

Leadership qualities to transform societies

This article focuses on visionary, moral and transformational leadership and its role in transforming dysfunctional societies.

A systemic definition of a transformational leader "is one who can produce, or encourage and facilitate the production of, a mobilizing vision of a transformed system" (Ackoff). Such a leader must be able to inspire people for the voluntary achievement of a vision and to mobilise and coordinate, not command and control, like the Anti-Corruption Czars in Colombia, Presidents Pastrana and Alvaro Uribe, who created mechanisms "for coordination across major ministries and agencies of government (auditing, investigation, prosecution, and so forth)".

These Czars are not role models of transformational leaders. However, sometimes such dictators can create short lived anti-corruption programs of which some elements as indicated, are exemplary.

CREDIBILITY AND RESPECT

In order to inspire people and to unleash energy to transform a systemically corrupt society such as Namibia, leaders must be credible, respected and committed. Role models of moral and transformational leadership, such as Mahatma Ghandi (spiritual leader who united deprived Indians in India and South Africa), Nelson Mandela (political leader who united South Africa after apartheid) and the Dalai Lama (spiritual leader and unacknowledged head of the state of Tibet), fulfill an inspiring role in uniting people to transform a society.



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Other examples of leadership in community work include Mother Theresa, Florence Nightingale and Princess Diana, business/entrepreneurial leaders such as Richard Branson and Bill Gates, moral leaders against apartheid in South Africa such as Desmond Tutu and Beyers Naude and education leaders such as Jonathan Jansen (a former rector of the University of the Free State in South Africa).

Probably the most appropriate examples of inspirational Namibian leaders are Reverend Bishop Zephania Kameeta, the Minister of Poverty Alleviation, the political leader, Herman Toivo ya Toivo and business tycoon Harold Pupkewitz. All of them were humble men with integrity, hard working and healthy lifestyles.

The author has met several times on an informal basis with Toivo ya Toivo and have been impressed with his humbleness and ability to listen and relate to people beyond race and culture. Based on readers' response in newspapers, some are of the opinion that Toivo ya Toivo should be considered as the Father of the Nation.

References

Ackoff, R.L. 2009. *A Systemic View of Transformational Leadership*.

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