

# BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

*Raineer Chu*

*"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." 1 Peter 5:1-4)*

Everyone is called to be a leader; all those called to become like Christ. Each Christian is to be salt and light to the world. Jesus knew the whole world would be watching us and through us he hoped they would know him and perhaps be saved. We are called ambassadors because we represent Christ to the world. We lead the world to a saving knowledge of Christ, we lead them to the truth that sets them free, and we lead them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, and best of all, through us they experience the love and sweet presence of God.

## LEADERS AS FATHERS OR MOTHERS

Leaders are of many types but they have one common denominator, they are all fathers and mothers. The main characteristic of a leader is what we see in the Epistles. The goal of the first missionary program was to set up or appoint elders, in the traditional Arab language, sheiks or village fathers.

We are called to be fathers (or mothers) when we are called to be leaders. To be a father or mother, means we die first, we eat last, we give more, we sleep less, we work more, in order to protect and provide for those in our care, children, the weak and the vulnerable.

Fathers or mothers, see farther into the future, embrace bigger communities, carry greater burdens. They also dream greater things and worry bigger troubles. They hold the world in their hearts.

During this period of pandemic, in the Philippines, the role of women has been highlighted even more. Our mothers are the new heroes. They work from home, and have to tutor their children in the distant learning modules, besides cooking and doing other house chores (not to mention giving birth).

Each one of us leads in his/her unique way, according to their spiritual gifts and talents. The spiritual gifts are not limited to those found in the epistles (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and 1 Peter 4). The Holy Spirit is more creative than that. I can imagine a million other

spiritual gifts and talents. In the Old Testament, we know that God gives abilities like carpentry, music and even fighting skills.

Some leaders speak with a soft voice, and some, their voices resonate throughout the world. I am always captivated by the theological leadership of people like John Stott, NT Wright, AW Tozer, CS Lewis, Eugene Peterson, et al, who did not lead armies but led the global evangelical community with their clear and strong biblical teachings.

When we look at the format today for child learning, we see a more expanded model for measuring intelligence. Children are no longer graded according to how well they do with the 3Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) alone. As some experts say, there are many kinds of intelligences. If we bring this to the matter of leadership, we might also say there are several kinds of leadership.

Someone who can organize one hundred or one thousand people (eg. a labor union, a people's organization, a fraternity, a political party, etc.) displays a different kind of genius that our academe may not know how to grade yet. I go to the slums frequently and I see community organizing as a basic and necessary tool for poverty alleviation, more effective than the 4Ps<sup>1</sup> or microfinance.

## LEADERS AS PEOPLE OF "THE PROMISE"

There are many characters in the book of Hebrews who are hailed as leaders, people we are to emulate. A handful of them can be characterized as people who are clearly living for a promise.

Christians are known as people of the Book. I have always known that the greatest Christians are people of one verse. Our founder in the Navigators<sup>2</sup> was such a person, he was captivated by only one verse and his whole life was spent around that verse, so much so that the vortex of his life being centered that way impacted everyone around him and the rest of the world.

But lately, I have realized that, that can be quite narrow and restricting. Many of the pharisees who resisted Jesus were people of the Book too, and often, people of one verse. Most legalists are like that.

1. The 4Ps of the government follows the newly discovered principle in community development and poverty alleviation, that shows that often the poor beneficiaries themselves actually know better how to use or spend their money and it is better to give in cash than give in kind. We can compare giving tons of rice or seeds with giving them the equivalent in cash. In times of calamity also, giving tons of rice or building materials tend to depress the market and make the economic recovery slower because now less people will buy from the stores while giving money stimulates the economy quickly.

2. Dawson Trotman

I think we should be known for instead as people of the promise. This has an element of tenderness and faith that is nourishing and inviting. Two elderly people greeted Jesus when He was brought to the temple: Simeon and Anna. These two old people were looking to the fulfillment of the promise. They waited for a long time, and spent their lives devoted to prayer. Oh, what joy they felt when finally, they saw the long-awaited Savior. ( Luke 2:25-38)

Joseph is another man of the promise. He ran away from the sexual enticement of Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12). I am not sure I have the same strength of character that Joseph had, the self-restraint, and moral purity that made him flee. I know I would easily do the opposite.

