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First academic looks at practical and theoretical possibilities with the TALO Leadership Theory

Author: Keith Orlando Hilton, Ph.D.

The following five articles are academic in nature and themes. My contribution this time is actually less of an academic paper and more of a public acknowledgement of those contributors to the second issue of the *Journal of Unabridged Genius*. They expertly articulated several innovative, practical and theoretical possibilities of the TALO Leadership Theory. While telling their own stories scholarly, they raised the bar by demonstrating that the theory is applicable to themes as diverse as studying the Arabic language, nursing, being a high school principal, the Nigerian fashion industry, and the inauguration and presidency of Barack Obama.

It remains my position that what makes the TALO Leadership Theory so heuristic is the fact that it is transdisciplinary and African-centered. There is only one race, the African race, which is the human race. It will be fascinating to see the challenges, angles and additions that will eventually come from researchers from other ethnicities. It is expected that they will apply the theory from their own respective, proud cultures.

One working definition of “practical” is that it means to be useful. Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, in their 2001 book, *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*, describe a theory as “a general statement or set of statements that summarizes our understanding of the way the world works, and is testable” (p. 18). And thus begins the second leg of our transdisciplinary and African-centered journey with the TALO Leadership Theory.

It took this theorist four years to articulate the TALO Leadership Theory on paper in its initial form (2004-2009), five leadership conferences, and numerous consultations with people with minds far sharper than mine. And it will take a lifetime to continue positively building and positioning the theory. Equally noteworthy is the point that five exceptional researchers have now helped elevate the discussions onto the international stage. At no time did they merely rubberstamp the theory, but what was most gratifying is the fact that they looked at it, questioned it, challenged it and approved of its overall heuristic merit from different lens, and to quote Dr. Gaye Walton-Price, “...the TALO Leadership...is an idea whose time has ripened.”

We are now in exciting times as other academics and pracademics will join in and expand this and other theories that help explain the way the world works and are “testable.” Please feel free to contact the eJournal or any of the contributors at any time about their/our findings. Also feel free to cite these articles as you continue to build your own research bases. I am confident that future contributions to the eJournal will also be valued by current and future researchers. I also strongly recommend that the TALO Leadership Theory be re-visited and re-read in its entirety on a regular basis, because it is designed to be a living, encompassing theory.

In response to “The Secrets of the TALO Leadership Theory: Leadership might be colorblind, but ethnicity is central!”

Author: Gaye Walton-Price, Ph.D.

This researcher/educator first became acquainted with Dr. Keith Hilton in 1998 when we were colleagues at University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. He was an instructor in the Communication Department and this educator was an adjunct instructor in the Religious Studies Department, and later in the Modern Languages Department where this educator taught Arabic language and was instrumental in initiating the Arabic language program there. From those early days of association, this educator is extremely grateful to Dr. Hilton for his having asked me to be a part of the TALO Leadership project, which is seen as brilliant in its conception and with far-reaching implications for the world of research and cutting-edge, insightful, and inspiring perspectives on the realms of human knowledge, scholarship, and the academic avant garde.

For an overview of this researcher’s profession, it is an amalgamation of disparate elements which has evolved over time into a somewhat kaleidoscopic medley of interdisciplinary streams. Currently, this researcher passionately teaches Arabic language, the Modern Standard variety and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, since Arabic language is the first academic love. Additionally, there are courses in philosophy, namely the Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, and Introduction to Critical Thinking; also courses in humanities, such as Introduction to the Humanities: Imagination, Creativity, and Invention; and Religions of the World (a comparative religions course).

The fact that these courses have been and are currently a part of this educator’s repertoire is attributed to the fact of a Master of Arts in Religion degree from Yale Divinity School (Yale University, 1975) preceding the Ph.D. in Arabic degree (Georgetown 1990). The current state of this particular profession is extremely promising, in the midst of California’s budgetary uncertainties, particularly with respect to higher education in the community college system. It is promising though because there are sources of funding which are emerging beyond the usual public channels, and for which this educator has already been contacted and invited to pursue. In addition, the wave of interest in Arabic language instruction has once again come to the forefront of the public and of college administrators.

Necessarily when one studies and specializes in Arabic language, one becomes well acquainted with the religion of Islam. Notably Islam is a major world religion today and one of the fastest growing faith communities in the world. It is also evident that with recent tragic and deadly events, there is a negative stigma attached to the idea of Islam by many people. It is up to the specialists in these areas to dispel the negativity instigated by a small misguided minority, and provide a balanced perspective on a major dynamic source of leadership for this time and into the future. Karen Armstrong, in her book, “A

History of God; the 4,000-year quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam” (1993) describes Islam as unity in its understanding of and approach to God. Another source, “What Everyone Should Know about Islam and Muslims” by Suzanne Haneef (1996) says, “. . . Islam is not a mere belief-system, an ideology or a religion in the usual sense in which these words are understood. Rather it is a total way of life, a complete system governing all aspects of [the human being’s] existence, both individual and collective. It is in fact a religion which, [. . .] frees the human being from domination by [one’s] material and animal aspects and makes [one] truly human.” (p. vii)

This educator sees the important connection of understanding Islam and Muslims along with a multifaceted cultural manifestation intimately intertwined with the resurgence of interest in the study of Arabic language. Any language study is an essential ingredient to cultural study, to enable the learner to gain insight into and appreciation for the people who use said language to formulate ideas, thoughts, theories, implementations, and to communicate these mental constructs with one another in the business of living in this world, and for progress and advancement of the human species.

A recent article on education appeared in the Oakland Tribune (Monday, May 18, 2009) focusing on the plans underway to establish an Islamic college in Berkeley, California: “U.S. scholars planning Islamic college: A group of American Muslims, led by two prominent scholars, is moving closer to fulfilling a vision of founding the first four-year accredited Islamic college in the United States, what some are calling a “Muslim Georgetown.” The proposed Zaytuna College could be ready to open in the fall of 2010. “Imam Zaid Shakir and Sheik Hamza Yusuf of California have spent years planning the school, which will offer a liberal arts education and training in Islamic scholarship.” Iman Shakir says, “As Muslims, we need to develop institutions to allow us to perpetuate our values.” The proposed Zaytuna College will begin with two majors: Arabic language, and Islamic legal and theological studies. “. . . Administrators aim to teach analytical skills, along with ethics and theology, that can prepare students for many professional careers”. [This author’s note: both Iman Zaid Shakir and Sheik Hamza Yusuf are African-American and are well-established as “prominent scholars”.]

