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DATES:

Published: 21 Aug 2018

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Slater, J., 2018. The Christian ethic of inclusive leadership within diastratic diversity: employing liminality as an analytical tool. KOERS — Bulletin for Christian Scholarship, 83(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.83.1.2320>

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The Christian ethic of inclusive leadership within diastratic diversity: employing liminality as an analytical tool

Abstract

This article discerns the ingredients leadership ought to employ when it functions within the plurifactorial dimensions of the sociological, economic, political, cultural, religious and class diversity. It discerns what qualities enable leadership to befriend and contain diastratic conditions present in a diverse living environment unique to the South African society. For analytical purposes, it employs the art of liminality and the Christian ethic of inclusivity, so as to make provision for the variable situations, providing leadership with flexibility, and an openness to embrace the new, the unknown and uneventful elements of life.

Abstrak

Hierdie artikel besin die bestanddele wat leierskap onder hande behoort te neem wanneer dit funksioneer binne die multifaktoriese dimensies van die sosiologiese, ekonomiese, politieke, kulturele, godsdienstige en klasverskeidenheid. Dit besin oor watter eienskappe van leierskap moet gestel funksioneer om die diastratiesse toestande, teenwoordig in die leefomgewing, uniek aan die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing, te omvat. Vir analitiese doeleindes gebruik dit die kuns van liminaliteit en die Christelike etiek van inklusiwiteit om voorsiening te maak vir die veranderlike situasies, om leierskap met buigzaamheid te verskaf en om die nuwe, onbekende en onbeduidende elemente van die lewe te omvat.

Key words: *Diastratic, diversity, variations, inclusiveness, leadership, reconciliation, alterity.*

1. Introduction

Leadership studies, as it is at present constituted, is a relatively new development and the study of leaders and governance as a distinct discipline has been around for barely sixty years or so. As a subject discipline it seeks answers concerning how best to lead and govern. On the whole leadership studies position itself as a science of individual conduct, informed predominantly by psychological and economic theory. A philosophy of leadership, applied reflexively to the discipline of leadership studies, seeks to expose the epistemological, ontological, methodological and ethical assumptions embedded within the discipline. This article positions leadership within the diastratic diversity of the post-Apartheid South African society. From a sociological perspective, it looks at how leadership dispenses itself towards a pluralistic assortment of ethnic peoples and socioeconomic conditions. From a Christian perspective, it investigates what contribution inclusiveness, as a Christian value, can make towards the legitimacy of leadership in a diverse national and social environment marked by obvious political, social, cultural and religious differences. It discerns how Christian ethics can enable leadership to be dispensed in a manner that is all-encompassing, allowing for cultural, racial, socio-economic, religious and philosophical alterity. Another important concept that is employed in this article is that of liminality. Leadership cannot be static in a situation that is unstable, fast changing, in transition and at best, unknown and full of unforeseen concerns. In an ever-changing environment, leadership begs to be open towards unanticipated events, to the surprise element, a leadership that is hovering at the frontiers and does not function according to predetermined formulae or methods.

2. Employing liminal leadership in a diastratically diverse society like South Africa

There is no doubt that a special kind of leadership is required in any diverse environment, but it appears that even a more exceptional kind of leadership is crucial in the South African landscape. Not only is diversity in South Africa present in all aspects of life, but the diversity shifts on a daily basis, thus calling for leadership to move with the motions of nomadic horizons. Since the diversity of South Africa is not conventional and predictable, to observe leadership in such an environment calls for a leadership that has the flexibility and the expanse of liminality. It calls for a leadership that constantly operates on the unpredictability of shifting grounds, always ready for the unknown, for the unfamiliar and the unspecified events of life, needs a special character. This implies that leadership cannot be static, cannot be customary, but should always be ready for the unpredictable, for the surprise element and for the unanticipated events of life, the good and the bad. This author proposes that the diverse conditions of South Africa call for a liminal type of leadership.

Before embarking on the conceptual exposition of liminal leadership it is helpful to first explore the brand of diversity that prevails in South Africa and thereafter consider the proposed type of leadership that corresponds to the complex variability and unpredictabilities of a *diastratically divergent society*. Thus, before the explication of leadership that requires the ethic of liminality, it is as well to clarify the diastratic diverse nature of South African society.