In this time of the pandemic, I have listed a dozen global, religious and national leaders who have fallen from grace due to sexual sins. I know it can happen to most of us. I wonder what it would take for me to be like Joseph, to flee from sexual temptation?

Joseph was captivated by one thing, a promise. His last breath was spent instructing his sons to dig out his bones and carry them to the Promise land when the time comes. Moses did so, carried his bones in the 40-year journey in the desert and finally buried the bones in Shechem (Genesis 13:19).

Moses himself was a man of the promise. He rejected the fleeting pleasures of the world as he looked to the promise. So also, Abraham. He left his homeland to journey to a place he did not even know existed, based simply on a promise. "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8).

Leaders today must also today must be people of the promise. These people of "Promise" become to us a beautiful beacon in the dark chaotic world we live in.

## **SPEAKING INTO CHAOS**

Leadership from the beginning was always a servant leadership. Servant leadership works out change from the inside out, from the bottom up. It does not shout out commands and issues instructions from the top.

Servant leadership begins with the lowest, the weakest and the poorest. Worldly leadership is the opposite. In particular, worldly leadership has been elitist, favoring the rich and powerful, and misogynistic, looking down on women.

For this reason, a good discussion of leadership must like all good theology begin from the bottom, from the perspective of the poorest, the lowliest and the weakest. The Bible has always started that way. The leadership of Jesus works from the bottom up.

This is the progression we find in both Genesis 1 and John 1. Genesis 1 and John 1 are parallel accounts, starting out with the same words, "In the beginning was the Word."

In Genesis, God created by speaking. He spoke into the chaos, which is the dark formless void. As God

speaks, he brings forth life, order and beauty. It is repeated several times in the narrative, God spoke and so it came to be. We need God today to speak into the chaos of our lives, inside us and in the world around us.

As a young father, with a super heavy work load, I would sometimes come home late at night, tired and hungry, and the kids are so noisy and unruly. I would shout at them and give them such a mean look, they would scamper upstairs and hide in their room and quickly the house is quiet. As I spoke, I think I brought forth some order, I don't know about beauty but certainly not life. I killed the life in them.

We lead by speaking into the chaos of our lives in order to bring forth beauty order and life, always the three come and go together.

The parallel in John 1 is irresistible. The spoken Word is central again. But this time, the Word that God speaks flows out into the chaos of that world, no longer as sound or magical power coming out of God's mouth, from heaven. Instead, as God speaks, what comes out is the Man-God, Jesus, what comes out is a baby, naked, helpless, and poor, who will dwell among us.

But trajectory is different in John 1. Instead of a voice from heaven, coming from above, the transformation in John 1 begins below, coming from weakness. The change-maker begins as a powerless baby. This is to be the model for all leaders in the coming ages, a servant leadership that changes from below and from within.

God will change us from a posture of vulnerability and intimacy, from the inside out. He will not command nor shout from a megaphone into our ears. Instead, he wiggles and maneuvers through all our foibles, idiosyncrasies, and sins, to bring forth beauty, order and life.

The apostle Paul sums it this way: Speak the truth in love! As servant leaders, we come from under, below the people we serve, we work from within the people's hearts, through a deep engagement, and we speak the truth in love, with the goal of bringing forth beauty, order and life.

## **WOMEN AS LEADERS**

I think the greatest argument today against women becoming pastors is not because we don't want women to teach or have authority over men, citing 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, which forbade women from teaching or asserting theological authority over men.

If we look closely at the argument, churches are saying women cannot become pastors even though the word pastor was used only once in the entire New Testament and it was used in the plural form, pastors. We have inserted the CEO mentality into the office of pastor which was never in the minds of the NT writers. For us today, the pastor is a one-man solo leader, albeit all the time the Bible speaks of leadership

by teams, with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit working together. The apostles always appointed elders, not a pastor.

This modern insertion is distorting the idea of leadership. When a woman leads, she leads in a team, just like the men. This misogynistic bias is the reason why it is so hard for us to recognize good leadership when they arise.

There is a notorious place in Manila, in Farola, Tondo, the most dangerous slum in the country. Male pastors who go there to minister do not live very long. But women pastors do not have to fear anything. And God has used many women pastors to plant and strengthen churches in this god-forsaken place.