In terms of the TALO Leadership Theory, the academic activities of these Islamic scholars and many others in these and related fields, as well as those in disparate fields, including this educator, bear witness to its validity and necessary interconnectedness with true and enduring scholarship that is leading and evolving the academy into a more accurate and truly humanistic state of being. In “Cultivating Humanity; a Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education”, Nussbaum (1997) goes into much detail about her notion of “Citizens of the World”. She explains that education for world citizenship “must be a multicultural education, by which I mean one that acquaints students with some fundamentals about the histories and cultures of many different groups. These should include the major religious and cultural groups of each part of the world, and also ethnic and racial, social and sexual minorities within their own nation.

Language learning, history, religious studies, and philosophy all play a role in pursuing these ideas. Awareness of cultural difference is essential in order to promote

respect for another that is the essential underpinning for dialogue. “There are no surer sources of disdain than ignorance and the sense of the inevitable naturalness of one’s own way” (p. 68). And also, “the world citizen must develop sympathetic understanding of distant cultures and of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities within her own.” (p. 69) And finally, Nussbaum concludes the chapter, “Citizens of the World”, with this advice:

It is up to us, as educators, to show our students the beauty and interest of a life that is open to the whole world, to show them that there is after all more joy in the kind of citizenship that questions than in the kind that simply applauds, more fascination in the study of human beings in all their real variety and complexity than in the zealous pursuit of superficial stereotypes, more genuine love and friendship in the life of questioning and self-government than in submission to authority. We had better show them this, or the future of democracy in this nation and in the world is bleak. (p. 84)

To conclude, I believe that the TALO Leadership Theory as heralded by The Journal of Unabridged Genius is an idea whose time has ripened. Let us applaud it and celebrate it and encourage it and allow it to unfold, truly for the betterment of the human family with its Afro-centric origin.

***About the author and educator Gaye Denise Walton-Price:** Ph.D. from Georgetown University in Arabic language; originally from New Jersey, now a permanent resident of Oakland, California with husband and son and daughter, who are both students at the University of Southern California; earned a B.A. in Philosophy from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, M.A.R. from Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, and M.S. in Arabic and Linguistics, also from Georgetown University. Currently teaching Arabic, Humanities and Philosophy at Berkeley City College and Contra Costa College in the San Francisco Bay Area of northern California; extensive experience abroad, living, working, and studying in Tunis, Tunisia, and in Cairo, Egypt.*

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Updated Reflections on African-American Female Leadership

Author: Melda Gaskins, Ed.D.

How race and education administration cultures play out in the lives of African-American female leaders and consequently their opportunities for advancement with the educational organization is a concern that many African-American, Latino, Asian and Native American (ALANA) women hesitate to discuss. The term ALANA that will be used throughout this article is a term referenced by Hilton (2009) to be the growing acceptance in academic and journalism circles, replacing the deficit term “minority.”

In this paper, my original study, along with the validation and expanded propositions of the TALO Leadership Theory, will provide a better understanding of how ALANA female leadership is emerging in majority and minority contexts as a “means of helping organizations become stronger and vibrant as they affirmatively expand on the factual strength that all individuals belong to one or more ethnicities (not to be confused with race) and that the positive luggage of ethnicity generally outweigh negative baggage” (Hilton, 2009).

According to Slay (2003), social identity allows an opportunity to examine individual as well as group factors that may influence the emergence of leaders. Some of the following leading literature on the subject of ALANA female leaders states:

Hemming, 1982. Under representation of women in administrative positions has been a concern of focus and study for several centuries in the history of America and the nation.

Hoeverler and Boles, 2001, (p.196). “There is a growing interest in different perspectives of women’s issues raised by women of color, African-Americans, Native Americans, and women of other ethnic origins.”

Weiler, 2000, (p. 29). “Authors have indicated that there is very little research that addresses under representation among minorities. There is a need for others to become aware of the unique problems faced by minority females...”

Yeakey, Johnson, and Adkison, summarized three problems with research involving racial minorities and women: 1) A general lack of attention given to research and the development of theories directly related to racial minorities and women as they function in organizations and society.

2) The structure of research designs has caused the omission of these women and racial minorities from research samples.

3) There has been an inaccurate assumption that adequate explanations of organizational structures can be found within the organization itself, and therefore the research has not looked to society, culture, and other potential variables.

A case study of six African-American high school principals in California found that all six female principals felt that literature on characteristics, personality and psychology for minority women in regards to inherited and environmental, played a dominant role in the stereotyping in America. They felt they had been denied promotions due to race and cultural background, not necessarily gender (Gaskins, 2006).

The literature that explores African-American female leadership is few and this article will serve as a follow-up to the original case study: “Career Paths of African-American Female High School Principals, the Perceived Barriers They Faced, and the Principalship in California” (Gaskins, 2006). This article will expand and validate the information and conclusions found in the case study through the TALO Leadership Theory. “The TALO Leadership Theory re-positions leadership from the pan-human African perspective. Its focus is on moving the world toward the often discussed 21st century ‘post-racial’ society, as it creatively focuses on one of the strongest and most central components of all people; ethnicity” (Hilton, 2009).

While fully acknowledging that I am not an expert on the TALO Leadership Theory, as I read through the document, I viewed several underlying factors within the theory that supported the findings and facts in the case study of the six African-American female principals. The concepts in the theory are as follows: Within a transdisciplinary and African-centered approach, The TALO Leadership Theory draws heavily from the social sciences, humanities, communication and management theories and practices, (Hilton, 2009, Pt. III).

The TALO Leadership Theory accepts the fact that all leadership profiles and patterns of Acknowledged African leaders today are not necessarily African-centered primarily,...and that they, regardless of fields of expertise, have rightfully earned some markers of merit in their fields because of their own individual work ethics and efforts. (Hilton, 2009, Pt. V).

The TALO Leadership Theory also attempts to remove, yet explain, excuses that are used by some liberal, moderate, conservative and Millennium Acknowledged African Leaders, spokespersons and prominent personalities, who have moved away or have been moved away from consistent leadership profiles that have enabled them to move beyond quantitative survival to qualitative productivity, (Hilton, 2009, Pt. VI).

The TALO Leadership Theory also draws upon the research of feminists/womanists such as Waters and Conaway (2007), Shorter-Gooden and Jones (2003) and James and Sharpley-Whiting (2000), (Hilton, 2009, Pt. VI).

Using Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards, the TALO Leadership Theory is qualitative research that attempts to produce a distinct explanation about a given situation or phenomena, (Hilton, 2009, Pt. VII).