2.1 South Africa as a diastratically variegated society

The Apartheid agendas of the past not only created contrived racial divisions in the broader South African society, but in turn, it also generated and duplicated a multiplicity of diversities within and among the engendered racial groups. Apart from the fact that the population was broadly categorized along colour classified racial lines such as white, Indian, coloured and black, numerous diversities were also constructed within the so-called colour-racial categories. Hierarchical divisions were devised among the different 'manmade' groups based on the colour of people's skins, with whites at the top of the echelon and blacks at the bottom. Similar tiered divisions were established within the colour-racial groups based on socio-economic conditions, qualifications, occupations and tribal backgrounds. These fabricated divisions were morally flawed from their inception, instead of creating any form of homogeneity, racial identity, an increased variety of divisions came into being. Consider the so-called coloured-racial group, wherein no racial homogeneity exists. This group was established as a category of convenience: that is to say, if a person did not fit into the white, Indian or black categories, then he/she, for convenience sake, were assigned to the multi-coloured population group.

Within the black South African communities, diverse ethnic and cultural groups were the order of the day, such as isiZulu, isiXhosa etc., and often the only thing they shared was the colour of their skin and their African origin. The enforced and superimposed diversities are multifaceted as they were concocted on the national level as well as within tribal allocated groups. Whatever differences that were already in existence, such as culture, language and customs, were exacerbated and intensified on local group levels. Social, class, socio-economic and educational strata, created by the Apartheid regime, among and within the four racial groups were in turn also reproduced within the various contrived groups. Socio-economic divisions were established by unequal monetary recognition and remuneration for professional qualifications. A white person's salary was higher for the same profession held by a coloured, Indian or black. The salaries and even civil pensions for different groups were downscaled, benchmarked by the white person's. This multiplicity and various layers of differences can be termed diastratic as it captures not only the variations of diversities that exist in South Africa, but also the various strata or levels of diversity.

2.1.1 What is diastratic diversity?

The use of the term 'diastratic' occurs generally in the architecture of language where there are different dimensions of variations. 'On a diastratic dimension', according to Peter Auer 'a language can co-vary with many different social factors. Besides social class, the main social factors, which intervene to determine diastratic variation are age, sex, or better, gender (the sex of a person as reflected in social position, status, role and their attributes) ethnically and social network. In many societies, membership in social and professional groups or religious faith can also be relevant factors of language differentiation' (Auer, 2010:232). To illustrate this diastratic variation, one can use social class as an example, which is by no means a clear-cut and indisputable category. Social class, according to Auer, is a plurifactorial concept that includes various mixtures of ingredients such as education, occupation, income, attributes, lifestyle and social networks: namely a structured set of social relations connecting a person and people with whom this person interacts. Distinct variations are used across socio-economic classes of social groups in this sense that it is that ingredient that constitutes the feeling or awareness of belonging to that social class, or language group and so on (Auer, 2010:233).

Diastratic diversity refers to various strata of diversity, in the sense that the different expressions of diversity among people assume different degrees and greatness of differences. This depends largely on the various socio-economic and ethnic divisions present in a particular society, cultural or racial group. The greatness of diversity and variations is shaped primarily by the social strata of people. Since human society is heterogeneous, natural differences do exist, but this is always exaggerated by social stratification differences. The stratification differences span across socio-economic layers and these in turn span horizontally, vertically, across scales of superiority-inferiority-equality-inequality, 'lower' and 'higher' economic hierarchical positions, together with unequal power influences.

