

Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies



Authenticity: Issues with Peter's Behavior in Antioch and Paul's Admonitions

Ogochi K. Deborah

Authenticity: Issues with Peter’s Behavior in Antioch and Paul’s Admonitions

Ogochi K. Deborah

Pan Africa Christian University

* Email of the Corresponding Author: cheerfulabigael.mongare@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Ogochi K., D. (2018). Authenticity: Issues with Peter’s Behavior in Antioch and Paul’s Admonitions. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies, Vol 1(1) pp. 21-30.*

Abstract

Authenticity is a term that seems new in the leadership phenomena, but its existence is not new since it can be traced back to the Greeks’ time. Authenticity as a concept can be traced back to the ancient Greeks where it is apprehended in their ageless caution to “be true to oneself” (Michie & Gooty, 2005). According to George, Sims, McLean and Mayer (2007), the construct of authenticity is not a new thing, there has been a resurging determination in what establishes authentic leadership within the applied and academic management literature. This author together with many other authors on the subject suggest that there is much more to authenticity than only being true to oneself. This paper seeks to bring out issues of Peter’s authenticity and Paul’s rebuke to bring a fellow leader back to track.

Keywords: *Authenticity, Peter’s Behavior & Paul’s Admonitions*

Authenticity: Issues with Peter’s Behavior in Antioch and Paul’s Admonitions

Authenticity is what is lacking in many leaders in this time and era. If only organizations’ leadership both in private and public corporations embrace authenticity, the world will not be struggling with scandals and many cases that has tainted the leaders’ and organizations’ name. According to Avolio and Walumbwa (2006), the corporate scandals in organizations, management malfeasance and the challenges that are facing private and public organizations have greatly contributed to the keen attention placed on authenticity and authentic leadership. The emerging of

these challenges have together provoked calls for more positive forms of leadership in organization and institutions in order to reinstate confidence in all levels of leadership and the public at large (Thomas, 2006). These issues did not start recently, but can be traced back to many centuries ago since we can see the inconsistency in the book of Galatians

Origin of authentic leadership

Authenticity as a concept can be traced back to the ancient Greeks where it is apprehended in their ageless caution to “be true to oneself” (Michie & Gooty, 2005). According to *George et al.* (2007), the construct of authenticity is not a new thing, there has been a resurging determination in what establishes authentic leadership within the applied and academic management literature. This author together with many other authors on the subject suggest that there is much more to authenticity than only being true to oneself.

According to Avolio and Walumbwa (2006), the corporate scandals in organizations, management malfeasance and the challenges that are facing private and public organizations have greatly contributed to the keen attention placed on authenticity and authentic leadership. The emerging of these challenges have together provoked calls for more positive forms of leadership in organization and institutions in order to reinstate confidence in all levels of leadership and the public at large (Thomas, 2006).

Further, (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May (2004), posit that the authentic leadership theory has been developing over the past numerous years from the connection of leadership, ethic, positive organizational behavior and scholarly literature.

Definitions of Authentic Leadership

From the field of psychology Seligman (2004) defines authenticity as “owning one’s personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, preferences, beliefs or processes captured by the injunction to know oneself and behaving in accordance with the true self” p. (382).

With a review of recent literature that is focusing on authentic leadership, authentic leadership has congregated around numerous fundamental scopes. Initially, Avolio, Sosik, Jung, and Berson (2003) defined authentic leadership “as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates

fostering positive self-development” p. (234). However, numerous authors have come out to express various concerns which led to (Ilies, Morgeson & Nahrgang, 2005) proposing a four component model of authentic leadership. This model consists of self-awareness, authentic behavior, unbiased processing and authentic relational orientation.

Later on Boas and Eilam (2005) defined authentic leaders as people who possess the following attributes; they have attained a higher level of self-resolution and self-concept clarity, their conduct is self-expressive, the role of the leader is a fundamental constituent of their self-thought and their goals are self-concordant. Further, Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa (2005) integrated these several aspects, viewpoints and definitions of authentic leadership and came up with a model that pays attention on a positive moral viewpoint that is characterized by high ethical standards that inform decision making and a leader’s behavior.