Finally, the implications of this article reiterate the findings in my original case study. With the growing number of high school populations, there is an increased need for qualified high school principals or ALANA females in leadership positions. For the American population, females outnumber males. With the shortage of people willing to go into administration, educational organizations would do well to look at all their possibilities and resources and how they are going to support their administrators professionally, socially, mentally and physically. Today's administration needs to be focused, well versed, well trained and durable.

ALANA females grow up in a world full of challenges and are taught while they are young to be self-confident, resilient and focused. African-American females' upbringings support and instill beginning leadership skills early in life. As with athletic people, most skills are developed early in life by the parent or adult in their lives. Their skills are nurtured, supported, and practiced, making them a sure winner for their team or sport. In some respect, this same development of skills has been supported by parents or other adults in the lives of the six African-American females in the case study, making them a valuable target for leadership positions (Gaskins, 2006, p. 147).

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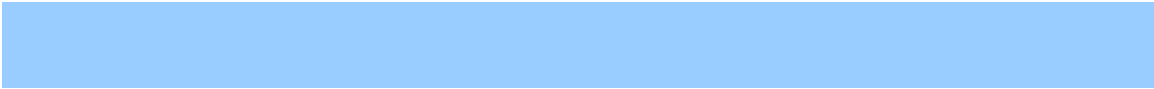
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Nursing, Change, and Race: Intersections with the TALO Leadership Theory

Author: Gloria J. Willingham-Toure', RN, BSN, MNsc, Ph.D.

California, the nation's most populous ethnically and racially diverse state, continues to have an under representation of Blacks in nursing (Adams and Napper, 2008). This takes on an important significance given that the United States is projected to mirror California's racial and ethnic diversity by the year 2060 (Seago and Spetz, 2005). The state has the opportunity now to lead the way in seriously engaging overlooked issues of change and race impacting the profession. The term *Black* is used in this article to refer to persons who claim descent from any of the Black tribes of Africa, or the African Diaspora; and/or who self-identify as Black or African-American.

Relatively small numbers of Black nurses enter positions of leadership and policy influence (Sullivan Commission on Diversity, 2004). Those who enter these positions in mainstream organizations must adapt to Eurocentric ways of knowing and acting in order to gain a measure of success. This author posits that this adaptation may perpetuate the racial disparities seen in nursing and in access to care. Diversity, often described in accordance with the numbers as opposed to the influence, must extend beyond mere *numerical presence* in the profession to acquiring the freedom to diversely *inform* the profession.

Nursing education and leadership development have been shaped by years of Eurocentric thought and knowledge learned by various racial and ethnic groups. Euro-centric is described by some to mean the perspectives of Whites (mainstream) who originally entered the United States from Western Europe. These groups and their ways of thinking and leading, and creating knowledge are indisputably influential in nursing leadership development curriculum.

Yet nurses must be able to work with and care for persons from many different backgrounds, beliefs and ways of seeing and maneuvering through the world. They must develop of an understanding of the needs of the various individuals and groups that receive, deliver, and support care. Nurses are often the interpreters of health care systems and treatments, and the lack of nurses to which a patient can relate can adversely impact on recovery (Byrne, 2001). Similarly the lack of knowledge regarding leadership styles other than the dominant western paradigm can limit the nurses' understanding of care needs. No longer can the profession be guided only by dominant western theoretical perspectives.

There are often whispered conversations among Black nurses relative to leadership and educational development in the profession. These "*whispered conversations*" contain information regarding leadership styles and impacts that may never reach the mainstream. These conversations are not addressed/revealed in professional nursing

publications, seminars, or classes. As such, they may in reality be contributing to the dominance of mainstream thought and knowledge as the primary informer of our educational systems.

Theoretical perspectives that are not driven by Euro-centric thought are considered by many as *different*. There is a reluctance to be different. Simultaneously, there is a need for systems and processes that not only *include* members of minority groups, but also for systems that learn with and from *different* leadership theories. Black nurses and nursing organizations have long recognized this need for *different* leadership theories.

Leadership

Mainstream professional nursing organizations have been traditionally positioned and credited with shaping the future of nursing. In order to be considered a *professional exemplar* in nursing, there is often an assumption that one must hold membership in one or more of these mainstream organizations. Many aspects of these organizations exemplify Western majority mainstream practices, leadership, and opportunities. While initially not open to minorities, they now welcome diverse groups. However the leadership development strategies may still be western posits. There is a need for further inclusive changes in these organizations. However, the burdens of change cannot be inflicted on any one group -- nor can the nature of the change. Black nursing organizations are now finding themselves in the midst of this burden.

Nursing organizations such as Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority, Inc. and The National Black Nurses Association served to bridge the gaps in leadership opportunities. Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority, Inc. states as one of its premier tenants that of *preparing nursing leaders* (Chi Eta Phi, 2009). The members determined that the system as it existed did not prepare enough Black nurses for leadership, thereby creating a gap in the number of Blacks in leadership positions, as well as education systems that required adaptation rather than informing. This absence of Blacks in leadership positions perpetuated a racial divide in the profession both numerically and in informing.

These organizations developed external, and parallel, to the mainstream opportunities to demonstrate leadership styles and attributes informed by different life experiences. Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority Inc now also serves as a means of exposing persons from various ethnic and racial backgrounds to issues in African-American communities, the relevance of those issues to nursing, and strategies for proactively making a difference in resolutions.

In 2003, the Village P.r.o.j.e.c.t.s was founded with the aim of reconnecting African-American nurses, African Diaspora immigrant nurses, persons with a vested interest in the health and well-being of these populations, and local underserved communities (Willingham, 1996, 2009). The Village P.r.o.j.e.c.t.s called out the need to include African centric ways of leadership as a part of leadership empowerment systems.

Positing that without a conscious effort to expand leadership opportunities, Blacks are more likely to become the “*recipients*” of knowledge rather than the “*informants*” of knowledge, space was created for the creation and sharing of knowledge from Black perspectives. Three project groups were implemented i.e. *Village of Mentors Project Group*, *Standing in the Gap Project Group*, and *Scholars Within Project Group*. This required informed change, and broader inclusion and connectivity than normally seen or experienced. The African centric concept of *The Village* was revisited and incorporated into leadership and other strategies.

Change

There is a shift in population demographics and a shift in the accompanying reasoning. There is a shift in the change that is needed and a shift in who needs to change. Many persons have recognized that need to shift from a Black-White world to a world embracing many groups with a spirit of change and hope. It means giving up old ideas of leadership and learning newer more inclusive strategies. The challenge is how to critically acknowledge and engage the influence of Western Euro-centric ideas and domination in nursing, while expanding the field so to include the theoretical perspectives and effective African centric leadership styles.