Proportions of diversity are in a constant state of flux and hence not always easy to define. The various components of diversity interrelate since diversity is multidimensional, and may simultaneously be concealed or revealed (Slater, 2016:2). Often, aspects of diversity refer to specific traits that distinguish one person or groups from another. For example: race refers to a group of people who are perceived as physically distinctive possessing certain characteristics, such as skin colour, hair texture, and facial features. In reality, however, what constitutes distinctiveness is our personal perception of differences. Diastratic diversity is also present within the race category in this sense that not all people that belong to the same race share the same economic and social strata, or the same level of education, language competencies, and wealth or living benefits. In other words diastratic differences exist in this sense that there are various strata or layers of differences; nothing is in equal measure, because human beings are simultaneously heterogeneous and homogenous. All differences, whether they are social class, sexual orientation, religion, personality, learning style, communication style, and family backgrounds are in turn also diastratically varied and these variations are consistently overlooked and invisible. *Diastratic diversity is therefore the stratification that pervades all aspects of culture and society and diastratic stratifications permeate the points of articulation between social, cultural and physical environments.*

2.2 Employing the term diastratic to explain South African social variations

While diastratic variation is an intricate social phenomenon in itself, in South Africa it is even more multi-layered due to the social disordered conditions that were created by the apartheid regime (as explained above). Notwithstanding the socio-economic differences, together with the social stratification and inequalities, each component of the various population groups developed their own distinctive form of differences and inequalities. For example a hierarchy of social inequalities exists in all populations, cultures and ethnic groups, races, genders as well as within their sub-groups, but in South Africa, says Jeremy Seekings

'... class inequalities are highly visible all around' (Seekings, 2003:2). Hence, when the term *diastratic* is applied to the South African society, it indicates that South Africa is 'diastratically divergent' due to the diastratically varied elements that constitute the distinctive nature of the South African population. The concept 'diastratic' is employed here to explain the social variations that cut across the different strata of the South African society. Within the widespread South African society there exist social inequality, social disunity, economic, political and cultural differences which were exacerbated, and intensified by the Apartheid system. Areas of diversity include, among others, race, ethnicity, religion, colour, culture, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, age, education, skills and language. However, within the different race groups, such as the white, Indian, coloured and black, there also exists a stratification of social and economic differences. The social diversities, according to Tabitha Wangare Wambui (2013:200), may include ethnicity, lifestyle, religious beliefs, political beliefs, heritage, and life experience. Diversity can also be classified as visible diversity as well as invisible diversity in this sense that visible diversity is external and demonstrates things we cannot change, such as age, race, gender, poverty, wealth and other noticeable attributes. Invisible diversity includes attributes that are not readily obvious. At face value one cannot see someone's personal credentials such as work experience, educational achievements, income, honesty or religious beliefs. Invisible diversity has to be ascertained. Diversity may therefore be hidden or visible. However, both visible and invisible diversity requires an understanding of the various magnitudes of diversity. This understanding of visible and invisible diversity coincides with Aristotle's thoughts on actuality and potentiality. Actuality is what is manifested and potentiality is what 'could be'. All potentialities must eventually be realized. However, if a potentiality never becomes an actuality, then it cannot be called 'potentiality'.

Noteworthy of diastratic differences is that differences are even further categorized in the pool of variations, and this becomes more evident in times of transition and transformation. Diastratic 'stratification' therefore refers to various social layers within numerous race and cultural groups present within diverse social groups, where resources are unevenly distributed throughout the strata due to hereditary wealth or acquired wealth or lack of wealth or loss of wealth that determine status in life. The diastratic variety of differences encompasses and is determined by additional dimensions of divergences obvious in age, personal and corporate background, education, job function and position, geographic origin, lifestyle, sexual orientation, and personality. To this list can be added ancestry, national origin, creed, religion, social class, leadership style, personality, family background, marital status and disability. In short, it includes whatever distinguishes us from the next person or groups of people, albeit to various degrees and intensities. Likewise, everyone who is seen as belonging to a group may not necessarily identify with that group, but is at home with the characteristics of another group. The fear of diversity and in particular diastratic diversity, which is often invisible, does not make it easy to shape a diastratically integrated national identity within any given state, more so in South Africa. Diversity, in a broad sense, refers to many demographic variables and it is very complex to define. All the same, diversity is often defined as the condition of being different. To manage diversity is not merely tolerance for differences, but ideally it is the *inclusion of differences* (Slater, 2016:2). Diversity is the ability for differences to coexist together, with mutual understanding and acceptance.