Further to the definitions given above, it is evident that authentic leadership will be incomplete and misguided without the aspect of amplified consciousness and great consideration to the essential ethical accountabilities that exist in the leadership role. It is clear that ethics is at the very heart of leadership (Ciulla, 2014). According to Datta (2015), it is very true that researchers may not fully agree on one operational definition of authentic leadership, but it is generally accepted that authentic leadership is made up of three primary antecedent factors, namely; psychological capabilities, moral reasoning and critical life events.

Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) posit that along with the three core antecedent factors afore mentioned, researchers also tend to agree on four core fundamentals of the authentic leadership theory as; relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, balanced process and self-awareness (Sagnak, 2017). Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008) define authentic leadership as “a pattern of a leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers fostering positive self-development” p. (94).

Authentic leadership

In modern day, leadership is lacking in organizations and corruption of the leaders is well documented. Organizations are competing for fame and resources, they are cheating, they are running fake programs, fishy enrollment and many more (Shahmohammadi, 2015). Due to these

scandals, both locally and internationally, they caused the need of ethical leadership that will help leaders act morally and genuinely and by that leadership, inspire their followers to the same (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2006). It is prudent to note that, unethical behaviors and corruption have been in existence throughout history. Unlike in the past, the current society has made information about scandals easily accessible to anyone, anywhere and anytime. So, it is not that the current leaders are more corrupt and engage in malpractices at a higher rate than before, rather, there is great awareness about the leaders' malfeasance because these scandals are highly publicized that they were in the past (Covelli & Mason, 2017).

George *et al.* (2007), posit that there are five scopes of authentic leadership that include; values, passion, self-discipline, relationship and heart. Further, authentic leaders own the following characteristics; they practice solid values, demonstrate self-discipline, understand their purpose, lead with the heart as well as the mind and establish connected relationships. These characteristics are not completed or gained sequentially but authentic leaders acquire these qualities over their course of lifetime. This is so, because authentic leaders are not born that way but they develop, learn and grow all through their existence from their own experiences and other people's experiences. They are determined to be authentic with values and beliefs.

According to (George, 2010) authentic leadership construct is the position of a leader's life history in his/her development. In a study carried out by George *et al.* (2007), it was found out that there were no universal styles, traits, or skills of successful authentic leaders, rather, being authentic to their personal life story like Paul in Galatians make them effective leaders.

Authentic leadership is a multidimensional leadership theory that has resemblances to transformational leadership theory and many other positive leadership theories like; charismatic, servant, spiritual, and ethical leadership (Covelli & Mason, 2017). The core difference between these leadership theories is that, ethical leaders aspire to be ethical, servant leaders are into serving, charismatic leaders desire to be pleasant but authentic leaders endeavor above all the mentioned to be authentic (Tonkin, 2013).

Therefore, authentic leaders do not have any static styles, traits or skills but each one of them possess their own style of leadership that integrates several skills and behaviors that will fit the specific setting of a situation based on their specific life experiences (George, 2010). When authentic leaders reliably reason ethically and ethics is incorporated in making and supporting their

decisions, it support a moral organizational culture that is self-sustaining and the followers will work to imitate the behaviors of these authentic leaders (Datta, 2015).

Covelli and Mason (2017) posit that authentic leadership is particularly very important in the current society because of the reduction in ethical leadership that is exemplified in many high profile cases that are involving major corporations. According to Onorato and Zhu (2014) the core components of authentic leadership that play a key role in organizations widely are; the self-regulation, self-concept and self-knowledge. Further, they highlight that “authenticity emerges from the interactions between leaders and followers. It is a reciprocal process because leaders affect followers and followers affect leaders” p. 254.

It is noble to note that authentic leadership is instigated from a person’s self-awareness, moral principles and value standards that usually give understanding about a leader’s behavior and can illuminate why some leaders succeeds while others don’t (Roberts, Cha, Hewlin & Settles, 2009). Further, the psychological aspect in authentic leadership has benefits such as; the leader having advanced self-esteem, making use of more positive outcomes and having extra hope for the future. A leader is said to have authenticity when he/she forms authentic associations with his/her staff (Luthans, Norman & Hughes, 2006).

