

Destructive Leadership in State and Religion: An Exegetical Study of Hosea 7:1-16

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ABSTRACT

Leadership has always been an unresolved problem across time or space. Balancing destructive leadership practices is essential especially in the context of religion and the state. Changes in models occur to answer the need for effective and relevant leaders. Various models of leadership are attested including servant leadership, transactional leadership, supportive leadership, laissez-faire leadership, transformational leadership and other positive leadership. The importance of a positive model in bringing full awareness to leaders in carrying out the leadership mandate is emphasised in this essay. The study focuses on the definition of destructive leadership and destructive leadership models practised by Israelite leaders during the ministry of Prophet Hosea in the eighth century B.C.E based on the text of Hosea 7:1-16. A destructive leader is described as one who negatively influences his followers. The negative influence may lead to the destruction of the organisation he/she leads. The destructive leadership model found in Hosea 7:1-16 is not integrity-oriented but power-oriented and individual-oriented. Three factors characterise it—the leader, the followers and the environment.

KEYWORDS: Destructive leadership, Hosea 7:1-16, State, Religion

A INTRODUCTION

Everyone desires significant progress in all aspects of life. In pursuing progress in life, many factors come into play, consciously or unconsciously but an important factor that must be considered in this regard is leadership.¹ Poverty often occurs in society when leaders do not adequately carry out their mandate

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¹ Johannes Radjagukguk, "Kredibilitas Pribadi Gembala Dalam Pertumbuhan Gereja," *Diegesis: Jurnal Teologi* 3/2 (2019): 13–24, <https://doi.org/10.46933/dgs.vol3i213-24>; Wiryohadi Wiryohadi, "Gereja Berbasis Visi Dan Misi Kerajaan Allah," in *Reaffirming Our Identity* (1st ed.; ed. Junifrius Gultom and Frans Pantan; Jakarta: STT Bethel Indonesia, 2014), 261.

and responsibilities.² Likewise, the widespread practice of prostitution in the community is because the leaders do not offer any alternative lifestyle to the prostitutes but instead help to promote the practice.³ Kompasiana states that the negative impact on the people emanates from the fact that even the rulers, the ulama, were damaged as spiritual leaders.⁴ Namie conducted a study in 2000 on leadership behaviour and found that 89% of office workers experience stress due to disruptive leaders.⁵ Namie's finding aligns with Hogan and Kaiser's 2005 study, which reported that 65% to 75% of employees believe their boss is the worst part of their job.⁶ Mert Kilic and Ayse Günsel also write about "The Dark Side of the Leadership: The Effects of Toxic Leaders on Employees."⁷

The above observations are not an open secret but are hidden from the public eye.⁸ Traditionally, much leadership research has focused on factors associated with effective leadership, often assuming that ineffective leadership reflects the absence of leadership. However, a closer look shows that damage to an institution, nation, state and religion may occur because a leader carries out his leadership mandate in a destructive way. It is essential therefore to examine authentic leadership's positive and negative aspects.

In the biblical world, destructive leadership occurred during the ministry of the prophet Hosea (around the eighth century B.C.E.)—the leaders could not help God's people, namely Israel, to fulfil God's plan but the people forsook God and followed the actions of their leaders. Thus, the study's aims were: first, to propose a definition of destructive leadership behaviour and, second, to propose

² Hasanul Rizga, "Kemiskinan, Imbas Dari Pemimpin Yang Khianat," *Republika.co.id*, 2019. <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/hikmah/19/04/23/pqf8n0458-kemiskinan-imb-imb-dari-pemimpin-yang-khianat>.

³ Ahmad Ubaidillah, "Kerusakan Moral Pejabat," *Radar Bangka*, 2020. <https://www.radarbangka.co.id/rubrik/detail/perseptif/5864/kerusakan-moral-pejabat.html>.

⁴ Didi Eko Ristano, "Rusaknya Rakyat Dan Penguasa Karena Ulamanya Rusak," *Kompasiana*, 2014. <https://www.kompasiana.com/didiekoristano/54f3a8367455137e2b6c7e2d/rusaknya-rakyat-dan-penguasa-karena-ulamanya-rusak>.