Esther was such a leader, she led where men could not. Esther became the savior and spokeswoman for the whole nation of Israel in a time when it was impossible for men to lead. She had strong men to help her and pray for her.

### **MEN AS LEADERS**

Most leaders in the Bible are men. The Bible is a very androcentric book.

The apostles were all men. Jesus was also male. I think the 12 apostles were men because Jesus was following a pattern, based on the promise given to Abraham. The tribes that constituted the nation of Israel were 12 corresponding to the 12 sons of Jacob/Israel. Having 12 male apostles also made the connection clearer, that Jesus was building a new Israel to replace the old Israel that was no longer obedient. In this case having men made the connection clearer and selecting women would have twisted the parallelism and obscured the lesson.

I think we can get over this androcentric hang up if we keep our focus on servant leadership. Servant leadership will always give room for others to lead and be at the top. Great leaders don't care who gets the credit as long as the job gets done and done well. The first job of any leader is to work himself out of the position. Succession planning begins on the first day.

A great male leader can subtly and kindly open space for women to lead. They are not intimidated by women leaders or other leaders for that matter. His arms are so wide and embracing, he can work beneath and under people, he can be more lowly and invisible, unrecognized than what society allows and yet still have the greatest impact.

We miss out on a lot of the rich blessings of female leadership when we simply impose across the board the generalization banning women leaders. Women can grow under our care without our patronizing them. A humble recognition that such a woman can do a better job than I (male) can but without abandoning her, staying around prayerfully supporting her, and serving her any way I can, will go a long way to enhance women leadership in the churches.

Women leadership is a fact. But whether this should alarm men is something we need to think through.

Men who are servant leaders will allow gifted women to lead anytime. I can always allow my wife to preach on the pulpit and she has complete confidence I will own all her faults. I know that I often speak from only one vantage point and her vantage point complements what I say.

In places where only women can go and minister, the men leaders have a duty to send these women, send them under their protection and their blessings. These men leaders will not negate the gifts of these women but will even encourage them. They will open wide their wings as covering for these women so they will succeed.

Leadership no matter where it is standing, will still be leadership even if that leader stands beneath someone, and more so when he stands beneath everyone.

### **LEADERSHIP AS TEAMWORK**

My four decades of being with the microfinance and the urban poor has confirmed what many have said, the poorest people in the world are women and it has not helped that most leaders are men. The saying is apt: men start wars, women suffer and children die.

Genesis taught us two truths that were eroded over time:

First, that women were equal with men, they are co-image bearers with men, both reflecting the image of God together. Man and woman reflect God's image, His beauty, His holiness, together. It is not just man alone or woman alone. It takes the two, side by side, man and woman, for us to see God here on earth. Over time, women have been sidelined, pushed to the background.

Second, that marriage has always been between one man and one woman only. Polygamy was a later development that Jesus corrected afterwards and so with divorce. Moses allowed divorce because of the hardness of our hearts but it was not so at the beginning. Jesus was saying the teaching of that day needed to be corrected and seen in the light of the original mandate.

Today, most divorces are excuses for committing adultery, and therefore, polygamy. In all these, it is usually the women who suffer. The New Testament corrected the low status of women and restored the original plan of marriage between a man and a woman. We find to our joyful surprise that the gospel was good news first to women.<sup>3</sup>

In the institution of the church, the apostle Paul declared, there are now no more male or female...

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 19 shows how Jesus interprets something by bringing the readers back to the original statement. This shows how over time, the instruction of God was eroded. Jesus locks the matter by saying divorce is not allowed except for a very limited reason which made Peter say, its impossible then to obey God. This is the initial salvo into breaking the bondage of women who by this time were considered as chattel or second class. In St Paul's view, it became more full blown. He announced that there is now no more male or female in the church or in the eyes of God (Galatians 3). They are equal. For thousands of years, women have been sidelined. They could not worship beside the men. They stood apart, at the back. When they had menstruation, they could not even draw near the temple. With the church, women became liberated. They could not stand beside the men in worship.

Those women who used to stand in the sideline, who could not enter the temple, now stood side by side with their men in the newly formed church. Thus, restoring the equality of man and women.