Authentic leadership has substantial influence on the staff and followers of any leader (Armstrong, 2012). On the other hand, Wherry (2012) brings out another analogy of understanding authentic leadership. He postulates that an authentic leader is a leader; who is willing to assess their personal values, along with acknowledging their weaknesses and strengths (self-awareness); who will behave in accordance with their values and beliefs (relational transparency); who is able to impartially analyze all relevant information before making a decision (balanced processing); and who is completely immersed in their core beliefs and values (internalized moral perspective) p. (33).

Peter’s Authenticity Issues and Paul’s Admonitions

With Wherry (2012) explanation of the authentic leader’s concept, this can smoothly usher us to discussing the authenticity of Peter and Paul in the book of Galatians 2:11-13 “When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the

circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray” (NIV, 1984).

Peter’s visit to the church at Antioch seems to have happened before the Jerusalem council and he had been there for some time, long enough to be detected that his custom while living with the Gentile Christians was like them, rather than living by the Jews’ customs. These customs were not new to Peter since that is how he was instructed to associate with Cornelius who was a Gentile and with other Gentiles too who had gathered in Cornelius house. Acts 10:9-22

“⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. ¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” ²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?” ²² The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.”

The fact that when these men who came from James arrived caused Peter to start distancing himself from the Gentiles that for so long he had associated with and had meals together raised eyebrows. The subtlety of the change in Peter’s conduct and way of life is so sudden and loud that no one could miss to notice it. The act of Peter was going to cause division in the church since his actions and those who followed him were clearly identified as sin. The authentic issues that reveal

from Peter's actions are; the actions of Peter and his followers were wrongly motivated in the sense that he acted out of fear of the group from James. Peter was guilty of acting as men-pleasers thus violating the principle of authenticity by (Avolio & Luthans, 2005).

Another issue is that the actions of Peter caused some believers to stumble. In verse 13 of Galatians chapter 2 "The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray" (NIV, 1984). Peter as a leader failed in his authenticity by misleading his followers. Remember an authentic leader influences and motivates followers in positive ways (Hannah, Avolio & Walumbwa, 2011). Further, an authentic leader understands better how to draw followers to oneself as a leader and allow them to put trust in him/her influencing their trust and emotions especially during change time (Agote, Aramburu & Lines, 2016). If only Peter acted this way to the Gentile followers!

Another very serious issue here is that Peter was hypocritical. This is depicted in verse 13 of Galatians chapter 2 that the other Jews and Barnabas joined him in hypocrisy. Authentically, this is very wrong. An authentic leader should be genuine implying that he/she should be true to him/herself on values, belief, principles, and morals that create the guiding compass (Klenke, 2007). Peter did not remain true to himself but sought to please the men who had come from James. Another revealing issue is that the actions of Peter were a practical denial of the gospel. Authenticity requires one to live to his/her values, principles and moral of what they believe in (Klenke, 2007) which Peter clearly denied.

Paul comes in to rebuke Peter in Galatians 2:14 "When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in in front of them all, "you are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" (NIV, 1984). Here Paul stands "toe to toe" and "eyeball to eyeball" with Peter and charged him for acting hypocritically. When Peter had the vision from God in Acts 10:9-22 on how to reach out to the Gentiles, he did that and won many to Christ, but when the men from James arrived, he stopped eating with the Gentiles and now started living like a Jew and compelled the Gentile believers to live like him as a Jew so as to have fellowship with him and other Jews believers. What hypocrisy! What inconsistency!

Conclusion

If Peter, a Jew did not need to live like a Jew, why did he demand that Gentile Christians life like the Jews? Ethically Paul was right to call sin by his name and living by what he believed was right before God. It is evident that Peter's actions in Antioch of hypocrisy, misleading followers and many more are also the challenges that many leaders are facing today. According to Avolio and Walumbwa (2006), the scandals that are facing leaders in organizations and the malfeasance, and the leadership and management challenges that are facing both the private and public organizations, triggered the development of authentic leadership which is currently trying to emphasize on people being who they were created to be. This was Paul's challenge to Peter, to be himself and be who God created him to be.