In sum the South African diversity with its diastratic complexity reads as follows. The Apartheid system divided people according to colour, namely white, black and coloured. Within the multi-coloured groups there are variations of whiteness or blackness, with diverse cultures, languages and ethnic backgrounds. Their socio-economic strata vary, from highly educated and professional, to barely literate and unskilled. Some are poor and destitute, others rich, some jobless and redundant. The degree and intensity of these comparable differences vary among and within the groups. Be this as it may, there exist diastratic differences between and among and within the various racial groups, and the diastratic levels of differences within each racial, cultural or language groups also vary. Poverty or wealth may be a factor in each group, but the intensity of the poverty or wealth would

vary from group to group. So the *diastata* of differences are compounded, multifaceted, plurifactoral and diversified. The question under discussion here is: *what kind of leadership can embrace such multifarious diverse scenarios and diverse stratum of differences?*

3. Leadership in diastratically varied conditions

Since the population in South Africa is diastratically varied, the logical inference here is that a person who assumes leadership in any sphere of life in South Africa, needs to develop an understanding of how to lead within a diastratic society. This implies that leadership needs to understand most of the ingredients of the multifactorial dimensions of social, cultural, economic, gender, political, religious and class variations present in the South African environment. This author is of the opinion that effective leadership in South Africa would hinge on the ability to embrace the variety of diastratic variances as well as the different levels of the same variety. It implies that leadership needs to embrace alterity and diversity in all its forms and very important, hold it in balance. Leadership in this diverse environment calls for inclusiveness and liminality. This article proposes that liminal leadership is the type of leadership that could hold diastratic differences in balance. In diastratic diverse conditions nothing is stable and predictable, but ever-changing, often confusing, chaotic and uncertain, and thus liminal - and to lead in diastratic conditions the leader needs to employ the power of liminal resilience.

3.1 Liminal leadership

The word liminal derives from the Latin word *limen*, which means *threshold*. A threshold is regarded as a part of the doorway that you cross over to enter into a building. In anthropology the term is used in rituals where a person is in a liminal state, i.e. 'betwixt and between', when the old status is left behind, but the transition to the new is not yet entered (Slater, 2016:3). This space of 'betwixt and between' is fluid and flexible and enables the person to be free to say what s/he would normally not say, and do what she would normally not have the courage to do. Generally liminality is associated with the quality of ambiguity, or transition and uncertainty. The state of liminality is depicted as a process of becoming, it is transitory, and does not offer the final answer as it is open-ended and it is a process of growing in awareness of something different or new. There is thus no sense of permanency in a liminal state. Where a state of liminality exists, one needs to be open for the unexpected since conditions are not clear or static. Leadership in liminal circumstances implies administering leadership at the margins, shuttling between the periphery and centre, between the known and the unknown. It is not prescriptive, but deals with the situation as it surfaces and deploys. It implies working through the contradictions and frustrations of both those in leadership and those who are being led, but is always practised with an openness to the unexpected without any expectations (Brunstad, 2016:11).

So liminal leadership cannot be preconceived, predetermined and defined. This leadership encourages the leader to move with changing circumstances, to remain open to different developments, to devise different responses to contemporary times and changes, to reply to new possibilities. Liminal leadership is meant to create movement, it is not static, it is meant to reach out to never-ending horizons, to nomadic, shifting horizons, a term Karl Rahner (1966: 230-231) used when he refers to his 'metaphysics of becoming'. Liminal leadership enables leaders to remain in a continuous state of openness for renewal and development. The concept of nomadic horizons, *horos* the Greek version of the Latin *limen*, implies that the horizons of leaders must expand, charter undiscovered possibilities. Leaders have to have the courage to go beyond what is familiar and venture into the unknown territories and not be confined to the familiar and controllable situations. The liminal leader find new paths, seek new solutions, discover new possibilities, and this implies taking risks (Brunstad, 2016:11).