Jesus also said, God has bound together, let no man set asunder. Our marriage vow of union even through sickness, even through poverty, till death do us part, is a vow common to monastics who live ascetic lives. The misogynistic bias is undermining all these again today. Jesus' leadership magnified this truth about women. We are still shocked today when we read in the Bible how Jesus lets women take some liberties with Him, touch Him and become very intimate with Him, in a way we don't approve of. Many of his disciples were women.

We so casually dismiss or ignore the leadership of women in the Bible and in human history. We never notice Mary Magdalene's role in mission. Some orthodox traditions call her the Apostle to the Apostles. It was her who first brought the Message to the Apostles: "I have seen the Lord." (John 20:18)

The Bible does not just allow women to lead but encourages them to be leaders.

#### LEADERSHIP INCIDENTALLY HAS NO OFFICE.

Often, we also force women to become men first before they can lead.

We have stereotypes of leadership that women do not fit in. We think Deborah in Judges was not a leader and that she deferred to Barak as the real leader. We say she only became a leader because Barak was too cowardly to rise to the occasion. I don't agree. She was always a leader and remained a leader with or without Barak's cowardice.

In the Old Testament time, it was neatly arranged in three offices: kings, prophets and priests. These were the three recognized offices of leadership. When the king and priest offices became corrupt or were broken, the prophets arose, appearing from the desert, and speaking powerfully into the chaos. They did not look like leaders, dress in rags and eating locust and honey, but they were leaders.

One such prophet was a woman, Deborah, who displayed leadership like no other. She was a leader in the office of the prophet. (Judges 4:4-10)

*4 Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. 5 She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. 6 She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. 7 I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'"*

*8 Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but*

*if you don't go with me, I won't go."*

*9 "Certainly I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him. (Judges 4)*

Many say Deborah deferred to male leadership. I disagree. She truly led Israel that time as a prophet. It was her spiritual gift and she did her job well as a prophet. She was a leader when both the priestly office and kingly office had shut down.

When asked to do more, she readily acceded. The role of leading the army to fight was given to Barak, it was not given to Deborah for Deborah was a prophet, but Deborah would not refuse to do the job. It was in that second aspect that we understand what she meant, that the honor would be given to a woman. There was a certain kick in it. Barak's masculinity was at stake but Deborah's prophetic leadership was never at stake. The reference that a woman would receive the honor instead of a man was like an insult to Barak who dismissed it casually.

It was in the prophecy from God that Barak should lead the army to fight. The comparison thus was between a man and a woman, not between a prophet and a king or general. The woman would get the credit, to the shame of the man. But it did not mean she had conceded her role as prophet leader when she asked Barak to lead the army. The problem was, when Barak would lead the army, he as a man would not get the honor for leading it, but a woman would get the credit. It was to shame Barak, who was not at all bothered by it.

The best leaders don't care who gets the credit. Deborah remained a leader, in the role of a prophet but a military victory like the one she was bestowing on Barak was not something she coveted. Barak can take the credit. Even if Barak did not back down and was not cowardly, his triumph would not have diminished any bit of her leadership. Barak would have been a military general leader (kingly office) but Deborah would have remained still the prophet leader. The kingly office has broken down and God intended to repair it.

Leaders also begin the succession planning on the first day. They begin to work themselves out of their jobs right on the first day. Leaders who cling to their position and seek to be leader for life, will soon face the dilemma king Saul faced. When God already had a replacement in mind, tension will rise. David was anointed king in secret by Samuel. Saul was no longer king but did not know it.

#### WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT WOMEN LEADERS?

There is a curious passage in the last verse of the letter

of Paul to the Romans 16:1-16.

*"I commend to you our sister **Phoebe**, a **deacon** of the church in Cenchreae. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the **benefactor** of many people, including me. 3 Greet **Prisca** and **Aquila**, my **fellow workers** in Christ Jesus, 4 who for my life **risked** their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; 5 also greet the **church** that is in their house. Greet **Epaenetus**, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. 6 Greet **Mary**, who has worked hard for you. 7 Greet **Andronicus** and **Junias**, my kinsmen and my **fellow prisoners**, who are **outstanding** among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. 8 Greet **Ampliatius**, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet **Urbanus**, our fellow worker in Christ, and **Stachys** my beloved. 10 Greet **Apelles**, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of **Aristobulus**. 11 Greet **Herodion**, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of **Narcissus**, who are in the Lord. 12 Greet **Tryphaena** and **Tryphosa**, workers in the Lord. Greet **Persis** the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord. 13 Greet **Rufus**, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine. 14 Greet **Asyncritus**, **Phlegon**, **Hermes**, **Patrobas**, **Hermas** and the brethren with them. 15 Greet **Philologus** and **Julia**, **Nereus** and his **sister**, and **Olympas**, and all the saints who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you." (Romans 16)*