The change is burdensome in that nursing education systems in the United States have been informed through the years by dominant Western theoretical perspectives. There may be an inherent fear to thinking and perceiving the world differently even by those Blacks who consider themselves as scholars.

Fostering Creative Tensions in Nursing Education: The TALO Leadership Theory

The Traditional African Leadership Oaths (TALO) theory posits that it is no longer enough to be informed only by the dominant Western views of leadership (Hilton, 2009). The time has come for a broader and more open examination of race and ethnicity and the impact on nursing leadership development. All ethnic and racial groups represented, and underrepresented, in nursing must become the informers and learners in the process. No longer is it enough to be informed only by traditional mainstream ways of being exemplified as the ideal. There is a need for creative tensions, examining relevant issues, informed by different theoretical perspectives and lenses.

The Traditional African Leadership Oaths (TALO) Theory offers a lens through which to examine such issues (Hilton, 2009). TALO introduces a new vocabulary to nursing inclusive of loaded terminology to include *Acknowledged and Unacknowledged Africans*, inferring that all persons fall into one or the other of these two groups. Hilton addresses this from a *post-racial* vantage point. He challenges the supremacy of Euro-centric thought, and points to the need to critically revisit and reconceptualize leadership theory. The very introduction of such thought and terminology arouses creative tension, intellectual fear, hidden or denied emotions, and ways of thinking.

The challenge of TALO theory is to distinguish philosophy from fact, or perhaps to connect philosophy to fact. Additionally, clear operational definitions of what is meant by terms such as racism, ethnicity, colorblind, and central must be addressed. This author recommends a deep engagement of the TALO theory as a part of nursing leadership curriculum. Engaging with the concept of human beings as the only race and with the seat of that race being Africa brings a new dialogic into learning.

While the theory assumes that Black (*acknowledged Africans*) have a common leadership profile, there is a need for research in the nursing leadership arena to further test that theory and its application to the profession, and to participate in the theoretical and conceptual growth of African Centric leadership. With each piece of theory exploration and testing, comes a new piece of knowledge. The door must be opened. Whether the theory is accepted or rejected, it is worthy of further exploration and inclusion in the toolkit of leadership theories applicable to increasing the diversity in nursing. This is an unprecedented opportunity for nursing in concert with persons in other disciplines to explore theory development and to test relevance to the profession from a non-western perspective.

About the author and educator Gloria Willingham-Toure': *Earned a Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University in Education; born in Little Rock, Arkansas, now a resident of California. She is married, and is a mother and grandmother. She earned a B.S.N. at Regents College, University of the State of New York, and a master's degree in nursing science from University of Arkansas Medical Science Campus. She is currently the Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, School of Educational Leadership and Change, Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, California. She has lived, studied and/or worked abroad in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Thailand, France, China, Cuba, Canada, and Mexico. She is a Fulbright Senior Specialist in Public/Global Health and was the recipient of a Fulbright grant to the University of Malta.*

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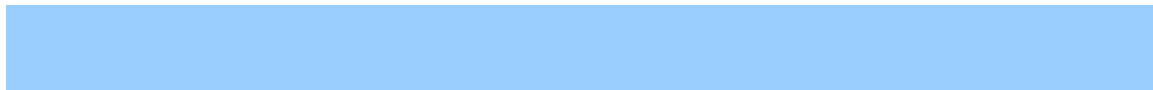
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The Urgency of Now: Putting Nigeria's Fashion Industry on the Global Map

Author: Uduak Oduok, Esq.

The saying “time waits for no one,” holds so true in today’s world. The world is changing at such an accelerated speed it becomes hard to keep up, especially with outdated mechanisms and theories. In technology, for example, search engines like Google and social media like Facebook have changed the way we communicate forever. In politics, we now have the first African-American man [of Kenyan heritage] as the President of the United States. Even further, on a global political landscape, the world super power, the USA, remains astonished as the Chinese surpass Americans as Africa’s trading partner, to the economic detriment of the USA. From 2007 to the end of 2008, for example, according to studies by the Trade Law Center for Southern Africa [TRALAC], the value of trade between China and Africa rose by 45 % (TRALAC 2009, P.1).

The rapid changes that appear to move at the speed of lightning have also affected the entertainment industries. “India remains the world’s leading film producer, but Nigeria is closing the gap after overtaking the United States for second place, according to a global cinema survey conducted by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture Institute for Statistics[UIS],” (UNESCO, 2009, Introduction section).

Rapid changes in a fast paced world means leaders and leadership organizations must reassess theories, applications and organizational structures as they try to respond to these changes. As such, the Traditional African Leadership Oaths [TALO] theory introduced by Keith Orlando Hilton, Ph.D (hereinafter “Dr. Hilton”) that advocates that leaders and leadership organizations, especially Western ones, expand their approach to leadership to include often ignored voices of Blacks, Africans, Latinos, Asians and Native Americans (“minorities”) is not only on point but timely:

“Today it is equally necessary for leadership theories to examine, expand, and include theories that are global and African-centered, much in the same manner that the fields of astronomy and anthropology were expanded with the inclusion of the existing myths and visions of the Dogon tribe of West Africa and the Egyptians of northern Africa, who identified the complete Sirius star system years before parts of it were reported by the German astronomer [Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel](#) in 1844”(Hilton, P. 6).

In a nutshell, the TALO theory “suggests that for all people worldwide, understanding ethnic identification and the pan-human African experience is key to deeper leadership knowledge and desired proficiencies within organizations,” (Hilton, P. 8). Dr. Hilton argues that leaders and leadership organizations accept that there is only one true race: the African race which is the human race. Accepting that premise, organizations should then classify people based on “ethnicity.” Quoting from Sociologist J.M. Yinger’s book “Ethnicity in Complex Society,” Dr. Hilton defines “ethnicity” as “a

segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and who share important segments of a common culture,”(Hilton, P.11).

In using ethnicity to classify people rather than race, it will permit more openness, viewpoints and contributions in organizations from these “ethnic groups” in the discussions on leadership. In the instance of Africans for example, “TALO Leadership Theory, at [its] roots, has the presumption that Africa and Africans worldwide are to be viewed as equal contributors to discourse rather than as deficit research subject matter”(Hilton, P.12).