This implies utilizing the liminal and transcendent capacity as well as mindfulness of resonant leadership (Boyatzis and McKee 2005:71). Mindfulness implies that the leader is

present to the present moment. This includes practical wisdom, because the leader cannot just rely on traditional and proven wisdom to solve new emerging problems. Practical wisdom enables the leader to 'actively and creatively reconfigure knowledge, skills and experiences in response to social tensions, fragilities as well as the incommensurabilities of inequalities. This leadership encourages a person to move with changing circumstances, to remain open to different developments, to devise different responses to contemporary times and changes, to reply to new possibilities, to remain relevant and rely on the activation of circumstances. In religious environments, this will be regarded as being activated by the Divine, thus leadership will be described as prophetic. The liminal aspect of leadership that is prophetic is described by O'Murchu (1999:18), as 'divine-human recklessness'. It is a term used which implies creating innovative spaces of freedom that challenge others to live a liminal existence rather than becoming over-spiritualized and institutionalized. Both liminal and prophetic leadership is life-giving, it has the capacity for growth. It does imply that leaders, while being present to the current conditions, have to move forward, and not harp back to the past to justify leadership aptitudes or lack thereof.

3.2 Socio-economic-political liminality

The socio-economic-political conditions of South Africa are also in a liminal state and since the social-economic conditions depict diastatic variations, life situations are always changing, people's circumstances are constantly in a state of flux, nothing is therefore certain and fixed. South Africans are currently living in liminal spaces of all kinds, and consequently social, political, religious and cultural hierarchies are often reversed or temporarily dissolved; the continuity of tradition is uncertain, and future outcomes, that were taken for granted, are thrown into doubt. Where there existed perceived order, displeasing chaos generally takes over and in times of liminality, the state of fluidity enables new institutions and practices to come into being. It is generally these circumstances that call for liminal leadership, because it has to serve or minister to people that live and exist in liminal conditions. Liminal conditions require liminal leadership styles and methods that respond to the flux and fluidity of the statuses of present-day life.

Leadership, in a state of liminality, has to lead to, and in and from liminal situations and to do so, all certainties dissipate. A liminal leader is therefore meant to lead people out of liminal spaces of uncertainty, or else make people comfortable and secure within liminality. Major transformations occur in liminal places, because liminality, being so variable can pave the way to access esoteric knowledge or understanding on both sides of the spectrum. In this sense liminality is sacred, alluring and dangerous, and this draws leadership to different heights and expressions. Leadership has to take that transcendent leap so as to be versatile and pliable to all circumstances. This is what liminality offers to leadership and in a prophetic sense it means that liminal leadership needs to be attuned to the signs of contemporary times. The challenge for liminal leadership is particularly pivotal in our times, which are marked with ethical upheavals such as secularism, relativism, sexism, corruption, violence, crime, women abuse, xenophobia, same sex marriages, homo-parentality, disbelief and disillusionment concerning those in authority both in church and state. In these controversial circumstances liminal leadership will caution one not to respond with dogmatic resolutions, neither by moralizing, but to look at what constitute responsible and appropriate responses, which may not necessarily include answers or solutions, but a willingness to linger with those who find themselves in liminal spaces of uncertainty.

3.3 Jesus and liminal leadership

Jesus is, no doubt for Christians, the indispensable model of leadership. For both ecclesial and secular leaders, the Jesus-model is most compelling, as his leadership was imbued with his belief in God's love. The personhood of Jesus as well as his personal qualities constituted the liminal elements of his leadership. Qualities such as a listening leader, being responsive in a loving manner, being authentic and compassionate, forgiving and generative, inclusive and empowering as well as personal integrity are just a few characteristics that signified Jesus leadership (Sofield and Kuhn, 1995:34-36).

The liminal dimension of Jesus' leadership was comprised by the combination of leadership and authority that is expressed in servant leadership. In the gospel of Matthew 20: 25-27 Jesus said to his followers: *'You know that the kings of the heathen lord it over their people and dominate them. That is not the way you are to exercise authority. Any of you who wants to be great must be the servant of the others; and the one who wants to be first among you must become your slave...'*