Ten of the people mentioned in the passage, who are co-workers of Paul, are women. The NIV is afraid to offend evangelicals and so hide the feminine Junia in the footnotes.<sup>4</sup> What is disturbing is Paul calling Junia

4. Here's some of the evidence Junia is a woman: Junia was a very common woman's name in the ancient Roman world, found frequently in both documents and inscriptions. By contrast, the supposed masculine name Junias has never been found anywhere. There are no examples of the name found in any document or inscription from the first century or any other era. The name does not seem to exist.

All ancient writers who commented on Romans 16:7 understood the name to be feminine, from the early church Fathers until the 13th century. Most famously, John Chrysostom (349-407) wrote, "Indeed, how great the wisdom of this woman must have been that she was even deemed worthy of the title apostle."

When accents started being employed in Greek manuscripts in the 7th century, the name was accented feminine. Additionally, the name was accented as feminine in all editions of the Greek New Testament until 1927, when an important edition of the text switched to the masculine form.

All early translations of the New Testament (From Greek into Latin, Coptic, and Syriac) translate the name in a way that is most naturally understood as feminine.

Given the above evidence, how is it that the name was commonly understood to be masculine during the 20th century? The first interpreter credited with identifying the name as masculine was Giles of Rome (1243-1316), who referred to the pair as "those honorable men." About two centuries later Martin Luther translated the name with a masculine article in his influential German Bible. Yet, during this time and the next three centuries the name continued to be accented as feminine in Greek New Testaments, and most translations (including King James) interpreted the name as feminine. The tide would begin to turn in earnest in the late 19th century, and the change to the masculine became established in early 20th century scholarship. Thus, after almost 1900 years of the name being understood as feminine by most interpreters, early 20th century scholars decided that the name must be masculine.

an apostle. Phoebe is a deacon although from what we know in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, deacons must be married MEN! To remove the contradiction, we have made Phoebe and Junia into males.

Leadership must begin with the poorest and lowest, and women are its center. If we cannot discuss leadership from the vantage point of the lowest and weakest, our leadership will make no sense.

In the New Testament, we see the arrangement of king, prophet and priest become fuzzy. It was after all merely a temporary if not a contrived arrangement. In the Second Temple period, leadership was exercised mainly by the priestly sect. The prophets and kings disappeared, until John the Baptist arrived, who was a prophet.

When Jesus came, all these finally disappeared. Jesus was king, priest and prophet. No human being, no Christian, can claim that same privilege. God is more dynamic. He can work through Moses as much as with Samson, with David as much as with Peter. He has bestowed his Spirit on all flesh as promised in the book of the prophet Joel. And there too, we hear again the echo: your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. It refers to both men and women. Does it also imply that as His ambassadors, we too are priest, prophet and king rolled into one?

If I were Walter Brueggemann writing his book, Truth Speaks to Power, I would insert an entire chapter on the treatment of women, to show how God takes a jab at this androcentricity, in the many subversive ways familiar to Brueggemann.

One of the women mentioned by Paul as his co-worker is Prisca or Priscilla. They were a husband and wife team, Priscilla and Aquila.

The wife apparently had a higher leadership role than her husband or perhaps, she was the only leader, her husband is not, by the fact that her name is always mentioned ahead of the husband. (Acts 18:24-26, NRSV)

*24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. (Acts 18:24-26 NRSV)*

Priscilla exerted authority over the great leader, Apollos. For a Bible that is fully androcentric, this is really significant. I wonder if the male leadership of Aquila was how I described it above, a liberating kind that easily let a woman leader to flourish.

