



## **Assessment of the Implementation of Mission and Vision Statements and Leadership Training of New Life College of Theology and Mission, Ibadan, Oyo State**

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### **Abstract**

Mission strategies are the set of procedures, plans and directions for implementing the biblical mission programmes and activities in churches and Christian organisations. Despite the efforts of New Life For All Nations Ministries in producing missionaries and evangelists, its popularity has been minimal and the activities of the church have been relatively obscured. This paper assessed specific mission strategies adopted by New Life College of Theology and Missions, Ibadan towards achieving her mission and vision statements and leadership training. The study used a descriptive survey research design with thematic analysis to process the data collected in relation to the research that addresses the problem identified. Findings revealed that various leadership training approaches included vision-setting, mentorship, and innovative teaching approaches geared towards fulfilling the trainees' ministerial calling, coupled with academic empowerment that fosters growth within New Life College of Theology, Ibadan. Hence, the discourse concludes that vision and mission statement formulation guide the mission strategies for active and good leadership training for Christian missions. Therefore, the study recommends that both the missionary trainers and the church must be in



tandem to contribute towards developing effective leadership training approaches and mission strategies that align with the objectives of fostering growth within New Life College of Theology and Mission and the wider church community.

**Keywords:** Leadership Training, Mission and Vision Statements, Mission Strategies Theological Education, College of Theology and Mission Ibadan

## **Introduction**

Christian mission involves reaching out to people of other faiths with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is a missional commandment of Jesus Christ to his disciples to make disciples in all corners of the globe. Furthermore, mission involves the crossing of border expedition to another, nation, community, tribe, language, and ethnic, and culture. It is a deliberate and conscious effort to break barriers of culture, language, norms, ethnicity, remoteness, and expose others to the doctrines of Christ over a period of time (Ibiyeomie, 2021: 12-19). Missions requires an interculturalist who promotes cultural diversity and sensitivity to accommodate all the cultures within a community. The term, missionary is a person sent to another place to proclaim the gospel. A missionary involves in cross-cultural activities to convert non-believers to Christ.

The missionaries has an integral role to play in the advance of Christianity for their specific purpose of sharing the word. For a missionary to be effective and productive on the field, it requires a deliberate effort to learn new language, ideology, culture, norms, and values of the people. This is what is referred to as *Doing Contextual Theology* since needs and challenges of people divergent in different contexts (Pears, 2009: 80-85). People from various cultural backgrounds and values enrol in missionary institutions to be trained and at the end of their training program, where they would be required to work in various mission fields. As a result, there should be a blueprint for leadership strategies for cross-cultural training in missionary institutions. This will help in the training of effective and efficient leaders who will become knowledgeable in the field of cultural diversity.



The missionary trainers in missionary institutions must also be grounded in effective leadership approaches to run and maintain missionary institutions. The missionary trainers in missionary institutions should be skilled in intercultural communication to be able to present their visions, expectations and goals effectively to the prospective missionaries or missionaries in-training. Furthermore, flexibility is also very important for both trainers and trainees as this virtue is quite important for adaption to new environments and decision-making processes. A missionary institution should be an environment where people respect and value other people's cultural norms, values and traditions. A missionary institution should be a place where missionary trainees from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to exchange ideas, and share experiences, which will help build mutual understanding and further learning among the missionary trainees. Missionary leaders need to have conflict and dispute resolution approaches to rebuke respectively and constructively. They should be skilled in mediation and negotiation, fostering harmony and unity within the community. A missionary leader should be aware of the changes in the global environment with innovative technology, and new strategies that encourage church growth.

### **New Life For All Nations Ministries**

The New Life for All Nations Ministries was established in 1972 as part of the universal body of Christ, called the Church. New Life Gospel Church is the church arm of New Life For All Nations Ministries for discipleship, ministering and mentoring, while the Ministries consist of the administrative outreach over the churches. New Life Gospel Church is a local Pentecostal church with a missional orientation since its inception.

The following is the vision of The New Life For All Nations Ministries: to expand the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations of the world, to plant churches structured and governed in accordance with New Testament principles and practices in every nation, to teach, to train those who give



their lives to Jesus Christ and to go with the gospel of Jesus Christ to places where Christ is not yet known (New Life Publications).