⁵ Gary Namie and Ruth F. Namie, *The Bully at Work: What You Can Do to Stop the Hurt and Reclaim the Dignity on the Job* (Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2000).

⁶ Robert Hogan and Robert B. Kaiser, "What We Know about Leadership," *Review of General Psychology* 9/1 (2005): 169–180.

⁷ Mert Kilic and Ayse Günsel, "The Dark Side of the Leadership: The Effects of Toxic Leaders on Employees," *European Journal of Social Sciences* 2/2 (2005): 51–56.

⁸ Anggi Maringan Hasiholan and Purim Marbun, "Sinergitas Kepemimpinan Senior Dan Muda Di GKII Se-Jabodetabek Dalam Menghadapi Dampak Pandemi 19 Dan Disrupsi Era: Sebuah Kajian Kepemimpinan Transformatif," *Harvester: Jurnal Teologi Dan Kepemimpinan Kristen* 6/2 (2021): 119–138; Purim Marbun, "Pemimpin Transformatif Dalam Pendidikan Kristen," *Magnus Opus: Jurnal Teologi Dan Kepemimpinan Kristen* 1/2 (2020): 72–87.

a conceptual model of leadership behaviour that incorporates the idea that a destructive leader can simultaneously exhibit the breakdown of an organisation. With the destructive leadership model, the essay aims to expand the research on destructive leadership behaviour based on the understanding of the prophet Hosea in Hosea 7:1-16.

Research on destructive leadership has been conducted by Wawo Runtu, which portrays the dominant leadership model as the cause of the destruction of an organisation.⁹ Similarly, Einarsen discusses the theory of destructive leadership in depth. The negative leadership model only began to emerge in the last decade.¹⁰ Krasikova, in 1999, indicated that the destructive leadership theory was being misunderstood.¹¹

There has been no detailed linking of biblical texts with leadership in religion and the state from previous studies. Therefore, this study proposes a conceptual model of leadership behaviour that incorporates the idea that destructive leaders can contribute to the breakdown of an organisation. With the destructive leadership model, the author aims to expand the field of leadership behaviour research to include potentially destructive leadership elements based on Prophet Hosea's understanding of Hosea 7:1-16. To begin, we conduct an in-depth exegetical reading of the text to understand Hosea's view of leadership and how to criticise destructive leadership. Furthermore, the exegetical results correlate with destructive leadership models in the religious and state spheres.

B CONTEXT OF PROPHET HOSEA'S MINISTRY

Prophet Hosea's ministry spanned a long period of approximately 30 years, starting from the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel and ending with the fall of Samaria (about 752-724 B.C.E.), that is, from the three-year tenure of Jeroboam II to the years before the exile of the nation Israel to Assyria.¹² Hosea was called by God to deliver prophecies to God's chosen people, a calling accompanied by visions aimed at national unity. Northern Israel and southern Israel (Judah) became divided after King Solomon's death.¹³ Andrew states that Hosea was

⁹ Bob Wawo Runtu, "Determinan Kepemimpinan," *Makara: Sosial Humaniora* 7/2 (2003): 71–81. <https://doi.org/10.7454/mssh.v7i2.57>.

¹⁰ Ståle Einarsen, Merethe Schanke Aasland and Anders Skogstad, "Destructive Leadership Behaviour: A Definition and Conceptual Model," *Leadership Quarterly* 18/3 (2007): 207–216, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.03.002>.

¹¹ Dina V. Krasikova, Stephen G. Green and James M. LeBreton, "Destructive Leadership: A Theoretical Review, Integration, and Future Research Agenda," *Journal of Management* 39/5 (2013): 1308–1338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312471388>.

¹² Hassell C. Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2010).