Abigail was in a way a leader too. She was fearless as much as she was wise. The impact of her leadership

Source: ROMANS 16: WHO WAS JUNIA? August 1, 2017 The Text in Context by Jen McNeel <http://thetextincontext.com/romans-16-who-was-junia/>

over the greatest king of Israel cannot be measured. When David became so mad and bloodthirsty that he swore no one would be left standing in the village of Abigail who had a male genital, Abigail quickly went into action. She stood in the war path of the army of King David now at full gallop going downhill armed to the teeth and she stopped them in their tracks not by becoming a man. Her impact was precisely because she led as a woman. Women leaders don't need to become men in order to lead.

### LEADERS AMONG THE POOR

Leadership from a biblical perspective, viewed from the weakest and poorest, viewed from the bottom, is humble, weak, vulnerable, and tender. This is what servant leadership means. Even Moses adopted the Egyptian motif of shepherd-king, which was very appropriate.

After reading the autobiography of Nelson Mandela, I thought that the best way to learn leadership was to read biographies. Biographies are un-distilled and unadulterated lessons on leadership, not pre-digested at all. They come with all the ambivalence and ambiguities of real life. One commentator writing about Mandela, said, Mandela did not have a programmed path. He stumbled and groped throughout, all the time suspecting perhaps he was wrong. The future never looked more bleak as at the top.

They said the same thing about Martin Luther King Jr. Luther King went through a lot of difficult things, vices, women and more doubts than an ordinary man could bear. Everyone near him could not say if he was the man. All those near us would not also think I am a leader. Mandela said on returning to his wife after 27 years of separation (he was in jail that long), that he had become a big icon in all that time and now that he is home, he turned out not to be that hero, but just an ordinary man, with many weaknesses. I think Moses had the same struggles. Abraham too, I imagine. I don't think anyone is set out to be a leader. And success was never in the mind of those who had become great in the eyes of many.

I think what stood out in leaders, as in the case of Mandela, was a constant, unceasing, bitter pain of being oppressed and discriminated. That was true of Luther King Jr and Gandhi. It was a desire to survive, a hope of being set free, a dream that one day they would finally be treated like a human beings - this was what set them apart, what made them to persevere through the doubts and the fears. It was humanity longing to be released.

We are all called to be leaders, to be servant leaders no matter where we are and what the situations are. All disciples who are called to become like Christ, ultimately lead. And leaders like the apostles have a mission. Mission is not to some esoteric land where the unreached and the unengaged live in the 10-40 window. Mission is where Jesus is. Jesus said, where I

am there my servants will be also.

### BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

We see three shapes in Biblical leadership. We see a model, a mentor and a coach. The model plays actively and shows the way. He or she washes the dishes and cleans the toilets. He does the lowest jobs while doing the noblest. Soon, people come alongside, wanting to learn, wanting to be fathers/mothers. When that happens, it is time to become a mentor, to guide and also at the same time to be a partner, a co-worker, a co-sojourner. In the first shape, only the model plays. Now, both play, the mentor and the student.

As we grow older, we find that we have less and less sons/daughters and more and more brothers/sisters, more comrades in arms. When we began, we had many children. Now, we have many colleagues and partners and co-workers. In the last stage, the leader no longer plays. He coaches, he watches from behind, from the bleachers where he applauds and shouts and rants but he does not play anymore. He works from behind, in prayer and discernment.

He has to learn to step back, to give room for new leaders. Without such space, new leaders will not come. Only with such sacred vacancies will new leaders arise.

The leader's heart will be broken as the new incoming leaders make mistakes but he/she knows that ultimately, it is not he/she that guides but God and God knows the game and the rules. It is God who will lead, for the whole game is God's. It is His future at stake more than ours, the dream belongs to Him. We are just servants.

As this year comes, let us look forward to becoming fathers/mothers, father and mother to our community and our tribe and let us be faithful fathers/mothers for we have also a Faithful Father in heaven who is our model, mentor and coach.



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*Atty. Raineer Chu, is a Law graduate from the University of the Philippines in 1981. He also has a DMin in Leadership from Bakke Graduate University, Seattle, USA. He is one of the founders of Companion of the Poor, Inc. an organization that planted 70 churches in the slums, working with 100 full time staff recruited also from the slums. Atty. Raineer is married to a doctor and they have 3 grown up sons.*