I believe the TALO theory ought to be fleshed out especially as to its fundamental premise: We are all one race and there is no need to classify by race. However, Dr. Hilton says “ethnicity is central” and classifies by ethnicity. In my personal experience as an American born to African parents, who also spent my early childhood in Nigeria, West Africa, classifying by “ethnicity” creates division, and in many instances violent conflicts. Nevertheless, I support Dr. Hilton’s TALO conclusions on the need for a more expanded view on leadership, one that includes voices and contributions of “minorities.”

Applying some of the conclusions stated in the TALO theory, I, however, in this article focus on the “Why” Africa is not part of the leadership discussions in the West. Even more specifically, as a publisher of a fashion magazine, Ladybrille Magazine, that is the pioneer of bringing Africa’s urban yet cosmopolitan fashion and entertainment industries to the West, I narrow my analysis and application of the TALO theory to Nigeria’s Fashion Industry.

An Overview of Nigeria’s Clothing and Textile Industry

For too long, Nigeria’s clothing [design] and textile industry has remained a stricken giant locally and globally. It is time to fix the giant.

Within the past five years, when it comes to fashion, Nigeria has, arguably, experienced tremendous growth. For example, recently at the prestigious platform of New York Fashion Week for Fall 2009, Nigerian fashion brands MOMO and Tiffany Amber showcased their collections to the world’s media, buyers and fashion elite. Further, Nigerian designers have and continue to showcase their designs at reputable fashion weeks across the continent.

However, a closer scrutiny raises the question as to the “industry’s” growth and even further emphasizes the saying that “all that glitters is not gold.” As it stands, Nigeria’s textile industry has suffered a heart attack while its clothing/design industry hemorrhages away. There is a real urgency, the urgency of now, that requires stakeholders and government officials to take action and place the industry on the global fashion map, where it belongs. To do so, however, means Nigeria must halt in its tracks in its pursuit of the global spotlight and instead focus on meeting its basic local requirements.

A Clothing and Textile Industry in Crisis

On a basic level, Nigeria's textile and clothing supply chain works in five straight forward methods. First, producers [agricultural] of raw materials, in this case cotton, grow cotton (Sasore, P. 2). Next, they gin the cotton. Third, they sell the cotton to the fabric designers. At this stage is where fabric production occurs as the designers spin yarns, weave, knit, dye, print and finish fabrics (Sasore, P. 2). In the Western fashion supply chain, at this stage, auxiliary services such as advertising and promotion are undertaken to actively promote the designed fabrics (Sproles and Burns, P. 49). Nigeria's fabric designers have no such thing. After fabric design/production, comes the fourth step which is fashion design/production. Here, Nigerian fashion designers purchase the designed fabrics which they then cut, trim and make into designs.

In the Western fashion industry, designs are subdivided into "high fashion," "mass fashions" and so forth. Further, at the fashion production stage, fashion auxiliary services are also engaged that is marketers and merchandisers come into play to market or create buzz about the designs (Sproles and Burns, P. 49). For now, most of Nigeria's "design industry" skips these auxiliary services. They also skip classification of clothes as "ready to wear" or "high fashion" as most of the "design industry" is not there yet.

The fifth and final step in the supply chain is exporting and retailing of completed goods (Sasore, P. 2). In the West, once designs are produced, they are showcased in showrooms in major markets allowing fashion buyers the opportunity to check and purchase for their retail stores: department, chain, specialty or discount (Sproles and Burns, P. 49). In contrast, in Nigeria, 99% of fashion designers retail directly to their clientele. There are no retail giants, specialty, chain or discount stores. In the past five years, there has been an emergence of design boutiques. For the most part, however, these boutiques are designer owned. For instance, MOMO, Deola Sagoe and Tiffany Amber own their own boutiques. For boutiques that might be synonymous with Western ones i.e. non-designer owned, they stock primarily foreign designs from Europe, Italy being a favorite. Further, for the Nigerian designer, retailing to market women in local Nigerian markets is not an option as the designs are simply unaffordable by the average Nigerian woman.

At every step of the already described supply chain, there is a fundamental ongoing crisis with the first and second steps (producers of raw materials and fabric designers) suffering the aforementioned heart attack. Indeed as of late 2008, every major headline across the nation's newspapers showed a textile industry pleading for a 70 billion Naira bailout to avoid a complete collapse (Vanguard Online Edition, September 11, 2008).

What went wrong? While Chinese imports are primarily blamed for the current state of the industry, history shows there are numerous significant factors independent of the Chinese that contributed to the current crisis ridden/collapsed industry.

Factors Contributing to Nigeria's Crisis Ridden Clothing and Textile Industry

Trade Policies: Prior to the mid-50s, Nigeria had a successful agricultural industry, exporting cash crops like cotton, cocoa and groundnut (Andrae & Beckman P. 33). The success of the agricultural industry paralleled with that of textiles. Textiles and agriculture went hand in hand as agriculture provided the raw materials, that is, cotton in the first step of the textile supply chain. By the mid-50s, however, the agricultural boom came to an end. Post 1960, attaining its independence and embracing nationalism, Nigeria adopted an import substitution strategy. This translated to control on cotton prices and high tariffs, among many tactics used, on imported textiles. From 1967-70 (the Biafra War) and later 1977, there was an outright ban on imported textiles. These bans were meant to provide leverage for Nigeria in its dealings with its trading partners (Andrae & Beckman P. 33).

Dr. Hilton's statement that "Africa, Africanisms and Africans worldwide, therefore, are not entities dying of AIDS, crime, illiteracy and poverty, but rather current and enduring," held true then and in spite of the challenges faced by Nigeria's Fashion industry and the country as a whole, holds true today (Hilton, P.7). The 1977 ban, for example, was the result of what the government deemed a self-sufficient clothing and textile industry (Andrae & Beckman, p. 33).

The government, arguably, got it right. As of 1980, Nigeria was ranked the third largest textile industry in Africa after Egypt and South Africa (Andrae & Beckman P. 34). However, amidst the oil boom of the 70s to 80s, Nigeria became over reliant on oil, to the detriment of its agricultural sector. Cotton production, for example, was in the 80s, fifty percent below its production capacity (Andrae & Beckman P. 36-38). There was nothing in place to actively stop its rapid decline. Nigeria engaged in a culture of high consumption but produced less. By 1974, Nigeria was importing simple basics like food. Things would only worsen.

In 1985, President Ibrahim Babaginda took office. A year later, he steered Nigeria into an adoption of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's [IMF] Structural Adjustment Program [SAP]. SAP ran from 1986 to 1988 and was defined as a period of massive devaluation of the Naira (Andrae & Beckman, p. 40).