¹³ Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *Theology for Every Christian: A Systematic Theology in the Reformed and Premillennial Tradition of J. Oliver Buswell* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2007).

called primarily because of the religious situation in northern Israel, whose citizens had spurned God's love by worshipping other gods especially Baal.¹⁴

Hosea prophesied during the reigns of several kings of Judah namely Uzziah (783-742 B.C.E.), Jotham (742-735 B.C.E.), Ahaz (735-715 B.C.E.) and Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.E.) as well as King Jeroboam, son of Joash of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.E.) of the northern kingdom of Israel. Hosea addressed the social situation in Israel. According to the prophet, the depravity of Israel's social life destroyed Israel's religious and worship life, producing corrupt leaders.¹⁵ Israel engaged in social and cultural idol worship by building altars and idols (Hos 10:1). The worship of Baal indicates that the Israelites believed in Baal more than the God of Israel.¹⁶ Hosea describes Israelite's act as adultery in marriage.¹⁷

God's ultimate solution to Israel's bankruptcy, spiritual adultery and all the associated corruption and social evils was using the Assyrians to exile the people and to demonstrate the unity of his holiness and love through the exile.¹⁸ God promised that the exile would produce a work of His grace in the remnant and the restoration of the glory of the Israelite society (Hos 2:14-23). Eventually, they would place their hope in the coming Messiah, a descendant of David (Hos 1:10-2:1). Israel's spirituality was adultery or deviation from the marriage covenant ; therefore, Hosea illustrated the state of Israel's worship with the treachery of his unfaithful wife.

The Syro-Ephraim war marked the period of the prophet Hosea's ministry. At that time, Assyria was a powerful nation and difficult to defeat. Judah, led by Ahaz, did not want to build military relations with Israel against Assyria. As a result of Ahaz's reluctance, Israel turned to attack Judah. The emergency situation forced Ahaz to ask for help from Assyria to fight Israel. The Edomites and Philistines took the opportunity to join in the attack on Judah¹⁹ but Judah began to regain its territory and Israel slipped further and further. It was not only foreign policy problems that caused the people of Israel to be exiled to Babylon but the domestic politics also was marked by crisis. They killed each other to gain power (see 2 Kgs 15) until finally, Israel was taken captive to Assyria in 722

¹⁴ Andrew E. Hill, *Survei Perjanjian Lama* (3rd ed.; Malang: Gandum Mas, 2013).

¹⁵ Barnabas Ludji, *Pemahaman Dasar Perjanjian Lama 2: Untuk Studi Kritis* (Bandung: Bina Media Informasi, 2009).

¹⁶ W.S. Lasor, *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 2 Sastra Dan Nubuat* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2012).

¹⁷ Ludji, *Pemahaman Dasar Perjanjian Lama 2: Untuk Studi Kritis*.

¹⁸ Willem A. Van Gemeren, *Penginterpretasian Kitab Para Nabi* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2007).

¹⁹ John Day, "Hosea," in *The Oxford Biblical Commentary* (ed. John Barton and John Muddiman; Oxford: OUP, 2001).

B.C.E.²⁰

C EXEGETICAL READING OF HOSEA 7:1-16

Hosea uses two literary styles to convey his message: prose and poetry. Andersen and Freedman, using syntactic tools, conclude that typical poetry is found in chapters 4-14. In contrast, the first three chapters are mostly prose narratives (especially 1:2-2:3 and 3:1-5). The prophecies embedded in the prose narrative of the first three chapters are grouped around a chiasmatically constructed theme of marriage. The judgment and warning prophecies of chapters 4–14 are presented in a collection of divine speeches related to prophetic statements. It is generally recognised that the most distinctive feature of Hosea's work is his use of parables and metaphors.²¹

Chapter 7 is dated to 733 B.C.E. when political and military chaos was caused by religious disloyalty. Kuiper divides chapter 7 into three sections which shown that Israel was: (i) 7:3-7 —against the domestic crisis leading to the assassination of the king; (ii) 7:8-12 – opposed the nation's foreign policy by asking foreign nations for help; (iii) 7:13-16 – rejected the religious syncretism with Canaanite cults.²²

Prophecy is expressed in a poetic literary style as a hallmark of Hosea's writing. Hosea 7:1-2 is a continuation of the prophecy Hosea to the unrepentant Ephraim (Hos 6:7-10). Hosea conveys his prophecy to the priests in a passage about Israel's situation., which is described as a theological evil (Hos 6:9). This prophecy captures the mistakes of spiritual leaders (priests) that impact the people's welfare.