Jesus urges his followers to take up leadership with authority, not for personal gain or honour, but purely as an act of service. Leadership is not for gaining titles, but *'the greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled'* (Mt 23: 8-12). The liminal element of Jesus' leadership is that he 'stood authority on its head: *exousia* (authority) is shown to be *diakonia* (service)'. For Christian leaders to emulate Jesus implies not to sport titles or flexing muscles (Harrington, 2005: 51-52). Jesus himself was liminal in this regard by going against the status quo. The service of Jesus was imbued with love, as was illustrated in John's (13 3-5; 12-16), account of the Last Supper. Slaves were not required to wash their master's feet, but by washing his disciples' feet Jesus demonstrated a spirit of exceptional love and devotion (Dorr 2006:18). Again in John (21: 15-19) the primary quality, which Jesus looks for in a leader, is love. All mistakes can be overlooked, as in the case of Peter, if leadership is an expression of love. A Christian leader's love is first and foremost to Jesus and then put into practice by committed love for the community (Dorr, 2006: 19). The other side of this leadership is that the leader is not possessive of the role of leadership, but can expect to suffer.

The challenge of liminal leadership is to apply leadership by influencing, motivating, guiding, directing and co-ordinating communities or organisations in a way that affects their behaviour or actions especially in bringing about change (Dorr, 2006:77). When Solomon was installed as King and leader of his people, his prayer was *'...give your servant a heart to understand how to govern your people, how to discern between good and evil...'* (1 Kings 3:9). What lies at the heart of liminal leadership is the ability to discern. Discernment forms part of the ethic of leadership in this sense that it is an essential part of human living as it enables us to weigh up various options to make good decisions.

The life of Jesus had always been in the liminal zone, at the edge, unpredictable. His liminal leadership was a risk-taking process, old solutions did not always apply and the newness of his innovative approaches did not always meet the approval of traditionalists. This was so because his leadership and leadership teachings did not always follow tradition and did not offer control and security. It was unpredictable, leaving the recipients insecure, vulnerable and insecure. But it brought along with it practical wisdom, newness, vision, creativity, universality and inclusivity (no one was excluded).

4. Christian leadership engenders inclusivity

An important question is: does Christian leadership possess the capacity to best deal with heterogeneous diversity? In Christian terms there is one characteristic that levels the playing field of diastatic diversity and that is inclusiveness. Practising Christian leadership within the context of diversity implies acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences among people (Esty, Griffin and Schorr-Hirsh, 1995:3). Managing diversity in South Africa should form part of the culture of the entire nation comprehending the history of unequal distributions, deprivations and opportunities. By so doing the merit, which a diverse population can bring to the nation or society can be unleashed, in order to create a wholesome, inclusive environment, that is 'safe for differences,' that enables people to 'reject rejection,' celebrates diversity, and maximizes the full potential of all, in a cultural context where everyone benefits (Rosado, 2006:4). For this to happen the leader has the task to foster a culture of inclusiveness.

An original and significant factor of early Christianity was that it attracted men and women from different classes, cultures, races and socio-economic backgrounds. As stated by Theissen the inclusive nature of Christianity formed the basis of 'a diastratic unity spanning different social classes, but not a representative cross section of society as a whole' (Theissen, 1992:214). While ancient Christianity did not penetrate the imperial classes, nor was it equally distributed in town and country, it did mostly bridge lower classes. All the same, the *diastratic cohesion* in the early Christian congregations was something new in the sense that free persons were living and socializing side by side with slaves. Despite their different legal status, they were often socially on much the same level. They shared meals every week, covered the whole of life, sickness, death, looking after orphans, old people, business transactions and travel arrangements. In this sense Christians of antiquity made a new 'social offer' to secular society, namely 'diastratic solidarity' (Theissen, 1992:214).

The early Christians followed Jewish traditions in the sense that the Jewish congregations also included people from various social ranks such as Roman citizens, resident aliens without civil rights, and foreigners. This diastratic structure of Jewish and Christian congregations in fact encouraged the relativization of status differences, as well as economic, social and sexual differences. It is precisely in this context that the earliest Christian congregations have lessons for South Africans on how to overcome inherited Apartheid disunities and establish a new social and political order that addresses divisions (Slater, 2012:248). In this sense Christian leaders are challenged to make a positive contribution towards the development of cohesion in South Africa by establishing measures that inculcate attitudes that cut across colour, class and race distinctions so as to establish social diastratic cohesion.