Raw Materials: From 1903 to 1974, the British Cotton Growers Association was in place to help regulate and advocate for Cotton Growers. By 1974, it was replaced with the Nigerian Cotton Marketing Board who retained the same functionalities including added functions of marketing its cotton. By 1986, however, the year SAP was implemented, the board was abolished (WAJS 2008). What would follow, especially with no oversight, was a further deterioration within the cotton industry in terms of production capacity. This meant the textile industry had insufficient and at times no raw materials to work with. As a result, fabric manufacturers relied heavily on imported raw materials and other textile inputs to even begin fabric production (Andrae & Beckman, p. 38).

Outdated Equipments: The massive devaluation of the Naira, however, made it impossible for manufacturers to even afford imported textile and textile inputs. Further, even fabric designers that could afford raw materials had to contend with outdated and run down equipments. The use of outdated equipments was, needless to say, crippling as it forced fabric designers to operate well below capacity. For instance, in 1986, the industry was performing at 37% below capacity utilization (Andrae & Beckman P. 38). By 1998, it had diminished to 28% (Obadina, 1999).

Infrastructural issues and Unemployment: Exacerbating the problems above were infrastructural issues, particularly power supply. The constant power failure, also caused by a Nigeria Electric Power Authority (NEPA) operating well below its capacity, made it extremely difficult for textile businesses to see a return on investments much less break even. The corresponding result was heavy retrenchments, huge turnover rates with the adverse effect of erosion of skilled workers, factory closures, riots and chaos (Andrae & Beckman, P. 35-37).

Further, although Nigeria, especially during the import substitution era of the 70s had tried to make most of its textile plants Nigerian owned, the fact remained that foreigners had the major market share. In 1986, for instance, according to Andrae and Beckman (1998), Nigeria's Textile Manufacturer Association reported 75 members. Of these 75, 30 were Indian owned firms with the rest being Chinese and Lebanese. Only 4 of the 75 were reported as indigenous Nigerian owned firms (Andrae & Beckman, p.35, 75). Amidst all the instability, huge operational cost, riots and corruption, these foreigners returned to their countries of origin. Sometimes, they left just as quickly as they had appeared leaving no retrenchment benefits.

Corruption: Adding fuel to the already burning fire of the textile industry was the government's corruption practices, practices which remain today. For example, despite the billions made from oil revenues, the Nigerian government had nothing to show. Oil monies had been used to sustain Nigeria's addiction on imported products, engage in excesses and embezzlements. For instance, in the 80s, the government built a \$2.4 billion smelter. The cost was 60-100% higher than what it would have cost to build the smelter in a developed country. In addition, in the mid 90s, the show of outright defiance to the rule of law was exemplified by President Sani-Abacha who blatantly looted funds from the treasury in what was dubbed the "Petroleum Trust Fund Scam," (Hill, 55).

"Bend Down Select" and Chinese Imports: The above factors along with trade liberalization policies adopted in the 90s, opened the floodgates for Second Hand Clothing aka "bend down select" from the West and later Chinese goods (,,,,). Specific to the "bend down select" market, affordability reigned supreme as Nigeria could no longer afford to cloth its own citizens. Specific to Chinese imports, neither Nigeria nor the world anticipated the threat China would pose for textile companies in the West and developing countries.

Prior to 1974, the USA along with other European countries who made up members of GATT, had signed trade agreements that restricted trade in cotton production with its exporting countries (Palmi, p. 19). Further restrictions came in 1974 with the establishment of the Multi Fiber Arrangement [MFA], a system of quotas which restricted all importation of textile goods from developing countries, with the exception of silk (Sasore, p. 5). The exclusions by GATT were a result of the interplay of power, politics fear, fit and racism. “The TALO Leadership Theory attempts to expand the boxes of leadership and leadership theory by first acknowledging the place of power, politics, fear, fit, racism, race and positioning in organizations,” (Hilton, p.9).

GATT implemented the aforementioned restrictions but even more restrictions would emerge in the 1980s as the world and GATT members became increasingly nervous of Japan’s success and a persistent trade deficit in the U.S. the world’s largest economy, among other key reasons (Hill, p. 210).

The MFA was set to expire in December of 2004. What appeared unanticipated was that China would join the World Trade Organization (WTO). China joined the WTO in 2001 and by 2003, it had 17% of the world’s textile market share (Hill, 225). Meanwhile, in 1995, the WTO enacted the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC). The purpose of the ATC, a multilateral instrument, was to eliminate textile quotas for all WTO members by January 1st, 2005. By 2006, China was the largest producer of apparel/textile products in the world (Hill, 225).

With China’s strong emergence on the apparel/textiles world map, it flooded other countries’ domestic markets, across the globe, with its cheap imports. Meanwhile, African countries like Nigeria who finally saw restrictions on trade lifted and who had waited to take a big bite out of the Western apple were now having to contend with China.

Nigeria matched against China was simply not a threat. For Nigeria’s textile industry, the lack of diversity and innovation in textile designs plus the aforementioned factors, made it extremely vulnerable. Chinese textile mills outpaced Nigeria in production capacity, labor/skilled workers, regulatory compliance in exporting to Western countries and innovative equipments (Andrae & Beckman, p.287). Worse, the Chinese did not spare Nigerians in its domestic market. The Chinese mastered and produced Nigerian designs like “ankara” and “aso oke,” stamped “Made in Nigeria” on them and sold them in Nigeria as local products (fibre2Fashion, November 11, 2008). The affordability saw consumers shunning the more expensive and genuine Nigerian textiles for China’s cheap imports. Nigeria’s already stressed out textile industry saw even more factory closures, retrenchments, and lesser production capacity.

While the government attempted to put a bandage on the wound inflicted by the Chinese, the mind set of Nigerians and corruption practices made it very hard to enforce. As such, there has been ongoing and overwhelming smuggling of Chinese goods into the country undermining government efforts (fibre2Fashion November 11, 2008).

Against this backdrop is where the Nigerian Fashion Design “Industry” and designer comes in.

The Nigerian Fashion Design “Industry”

With “extravaganza” shows and too numerous a fashion event to count, it is easy to believe there is a Nigerian Fashion Industry. However, the evidence contradicts such assertion. Simply put, Nigeria has no design industry. The factors that substantiate this conclusion follow:

First, fashion is treated more as a cultural experience. For decades, the Nigerian society has frowned on fashion design as a “serious career.” Indeed norms and attitudes reveal a degrading “you can’t be serious” attitude towards fashion” (Vanguard Online Edition, January 11, 2009). Across the nation, fashion is one “ko mo le (get down and have a good time)” show after another as monies are spent on shows and parties at overpriced venues with the sole purpose of displaying an unmatched level of ostentatiousness. However, show me a successful developed or developing country and I will show you a corresponding successful garment industry where it is very much about the business of fashion as it is “extravaganza.”

