rightly relating to God that a man can balance and manifest what it means to be a true king, warrior, lover and wise man.

When male kingship (rule) is not aligned to God, man behaves as if he is the final bastion of power - the king of kings. He acts as if he is god and not subject to God. He therefore abuses the

weak and vulnerable and advances his own selfish cause. Conversely he may be a wimp and spineless (does not know who he is in God). He therefore acts irresponsibly or may manipulate and exploit. He does not treat, respect and honour women- as Queen/ co-regent (equal but different). He does not act responsibly for his children. He abdicates the leadership of his family to others. He is a fool!

When not rightly related to God, the warrior in man produces abuse and violence and destruction. The true warrior aligned to God, protects, shields and defends his family, community and society. He stands up for truth, justice, righteousness, brotherhood and peace. He stands up for the norms of God's kingdom.

Without submission to God, the lover becomes a philanderer 'a gallist,'and sexually immoral. Without God he is unable to be whole emotionally and to live in committed wholesome monogamous relationship with one woman. He becomes a cheat, a liar and embraces unwholesome behaviours. Pause to observe that one of the greatest gifts a man can give his children and to society is to model faithfulness and fidelity to his spouse.

Where man is not aligned to God, he will reject godly wisdom and instead embrace earthly wisdom which jettisons God, as source of all wisdom. As such he embraces worldviews of secularism and humanism- notions of truth being relative - as I choose and as I feel. He becomes arrogant and conceited in his abilities to solve human problems, rejects God and creates mayhem in society.

The epitome of true humanity, masculinity and of the father's heart is Jesus Christ the Son of God who became a human being. Jesus manifested the godly exercise of authority as he lived in total submission to his father. He exercised godly responsibility. He was supreme **servant leader** as he redefined what true kingship meant. The greatest in my kingdom must be the servant of all.

Jesus manifested the spirit of the warrior as he confronted and drove out demons, stood against corruption, injustice, prejudice and hypocrisy. He defended and uplifted the weak, vulnerable, downtrodden and fallen. He was the perfect lover. He loved his disciples. He loved and treated women with respect, dignity and honour. He loved sinners and offered them entry into his kingdom. He healed the sick and touched the untouchables. He manifested perfect wisdom as his speech and life were full of grace and truth as he advocated and modelled the ethics of God's kingdom. His answers to questions were sublime and he confounded his critics and accusers. Ultimately his love for humanity was manifested in his laying down his life for the sins of the world and not responding to violence with violence but absorbing the violence and sins of the world in order to set us free from sin, death and the power of the devil. Jesus died as perfect king, warrior, love and wise man.

Jesus modelled what it meant to hold these aspects of the male soul in perfect balance. He lived in total submission to his Father. I submit that this is the key to a man experiencing true

masculinity and to have the father's heart. We need to reconnect with our heavenly Father and help men to live in submission to the King of Kings – Jesus!

Jesus answers the crisis in masculinity and points us to how males may find and take their place as godly boys, men, brothers, husbands, fathers and citizens in society.

It is instructive to note that when Jesus started his earthly ministry he relocated to the Galil…and the regions surrounding Galilee which were places of darkness, gloom and despair, (the abject inner city) as his primary places of ministry. He ministered primarily to the marginalized – people and males in crisis! He did not centre his ministry in Jerusalem the place of prestige, power and prophetic hope. Jesus' message was simple and powerful. He announced a new day and declared: **Repent for the kingdom of God is near – Matthew 4: 17**

Jesus identified himself as King of God's kingdom and called people to allegiance to him as King and to submit their lives to his kingdom agenda. Jesus taught, preached and healed. His ministry was holistic and comprehensive in its scope and had powerful impact *Matthew 4: 23 – 25.* In this context of announcing his kingdom agenda and executing same Jesus called some fishermen to **"come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:**

There are three (3) things which these fishermen would have understood by Jesus' call:

1. **Call to be disciples** (Follow Me)
2.Call to radical makeover (I will Make you – he would transform their lives)
3.Call to participate in Jesus' kingdom agenda -

In light of Jesus' example, how should we lead? What does effective, wholesome godly men ministry leadership involve?

- The church (effective male ministry) needs to **call males to repentance and allegiance to Jesus Christ as King of the kingdom of God.** (Men can relate to a kingly rule as expression of love rather than "loving a man" which has sexual undertones in Jamaican culture)

- The Church has a therapeutic role to play **- fostering healing of males (the masculine soul) by addressing issues of the 'father wound' and general 'male pain' caused by his life experiences.** (There is an abiding aloneness in the inner city males and indeed in many males.)

Jesus laid the axe at the root of hegemonic masculinity and indeed patriarchy and affirmed masculinity as not devoid of emotional tenderness and compassion.

- **Males need to be challenged and empowered to embrace faithfulness as a lifestyle and to live in faithful relationships to their woman/spouses and children**

He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse (Mal. 4:6). (Mal. 2: 10-16) N.B. Ministry of John the Baptist

- Regarding Family life the Shema (Deut. 6: 1-9) speaks to the importance of allegiance to one God and calls parents to teach their children to love and serve him as such. Jesus is King of God's kingdom. Males need to be helped to love God/Jesus and neighbors as themselves. **Males need to be trained, equipped and empowered in life skills generally, to be good fathers and to inculcate godly values and lifestyles in their families, fostering allegiance to Jesus as King.**

- In light of its discipleship mandate the Church needs to **be <u>missional</u> and <u>incarnational</u> in its discipleship of males. (Matt. 28: 18-20)**

- The Church needs to be **<u>holistic</u> in ministry** with inner city males **and give attention to addressing the root causes of male dis-empowerment, which includes giving attention to his socio-economic empowerment**. In this regard as well, the church needs to model and teach what true power means as expressed in Christ.

- The Church needs to **be agent of and foster healing and reconciliation in the community and empower males to work towards reconciliation and the creation of a beloved community. (2 Cor. 5: 10-21)**

SUMMARY

We have examined who is a leader and what leadership involves and have noted that godly character is vital to leadership. We lead from who we are. We have examined the ethos of manhood and why the Jamaican church may be unappealing to the males.

We have noted that there is a crisis in masculinity and reflected on God's ideal of manhood anchored in the Imago Dei. We have reflected on the shape of the masculine soul and observed that Jesus is our supreme example of masculinity who mastered holding the king, warrior, lover and wise man, in man in perfect balance.

We are called to follow Jesus' lead in leading others including ourselves. We call men to repentance. We foster healing, challenging men to faithfulness in relationships and equipping them to be good fathers. Our ministry is missional, incarnational and holistic and facilitates reconciliation.

Our ministry is urgent given the present milieu.

May the Lord enable us to be godly and effective leaders!