To pursue this vision, New Life Mission Institute was established in 1992 by the leading of the Holy Spirit to teach and make disciples of all nations. The nomenclature, New Life College of Theology and Mission was adopted in 2016. New Life College of Theology and Mission is an interdenominational mission, pastoral, and theological centre, established for the work of the Lord, where people are trained, tutored, and exposed to the knowledge and deeds of Jesus Christ. The college admits and trains all ministers of Gospel, church leaders, and church workers (including the youth) irrespective of their denominations and religious affiliations. The college also admits students of any race, colour, or tribe for mission training. However, despite the efforts of New Life For All Nations Ministries in producing missionaries and leading in evangelism, very little has been done in relation to the assessment of its mission strategies and leadership training.

The objective of New Life College of Theology and Mission is to build men and women who are called of God into teams that share a common vision and goals. The following are the objectives of the college:

- to provide instructions and training to students in Theology, Pastoral Studies, Missions and other areas that can enhance effectiveness in the ministry;
- to train church leaders and workers on leadership and church ministries;
- to train women in leadership and missionary involvement;
- to train youths in leadership development, short-term missionary involvement and capacity building in youth services;
- to run short-term programs on Deacon-ship etc.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to study leadership training and visions and mission statements of New Life College of Theology and Mission towards the fulfilment of the 'Great Commission' as commanded by Jesus Christ. This is used to



systematically describe the population of study between 2013 and 2023. It involves a careful observation and analysis of information obtained from a representative sample as described by Papadopoulou et al, (2022: 502). Thus, the purposive sampling technique was adopted as it is relevant to select missionary trainers and missionary trainees among those involved in mission work at New Life College of Theology and Mission, Ibadan. The sample comprises twenty (20) respondents including ten (10) missionary trainers/leaders who are members of the staff at New Life College of Theology and Missions, Ibadan, and ten (10) missionary trainees of New Life College of Theology and Missions in Ibadan. The ten-year period was covered due to the unavailability of sufficient data from previous years. The choice of New Life College of Theology and Mission is due to its enormous missionary training programmes employed by the school to achieve the 'Great Commission'. The age range of respondents between 31 and 70 years of age. Semi-structured questions were used to collect information from the interviewees. The oral interview format consisted of nineteen (19) questions, divided into four sections, with each section focusing on the objectives of leadership approaches adopted by the mission trainers in New Life College of Theology and Mission, Ibadan.

### **The Concept of Biblical Leadership Training**

The concept of leadership is an old phenomenon and examples of leadership attributes abound in the Holy Bible since the creation of nature, plants, and animals in the world (Simić, 2020: 1-13). Individual(s) are required to lead at every level of socio-political, and economic life of a family, organization, and the society. The leader is defined as someone or group of people who selects, equips, trains, and influences follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and orientations. The leader ensures the followers adhere to the organization's mission and objectives, making the followers (either willingly or unwillingly) expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives (Hsu, 2022: 104). A leader is defined as a person



who sets goals for other people or team-mates, and then leads or rallies them to achieve those goals (McClellan, 2022: 3-24). A leader is also described as a person who instructs and controls people to secure predefined goals or targets. Scholars have posited that leaders are not only interested in effecting change for the purpose of benefiting the organization and its members, but also for the development and growth of the people they are working with (McClellan, 2022: 3-24 and Simić, 2020: 1-13). From these definitions, leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others through inspiration and encouragement.

Good leaders provide directions, inspiration, and guidance to their team members. They also exhibit courage, passion, confidence, commitment, and ambition. They influence their team members to work on their individual strengths and talents and build teams committed to achieving common goals (McClellan, 2022: 3-24). A leader can recognize diversity among the followers and is flexible to adapt to the differences among the group (members of his immediate community). Although anyone can occupy a leadership position as a result of promotion or inheritance but to become effective and productive, a leader needs training to have effective communication skills.