Second, there is no functional regulatory body that governs designers. In the West and South Africa, stakeholders in any professional industry form regulatory bodies whose primary responsibilities include: providing resources for members, engaging in public policy and governmental relations with law makers, and establishing acceptable industry practices to stay competitive both locally and abroad (Vanguard Online Edition, January 11, 2009).

The Fashion Designers Association of Nigeria (FADAN), established eight years ago, appears to be a regulatory body for Nigeria’s “design industry.” While FADAN might have initially been conceived to perform the above basic duties, it simply has not. There has been no meaningful crafting and influencing of public policy with respect to the designers it purports to serve. Further, FADAN lacks any structural systems that meaningful address and respond to the needs of its constituents. Neither does it address the issue of sourcing for its members. As a result, most designers, especially the established ones, have lost faith in the organization.

Third, there is an astonishingly huge fragmentation among designers. It is hard to work towards a common goal when there is major divisiveness within any group. The sheer fragmentation and lack of cohesiveness among Nigerian designers is simply astonishing. Nigerian designers with their creativity can stand in the gap for the crisis ridden textile industries as they work together to identify sourcing opportunities; and work with fabric designers to create innovative and complementary fabrics for their businesses. This, however, is simply not the case. Instead, there are redundant and duplicative efforts rather than camaraderie.

Fourth, there remains a lack of highly skilled workers in the industry. One of the biggest complaints from Nigerian designers is the lack of skilled workers and workers who can meet production deadlines. As such, many Nigerian designers look and do outsource their work to, yes, the Chinese.

Fifth, there is a lack of protection of intellectual property rights. Protecting the intellectual property rights, copyright/trademarks, of the Nigerian designer is important. However, that appears a lost cause and Nigerian designers are frequently subjected to trademark infringement and counterfeits of their goods both from the Chinese and at times their competitors.

Sixth, there are no auxiliary/merchandising services that can amplify the Nigerian designer brand. Holland's Vlisco recently launched an aggressive campaign in Nigeria marketing and branding Vlisco fabrics through its fashion designs to Nigeria's designers. Indeed, I read with embarrassment an article titled, "the Real Dutch Wax, the Company that Clothes Africa" by Wentholt, Wyger. All of the Dutch "Ankara" fabric which are largely used by Africans and thought to be made by Africa are NOT. Vlisco, a Dutch based company has Africa's total market share when it comes to Ankara. Indeed Vlisco prides itself as the "company that clothes Africa" and while it clothes Africa, at the time of the article, not even one of the Vlisco's fabric designers were Africans. There is no evidence that has changed (Wentholt, 2000).

While Nigeria's designers embrace Holland's Vlisco, they also must engage auxiliary services to brand their products, services and names independent of promoting multinational brands.

Seventh, designers lack access to finance. For both the clothing [design] and textile industry, access to credit remains a major challenge. It is probably why there is no "design industry," per se. The fashion business is capital intensive and access to credit is paramount to its success. Nigeria's fashion designers, like other industries, are categorically denied access. The few designers who have been able to make it are members of Nigeria's elite. The lack of access to credit is simply unacceptable as it leaves out extremely talented pool of designers.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

"The TALO Leadership Theory suggests that leaders with clear African knowledge need to be active participants and also set the bar and design the roadmap with regards to individual and organizational issues in diverse environments. . . ." (Hilton, p.22). Such advice ought to be part of what Nigeria's leaders and leadership organizations adopt especially with its textile and clothing industries.

The following, therefore, are suggested solutions for both the textile and clothing manufacturing industries. I understand Nigeria will not solve its infrastructural problems (particularly power supply) overnight. However, while it hopefully begins working towards repairing infrastructural issues and implementing favorable trade polices, there

are steps all stakeholders can take to begin fixing and awakening the stricken and crisis ridden giant that is Nigeria's Clothing and Textiles Industry. These suggestions serve as an illustrative list:

Textile manufacturers and agricultural producers should collaborate to advocate for stronger infrastructure and government incentives that can help increase production of raw materials such as cotton.

The clothing and textile industry should form a governmental relations arm within their respective sectors that undertake a comprehensive study and solutions on how to modernize, strengthen and get the industry to perform competitively locally and ultimately globally.

The government should rethink and come up with stronger safeguard measures against Chinese and SHC imports. There is still a high rate of smuggling of products driven by affordability despite the ban on Chinese imports, for example. The one size fits all ban that worked in the 60s and 70s is no longer the solution for today. The government should undertake several measures and provide incentives to the average Nigerian that serves as deterrence for buying smuggled goods.

All stakeholders should make a commitment to train and demand innovation in all phases of the supply chain. In addition, with respect to innovation, special emphasis should be added to natural/green textile goods that can be exported to the West as countries like the USA embark on a green economy.

Stakeholders particularly in the design world should consider creating a sourcing data base through appropriate agencies and organizations to better serve the needs of their respective constituents. In addition, these agencies as well as the government should teach entrepreneur skills.

All stakeholders and government should engage in ongoing dialogue which identifies the needs and solutions of the industry.

Government should provide financial incentives that encourage financial institutions to provide the much needed access to credit for things like new machineries. Government should build fashion clusters in historically textile driven states like Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Abuja and the now emerging Calabar to encourage more interaction and collaborations with designers and textile manufactures.

The government should develop and brand Nigerian cotton and other textiles much the same way as Holland's Vlisco or any other multinational does in Nigeria. All stakeholders as part Establish or revamp an active fashion council/regulatory body that meets the needs of designers.

All stakeholders must create awareness through training and appropriate liaisons with the US Trade Office on how Nigeria's clothing and textile industry can take

advantage of important trade agreements like the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act which permits duty free imports of goods made in Africa to the USA.

Finally, tying all of the above suggestions together should be the willingness of Nigerian leaders and leadership organizations to observe the TALO oath which calls for a promise to serve for “the betterment of humanity.”

***About the author Uduak Oduok, Esq.** Uduak Oduok is a fashion model, journalist and attorney. Ms. Oduok has been in the fashion industry, where she has over 14 years combined experiences in retail, sales, marketing, and fundraising. She is also a fashion model, shows producer, writer, fashion editor, fashion business owner and attorney. She has been an invited speaker to many organizations on fashion topics and conducts fashion workshops/seminars. She is currently obtaining her degrees in fashion design and merchandizing. Ms. Oduok enrolled and spent her first two years of law school at U.C. Hastings College of Law. In 2001, she completed her law studies at Georgetown Law Center in Washington D.C. She currently operates her own firm, where she practices general litigation, business, contract and intellectual property law.*

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What the inauguration means to me: "A theological perspective"

Author: David D. Hurst, Ph.D.