As observed above in John 13:14 effective Christian leadership, expressed in servant leadership, can be summarized in terms of inclusiveness when God's purpose in Christ is to reconcile all things to himself: yearning for the vision where people 'from every tribe and language and people and nation' will be gathered around the throne (Rev. 5:9). Thus, Christian leaders are called to down barriers and differences between individuals and groups, and one of the greatest is that of racial inclusivity. Deep racial understanding is one of the greatest testimonies to the power of the gospel that the Christian leaders can provide. Effective Christian leadership involves the intentional pursuit of reconciliation that embraces all diversities (*Effective Leadership in the Church*: 2005). To administer leadership in an environment of diversity is not a project, but rather an ongoing core task (Bilimoria)¹. When Paul stated that in Christ there is 'neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free...' (Gal. 3:28) 'inclusiveness' was sealed as a tenet of Christianity. In Galatians 3:28 named the categories which referred to the underprivileged in their social life, but who was invited to enjoy equality in the Christian congregations that consisted of Jews and Greeks, slaves and free persons as well as male and female (Gal. 3:38). Here Paul calls for the negation of all distinctions and inclusiveness which was a principle whereby all people are to eliminate all differences. The differences identified by Paul were:

- *Racial differences, namely 'Greek and Jews';*
- *Religious differences, the 'circumcised and the uncircumcised';*
- *Cultural differences, 'barbarian and Scythian' (Col 3:9-11);*
- *Social differences, 'slave and free'; and finally;*
- *Sexual differences, 'male and female'.*

This included the statements in Gal. 3:28 as well as 1 Cor. 7:19; 1 Cor. 12:13. It is clear, of course, that the above-mentioned differences are not the only differences and significantly Paul does not erase differences between people; on the contrary, he advocated

1 Diana Bilimoria *Inclusive Leadership: Effectively Leading Diverse Teams*. Posted 4.3.12.

that Christians embrace differences. Since it is understood that inclusive leadership authentically respects diversity and make people feel valued for who they are, it enables people to leverage their diverse perspectives (ways of thinking) and approaches (ways of doing) to enhance acceptance and growth (Bilimoria. Posted 4.3.12). This characteristic of inclusiveness engenders meaningful acceptance and therefore assists Christian leadership in treating people as insiders rather than outsiders. Inclusiveness implies accepting others as they are and respect them for who they are without eliminating differences. A point of value is that inclusiveness may not be the same as equality. It is possible that the first century's claim to equal status in salvation may not necessarily have translated to equal claim to social, political or religious status. Characteristic of early Christianity as expressed by Paul in Galatians is that being 'baptized into Christ' highlights an incorporation process and makes no distinction regarding the differences between 'Jews and Greeks', 'slave and free', 'male and female'. Hence:

- *Neither slave and free, equals social equality*
- *Neither male nor female, equals gender equality*
- *Neither Jews and Greeks, equals racial equality*
- *Neither circumcised and uncircumcised, equals religious equality*
- *Neither barbarian and Scythian, equals cultural equality*

Gal. 3:28 embodies a shift from an old world to a new creation characterized by Christ. Egalitarianism or equalitarianism holds that all human beings are equal despite differences. However, to define full equality without differences is almost an anomaly as it implies obliterating human variations. In historical context the use of Jew and Greek' is intended to be an exhaustive division of the human race, because of the spread of the Greek race through the conquests of Alexander, their global presence, the use of Greek as a universal medium of communication, led to the name 'Greek' to be applied to all who were not Jews.

Equality in Christ implies inclusiveness, unity and justness in Christ. Paul was of strong opinion that racial equality between Jews and Gentiles was to be an experienced reality within the early Christian community. Any expression of racial superiority, gender superiority (men over women), social superiority (slave over free) articulated then and now violates the truth and the essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul is of the opinion that all divisions and prejudices had been abolished in Christ and should thus be abolished among people (Hansen, 1994:112). Paul argues that the Gentiles did not have to become Jews to be fully accepted by Jewish Christians and to be fully part of the life of Christ. In the same vein today, black people do not have to become white and in the same vein white people do not have to become black; females do not have to become males and neither do males do not have to become females for full participation and recognition within the South African society. What is important is that Inclusivity authenticates Christian leadership and creates diastatic cohesion.