People in position of leadership must have the skill to connect with team members and encourage growth. Leaders must also be open to change and develop positive attitudes. A leader fails and becomes ineffective if such personality resists change and is unable to develop good working relationships with others. Leadership in this sense also fails when the leader is not visionary and is not able to meet the objectives of the organization. While effective leadership styles have a positive impact on the people in the organization, ineffective leadership have a negative impact on the individual, the team members, and the organization as well. In addition, ineffective leadership prioritize the leaders' interests above those of the team and that of the organization (O'Dell, et al, 2023). An organization fails if the leadership lacks important characteristics or abilities to succeed. Leaders also fail if they possess undesirable qualities (Khan et al, 2023: 101). Various leadership strategies can be employed



by leaders in various spheres of life, such as in missions, to engage their team members, missionary trainees, and trainers to influence and encourage excellent performance that helps the organizations achieve their objectives. The relationship between the success of an organization and its leadership also applies to the growth of a church. This approach can be applied to the 'Great Commission' of Jesus Christ to all Christians, that is – to evangelise the world. Leadership approaches are the set of procedures, plans, and directions for implementing the programs and activities of the church. The growth of the church depends largely on its leadership effectiveness. Good leadership approaches enhance growth. In addition, leadership approaches create and sustain a good work environment, organizational culture, and fulfillment workers (believer).

### **Concept of Mission and Strategies for Missional Works**

The history of Christian mission can be traced back to the early Christian church when Jesus sent the apostles to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations (Acts, 1:8). Mission is the divine activity of sending intermediaries (whether supernatural or human) to speak or do God's will so that his purposes for judgment or redemption are fulfilled (Little, 2008: 65-73). A missionary is a member of a religious group who is sent to a location to promote faith or provide services to people, such as education, literacy, social justice, health care, and economic development.

Biblically, the concept is expressed with the use of a verb, meaning 'to send', expressing God as the subject. In the Latin translation of the Bible, the word mission was used by Jesus Christ when he sent his disciples into the cities, commanding them to preach the gospel in his name. Mission is a Latin word "*Missio Dei*", which means the mission of God or "sending of God". It reveals the heart of God toward mankind concerning His divine plan of salvation for all the people of all nations of the world (Mudzanire). This term originated by St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century (World Mission Centre) and it is mostly used in referring to Christian mission. Christian mission is the plan of God to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin to Himself and to heal their





land. It is a form of outreach and evangelism which aims at reaching out to non-Christians to make them embrace the Christian faith (Goodman, 1995: 1-19). An aspect of the Christian mission based on social action, involves the provision of education, health care services, alleviation of human suffering, and the elimination of injustice, exploitation, and deprivation to demonstrate the love of God to humanity. This approach believes that social action is an integral part of missions as it goes along with evangelism and disciple making. Missions are therefore not only based on evangelism but also includes discipleship and church planting (Vaughan, 2022).

Christian missions have also been influenced by colonialism and imperialism. During the colonial era, the Europeans established missions as a tool to achieve political and economic gains in Africa (Nwaka and Onu, 2021). This led to the establishment of mission stations and schools that propagated Western culture and values alongside Christianity in Africa. As a result of these services, a scholar notes that the church performed more than just spiritual duties; it fed the hungry, taught modernized farming, carpentry, and animal husbandry (Măcelaru, 2023: 29-33). In the twenty-first century, missions in not only focused on evangelism, it goes along with social issues and also bring about the transformation of local communities. Therefore, twenty-first century missionaries in New Life For All Nations Ministries must be interculturalists to appreciate the culture of the people, as Christ's doctrine is focused on equality.

Christian missions in Nigeria have suffered many setbacks and barriers that have brought hindrances to the progress of missionary activities. These setbacks include poverty, a proliferation of churches, the inability to speak truth to the political class, and the vestiges of colonialism.

What are the leadership training approaches adopted by New Life College of Theology and Mission and their effectiveness on the growth of the church in Ibadan. In answering the research question: what are the leadership training approaches and programmes of New Life College of Theology and Mission? Figure 1 represents the model that presents the independent variables of the study (leadership approaches). The types





are transformational, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, coaching, strategic, and autocratic. Effective leadership training approaches and strategies are essential in achieving organizations mission success (church growth). By understanding and implementing effective leadership training and their strategies, mission-driven organizations can foster collaboration, enhance performance, and achieve remarkable results. In addition, the relationship between the independent variables (leadership training approaches) and the dependent variable (church growth), hinges on a series of independent variables such as autocratic, diversity mismanagement, inequality, prosperity teaching, and finance. All these variables form complex actions that require integrated skills and knowledge to produce a valued result.