References

- Agote, L., Aramburu, N., & Lines, R. (2016). Authentic leadership perception, trust in the leader, and followers' emotions in organizational change processes. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 52(1), 35-63.
- Armstrong, M. (2012). *Armstrong's handbook of management and leadership: developing effective people skills for better leadership and management*: Kogan Page Publishers.
- Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Walumbwa, F. O., Luthans, F., & May, D. R. (2004). Unlocking the mask: A look at the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviors. *The leadership quarterly*, 15(6), 801-823.
- Avolio, B. J., & Luthans, F. (2005). *The high impact leader: Authentic, resilient leadership that gets results and sustains growth*: McGraw Hill.
- Avolio, B. J., Sosik, J. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Leadership models, methods, and applications. *Handbook of psychology*, 12, 277-307.
- Avolio, B. J., & Walumbwa, F. O. (2006). Authentic leadership: Moving HR leaders to a higher level *Research in personnel and human resources management* (pp. 273-304): Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Avolio, B. J., Walumbwa, F. O., & Weber, T. J. (2009). Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions. *Annual review of psychology*, 60, 421-449.

- Boas, S., & Eilam, G. (2005). 'What's your story?' A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. *The leadership quarterly*, 16(3), 395-417.
- Ciulla, J. B. (2014). *Ethics, the heart of leadership*: ABC-CLIO.
- Covelli, B. J., & Mason, I. (2017). Linking Theory to Practice: Authentic Leadership. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 16(3), 1-10.
- Datta, B. (2015). Assessing the effectiveness of authentic leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 9(1), 62-75.
- Gardner, W. L., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., May, D. R., & Walumbwa, F. (2005). "Can you see the real me?" A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *The leadership quarterly*, 16(3), 343-372.
- George, B. (2010). *True north: Discover your authentic leadership* (Vol. 143): John Wiley & Sons.
- George, B., Sims, P., McLean, A. N., & Mayer, D. (2007). Discovering your authentic leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(2), 129.
- Hannah, S. T., Avolio, B. J., & Walumbwa, F. O. (2011). Relationships between authentic leadership, moral courage, and ethical and pro-social behaviors. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 21(4), 555-578.
- Ilies, R., Morgeson, F. P., & Nahrgang, J. D. (2005). Authentic leadership and eudaemonic well-being: Understanding leader-follower outcomes. *The leadership quarterly*, 16(3), 373-394.
- Klenke, K. (2007). Authentic leadership: A self, leader, and spiritual identity perspective. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 3(1), 68-97.
- Luthans, F., Norman, S., & Hughes, L. (2006). Authentic leadership. *Inspiring leaders*, 84-104.
- Michie, S., & Gooty, J. (2005). Values, emotions, and authenticity: Will the real leader please stand up? *The leadership quarterly*, 16(3), 441-457.
- NIV. (1984). Holy Bible, New International Version.
- Onorato, M., & Zhu, J. (2014). An empirical study on the relationships between authentic leadership and organizational trust by industry segment. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 79(1), 26.

- Roberts, L. M., Cha, S. E., Hewlin, P. F., & Settles, I. H. (2009). Bringing the inside out: Enhancing authenticity and positive identity in organizations. *Exploring positive identities and organizations: Building a theoretical and research foundation*, 149-169.
- Sagnak, M. (2017). Authentic Leadership and Altruism: The Mediating Role of Meaningfulness. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(3), 447-452.
- Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*: Simon and Schuster.
- Shahmohammadi, N. (2015). The Relationship between Management Style with Human Relations and Job Satisfaction among Guidance Schools' Principals in District 3 of Karaj. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 205, 247-253.
- Thomas, A. (2006). *Managing by Accountability: What Every Leader Needs to Know About Responsibility, Integrity and Results*.
- Tonkin, T. H. (2013). Authentic versus transformational leadership: Assessing their effectiveness on organizational citizenship behavior of followers. *International Journal of Business and Public Administration*, 10(1), 40-61.
- Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of management*, 34(1), 89-126.
- Wherry, H. M. (2012). Authentic leadership, leader-member exchange, and organizational citizenship behavior: A multilevel analysis.