South Africans and Christian leadership can definitely learn from the Christian concepts of inclusiveness since it nullifies separation and apartheid. Inclusions, however, do not necessarily imply the removal of differences; instead Paul argued for differences to be accommodated within Christianity. Thus a Christian leader does not have to erase the differences of people, but make it a prerogative to embrace differences. His argument is that becoming a follower of Christ does not result in undifferentiated humanity as differences will always remain, but within Christ they are of no avail (Gal. 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor.7:19). All inequalities, as stated by Hansen (1994:112), racial, economic and gender barriers are removed in Christ as equality and unity of all in Christ are part of the essence of the Gospel (Hansen 1994: 112).

4.1 *Inclusive leadership moulded by the ethic of inclusiveness*

In Christian Leadership, inclusiveness is a human equalizer. Inclusiveness restores harmony, which is necessary for life to flow and it starts with self, but involves the community, the cosmos and the ancestors, nonhuman spirits and God (Bere, 2011: 54). This makes everyone a leader. What became apparent from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is that forgiveness is a means towards inclusiveness. When forgiveness is practised and administered it is both vertical and horizontal and thus functions as a human equalizer. Theologically and practically speaking forgiveness is at the very heart of what it means to be a Christian. True forgiveness comes at a cost and is pursued intentionally within a community of believers. Forgiveness and inclusiveness both facilitate the capacity that enables Christian leaders to build a diverse culture of inclusion. Because of the South African history of separation, disunity, oppression and suffering, forgiveness had been recognized as a quality that can bring about inclusiveness and reunion. In this regard a leader, and specifically a Christian leader, has to suffer forgiveness and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, so rightly calls forgiveness a 'costly grace' (Bonhoeffer, 1966).

The Christian leader has to differentiate between using forgiveness and inclusiveness as a political tool for reconstruction. Using it as a political tool, says R. Louis van der Riet (2014:46), may not necessarily, restore justice and equality.² This is evident from the effort to promote national reconstruction in South Africa through the TRC. The effort aimed towards truth, justice and national inclusiveness cannot reach fruition unless it is accompanied by Christian spirituality that engages in the practices of inclusiveness and justice. Inclusiveness is an event and a process and Christian spirituality, and according to John de Gruchy, it raises one's consciousness so that all relationships cry out for justice (de Gruchy, 2002: 42).

For inclusiveness to take place and for wholeness and harmony to be established, people must enjoy a degree of security and freedom from violence and abuse. They must believe that the old sources of division and exclusion are being transformed, and that the pain and hurt of their individual and collective past have been acknowledged (Lederach, 1997: 29). Thus, when leadership, be it within the church, government or corporate world employ the competencies of inclusiveness, forgiveness and inclusiveness, diastatic diversities are of lesser consequence.

5. Conclusion

To exercise Christian leadership in a diastatic varied society does not call for the obliteration of the similarities and differences unless this is a consequence of injustice and deliberate oppression: instead natural differences are to be valued, respected and assimilated. Managing diversity implies creating a just and safe environment where everyone is accepted and respected. Only when people in diastatic diversity feel that the evils of society are addressed, that old divisions are not perpetuated, that 'things are moving in the right direction' then can diastatic diversity and differences be embraced and appreciated. Only then can the bonds of the past be loosened and the impulse for retribution be relinquished. Leadership in diastatic diversity needs to be grounded in a sustained effort at bringing people together by living the spirituality of inclusiveness and walk the path of forgiveness and reconciliation. Christian leadership will not obliterate diastatic diversity, but can be enabled to establish a respectful diastatic solidarity. A leader in a diverse environment simply implies recognizing that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways and has to recognize the individual as well as group differences. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognize, respect and value differences. It is about generating a climate where people feel valued and respected.

2 R. Louis van der Riet, *Inclusiveness, Justice, Spirituality: In Conversation with John W. de Gruchy*. An assignment presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Divinity in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. (2014), 46.

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