The New Life College of Theology and Mission also has different leadership training programmes, such as the women leadership programmes, and the youth and sisters/spinsters ministry. Women were actively involved in different crusade programmes through praise worship, intercessory prayers, crusade propagations, evangelism, caregiving, the welfare of brethren, mission and revival activities. This involves the interaction of the older females with the youth sisters or those that are unmarried for advice on real-life situations and experiences .

### **Theory of Performance**

The Theory of Performance (ToP) develops and relates six foundational concepts to form a framework that can be used to explain performance as well as performance improvements. The six foundational concepts are: to perform, developing performance, level of performance, a performer's mindset, immersion in an enriching environment and engagement in reflective practice. To perform is to take a series of complex actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valued result. A performer can be an individual or a group of people engaging in a collaborative effort. Developing performance is a journey, and level of performance describes location in the journey (Elger, 2007: 19). The theory shows that the current level of performance of leaders in New Life



Church depends holistically on the following six components, such as: context, level of knowledge, levels of skills, level of identity, personal factors, and fixed factors. The performer's mindset, immersion in an enriching environment and engagement in reflective practice are the three axioms proposed for effective performance improvement.

The theory of performance (ToP) is useful in many learning contexts. One of them is traditional context which includes learning in classrooms, workshops, and other venues that are traditionally associated with learning. Another setting is the non-traditional contexts i.e. learning in contexts that are not traditionally conceptualized as learning environments. Examples of which include academic advising, self-development, departments, academic committees, professional research groups, colleges. The third example is the organizational learning context which informs learning by organizations through the idea of examining the level of performance of the organization.

This study finds the organizational learning useful in the context which informs learning through the idea of examining the level of performance. The performance of a system, depends on the components of the system and the interactions between these components. As the levels of knowledge and skills increases, the level of performance also increases. Components that holistically interact to establish the level of performance are levels of identity, levels of skills, level of knowledge, the context of performance, personal factors and fixed factors (Elger, 2007: 19-22.)

For any organization to have a successful performance, they must be able to adapt to the changes and developments in their environment using the right resources with effective methods. In order for the performance of an organization to be positively affected, the leaders need to consider factors such as the organization's structure, systems, management programs, human resources, reliability of activities and processes, environmental compliance, and competitive strategy. Leaders should also adopt flexible leadership approaches in ensuring organizational performance instead of adopting a single leadership style (Vijaya et. al 2022).



Leaders should regularly review the gains and losses of the organization in relation to the factors mentioned above, analyze the potential synergy in the organization and improve the existing synergy while making decisions to increase performance. In conclusion, since leadership is a dynamic process and the relationship between the leader and the followers requires a two-way interaction, effective leadership interaction should be carried out depending on both the followers and the organizational performance.

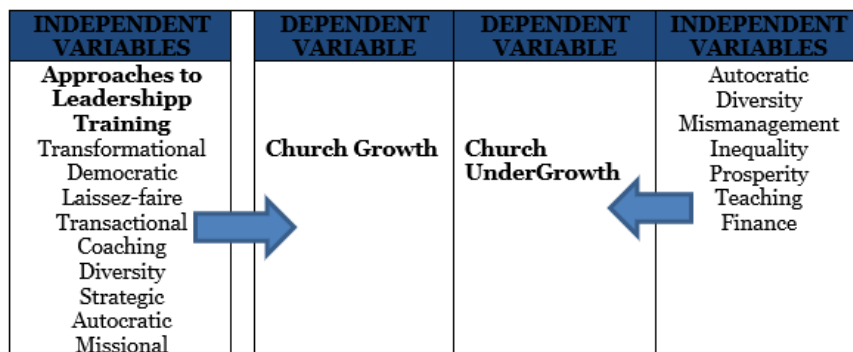


Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Leadership Training Approaches in New Life College of Theology and Mission (Interview codes)  
Source: Researchers' Concept and Fieldwork, 2024