The advent of President Elect Barack Obama is a gift of God to African-American people in particular, racially mixed couples/families in particular, and the nation and world at large.

The history of African-American people reveals that God acts in their history by bringing to the forefront a person who moves the race toward full equality in the American experience. This person appears once or twice in a century. They leave their impact on their own kind, and, at the same time, raise the consciousness of the nation for the betterment of all. A Crispus Attucks fires the first shot to open the American Revolutionary War during the founding years of a new nation. A Baptist preacher named Nat Turner leads a frightening plantation revolt that shakes the very foundations of the Southern way of life. A Sojourner Truth, a woman of deep faith and piety, becomes the female Moses of the Underground Railroad movement, freeing slaves to escape from the cruel lash of the antebellum slave master, to freedom and new hope in the North. A Fredrick Douglass becomes America's greatest political orator prior to the Civil War, taking his place alongside Abraham Lincoln.

The early 20th Century gives us a Booker T. Washington as the leading spokesperson for the plight of African-Americans. The Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and 60s becomes the platform for a Baptist pastor in Montgomery, Alabama named Martin Luther King, Jr. The 21st Century is the advent of Barack Obama, which, could potentially become the Age of Obama, not only in U.S., but in world history. His advent brings closure and therapeutic catharsis to those who suffered and grieved over the heinous assassinations of King, Jr. and others. Those also who thought they would never see this event in their life-time.

The greatness of America: it is a country where all God's children, irrespective of their racial or ethnic group, can come to exercise the ethic of hard work and responsible citizenship, pursuing their most passionate aspirations, achieving their highest goals. This is especially important for those from racially mixed parentage. They walked between two worlds, not totally accepted in one or the other. Their lives were spent resolving internal and external "identity conflicts", in their own group and the surrounding social order.

This country has been built by God's children from every continent of the Earth! What a great moment for America; two great continents, Africa and North America, bonded to give this nation its next President! America can now close the chapter on the ugly and shameful history of its inception or genesis. This was marked by the African slave trade and the sorrowful murder of native Indian Americans. Although the stain will

always be on the pages of U.S. history, the chapter can be closed. American has come full circle by electing Barack Obama its next President, toward being the true "melting pot" of the world.

Finally, the world is looking in as never before at this historic moment as the 21st Century dawns; especially the third World or the darker races of the Earth. World history the past six centuries has been dominated the Spanish, the French, and recently America's involvement in world Wars I & II against Germany + Italy + Japan and its succeeding "cold war" conflicts with Russia. Now another king of history can be written - the history of the great "melting pot". Perhaps this will be an enduring history. History has recorded the rise and fall of great political leaders and their nations, the decline and fall of great empires, their ascendancy and their collapse. Where other political leaders, nations, empires have seen their eventual and inevitable demise, could it be that the great "melting pot" America can have a historical continuance without end? Could this be God's ultimate meaning of President-elect Barack Obama?

Prayer

O God, Who has given birth to the great "melting pot" of all the Earth's children, let Your anointing and blessing be upon President-elect Barack Obama, Michelle, their lovely daughters, America and the world. Grant him the guiding faith of Abraham, the tested ordeal of Moses, the tenacious courage of Joshua, the honored integrity of Samuel, the charismatic passion of David, the divine wisdom of Solomon, the trial-by-fire of Job and the exemplar humility, love, the power of forgiveness of Jesus, and the great lessons of reconciliation and forbearance taught by Paul to the churches. Amen

January 20, 2009

POSTSCRIPT

Obama & the TALO Leadership Theory

David D. Hurst

Barack Obama, a by-product of two great continents (America and Africa), now occupies the most powerful political office in the world. He is indeed President of the United States of America! The eyes of the world are upon him. His advent provides him with the opportunity and his political party, global good will at the moment, despite the continuing arrogance and John Wayne mentality of his rival party (notwithstanding futile attempts at bipartisanship early on), detractors and enemies, to reshape the political landscape nationally and internationally. On the other hand, there are those who fear him especially in the U. S. South. Obama won by a significant and clear-cut margin, but lost Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kentucky, Virginia, South Carolina, West Virginia, and South Carolina.

Aryan supremacist like Limbaugh and Fox News' Hannity continue to needle, hammer and attack every move. The South continues as the last regional bastion of racial exclusiveness. Limbaugh and Hannity belong to 1930s Nazi Germany movement, unfortunately, both born at the wrong time, in the wrong country.

David Gergen, CNN analyst and former presidential adviser to Republicans and Democrats said, "America is not longer a racist nation, but still has pockets of racism left." Former President Bill Clinton said, "By mid-century America will no longer be a White majority nation." Decades ago, **Time Magazine** did a piece on "The Browning of America."

World history may be witnessing the birth of "the age of Obama". This is an age that has become one community. Indeed, the Internet has brought the world closer than the boat, the airplane and telephone. The unspoken fear, will Obama live out his presidency? Obama, the first Internet elected President, is the "handwriting on the wall" for the Limbaughs and Hannitys, the bigoted and godly mentality they symbolize.

The real socialists are those who want "for White's only" to remain the dominant pattern of American economic, social, political, and military order to remain under their control for their kind or species. Obama's presence in the White House is the final blow to the Jericho walls of white racism in America, institutional and organizational life as we have known it. We see this with the collapse of Wall Street, banks closing, the auto industry in bankruptcy, escalating home foreclosures, unregulated financial institutions with the CEOs walking off with millions of dollars after their company's have gone under. The real socialists are those who want "business as usual" and "the same old same old"; their unregulated control of it.

Mr. Obama is too African, too American, and too Christian to fail. Too much talent is embodied in this young Harvard lawyer, not to mention the powerful asset of his equally and professionally accomplished wife, to fail. He has a great team of rivals working with him and prayers of intelligent and fair-minded Americans of all ethnic groups and persuasions.

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***About the author David D. Hurst:** David D. Hurst, Ph.D. is a pastor, professor, family counselor, prison & denominational chaplain, evangelist, journalist, author and jazz trumpeter. He is originally from Fresno, California. He is a graduate of Bishop College (Texas) with a B.A., Union Theological Seminary (New York) with a Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology, and Ph.D. from the Claremont School of Theology. He has two children and two grandchildren. He and his wife, MaNetha, live in Rancho Cucamonga, California.*

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