All the variables used in Figure 1 were generated from the fieldwork. From the 20 interview sessions conducted, ten interviewees are in the category of trainers, while the other ten interviewees are in the category of trainees. 70% of trainers mentioned that the approach of the leaders at the New Life College of Theology and Mission is rigid. On the other hand, 60% of the trainees also mentioned rigidity in the approach of the leaders at the New Life College of Theology and Mission. This means that the leadership needs more flexibility and the rigidity in the approach of the college is autocratic but strategic in nature. However, this approach



is injurious to church growth, as this trumps new ideas and innovation. Both categories of respondents (trainees and trainers) corroborated that the leadership does not give room for certain doctrines that are acceptable in other churches. On the reasons for the rigidity approach, all the interviewees in the trainers' category mentioned that "the leadership of the college believes mainly in gathering people who are heavenly bound". The respondents from the group corroborated that the leadership is not focused on having large congregations but few that have the focus of making heaven". This response appeals to the transformational and missional independent variables in Figure 1 in such ways that the approach of the leaders at the New Life College of Theology and Mission is directed at individuals who are intrested in heaven and not numerical strenght of the church. As argued previously, the concept of church growth involves more than number of congregants, but a wholistic approach to winning 'souls', discipleship, and community-building.

At this point, it is pertinent to ask: does New Life College of Theology and Mission have any cross-cultural mission strategies in place? An important puzzle is the adaption of other cultural groups in leadership positions of the church and college. All the respondents (both trainees and trainers) mentioned that the effort to language learning is individual and no curriculum is in place for interculturality, conflict resolution, and language courses. This means that New Life College of Theology and Mission has no course in the curriculum of the school for missionaries to learn languages outside their ethnicity. Language learning for missionary trainers will help improve the relationship between the diverse cultures within the church. However, the trainees make an effort to learn other languages from their colleagues. The inability to manage diversity can affect the church negatively. For instance, only 4 out of 23 branches of New Life Church established in Ibadan have non-Yoruba speaking pastors. In another light, the research inquired which of the theological orientations of New Life College of Theology and Mission contributed to the growth of New Life For All Nations Ministries, Ibadan.



All the trainers selected (ten) for the study also mentioned that cross-cultural mission strategies are not part of the curriculum.

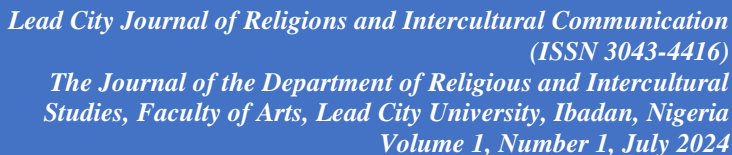
In the bid to unravel reasons for the failure of the approaches of leadership training in New Life College of Theology and Mission, one of the major challenges for church growth is the position of women on issues relating to equality in New Life Church. It is pertinent to note that all the respondents were males as no missionary trainer is a female. Therefore, no female is allowed in the position of authority. According to all the trainers, the church also did not focus on prosperity preaching and forbade tithe and offering to the church for a long time. This also affected the finances of the church as missionaries survived with little or no means to support the mission fields and their families. Inadequate education is also another factor that affects the proficiency of the Church leaders.

## **Conclusion**

Mission strategies play a crucial role in the growth of the Church. By identifying and refining these mission strategies, the church can effectively reach out to the community, engage its members, and attract new followers. The theological orientations of the Church are deeply intertwined with its mission strategies. Understanding the theological foundations that guide the mission efforts can help align the actions of the church with its beliefs, creating a more cohesive and impact outreach programme.

The leadership of the institution do not believe in gathering crowds (quantity) but in gathering heavenly bound citizens. The system adopted is believed to be effective because twenty-three branches of the Church has been established in Ibadan. There is a conflict resolution committee in place to resolve culturally sensitive conflicts.

For the church to grow, leaders also need to impact the lives of the people in their communities. With the current economic situation of Nigeria, high rate of unemployment, and corruption, the twenty-first century mission-based church need to contribute to the improvement of the economic condition of the country. This could be achieved by engaging



## Recommendations

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Mission graduates must also be equipped with conflict resolution skills to address the problems of undergrowth.

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