In Verse 1, which begins with the phrase "when I heal Israel" (כִּרְפֹּאֵי), Hosea urged the Israelites to return to the LORD. The word heal, which comes from the Hebrew root *rapha*, does not only mean healed or to heal in the sense of physical illness, Poole says God positioned himself as a doctor or surgeon who lovingly cured Israel as his patient.²³ *Rapha* can also mean to restore (restored). Thus, the purpose of God healing Israel is the restoration of the damaged relationship between God and Israel in religious matters especially regarding Israel's rebellion (Hos 5:13; 6:1; 11:3). Landy notes that the desire to "heal" Israel was temporary, depending on the people's desire to acknowledge the reality of God and correct their deception.²⁴ Thus, we conclude that certain conditions

²⁰ James Limburg, *Hosea–Micah* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988).

²¹ Francis L. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Hosea* (The Anchor Bible; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980).

²² A. De Kuiper, *Tafsiran Alkitab: Kitab Hosea* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011).

²³ Matthew Poole, *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Holy Bible* (3 Vols; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985).

²⁴ Francis Landy, *Hosea* (London: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011).

must be met to experience restoration.

God's restoration or healing resulted in the "disclosure of the evils of Ephraim and Samaria." Regarding the identity of Ephraim, Ephraim could refer to the descendants of Israel after the period of the Greater Israel under the reign of King Solomon, that is to Ephraim's descendants and not Ephraim as a person such as Jeroboam, son of Nebat and Ephraim from Zerada (1 Kgs 11:26), who became king over northern Israel with ten tribes on his side. Browning's understanding of Ephraim, in the eighth century, refers to the entire Northern Kingdom.²⁵ At that time, Samaria was the centre of worship in Northern Israel as Jerusalem was in Southern Israel (Judah). Then this happened during the reign of King Ahab, who built the temple of Baal in Samaria and built the statue of Asherah (1 Kgs 16:32-33). However, Samaria became the capital during the reign of Omri (circa 885-874 B.C.E.; 1 Kgs 16:24).²⁶

The word "exposed" is a translation of הַגָּלוּת, which means exposing oneself, becoming known and manifest. Therefore, if the word "exposed" is translated as to be found, disclosed or stripped, then, the verse is more accurately read as "If Israel is restored, then, the guilt of Ephraim will be found." The King James Version (KJV) translation renders the phrase as, "then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered." Ephraim did wrong refers to Israel's cheating, stealing, breaking in and looting mobs outside. The actions were based on the sin of fornication committed by Israel. In the immediate context of the book of Hosea, precisely in Hosea 4:2, it is said that "only cursing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery, committing violence and shedding blood follows bloodshed."

Verse 2 begins with the conjunction (*waw*), which translates as "and." The passage's structure focuses on the unrepentant Ephraim. Israel's ignorance of God, who remembers their sin, is part of the evil they committed. The concept of "knowing God" as well as God's love and justice in the Israel's faith tradition that must be passed down from generation to generation also features in this verse. Love and justice are consistent with the part of the Shema of the Israelites in Deuteronomy 6:4-7. Furthermore, the word "thought" is a translation of לִלְבָבָם, defining the conscience as humans' deepest part. This study opts for the term conscience in this verse because it fits the context, as the conscience of the Israelites has been dulled to the point that they no longer know God, who remembers all their sins.

Verse 2 continues with the phrase, "now their deeds surround them". The word "סָבְרוּם" is translated as besiege, which means to surround or set up across

²⁵ Wilfred R.F. Browning, *Kamus Alkitab: A Dictionary of the Bible, Panduan Dasar Ke Dalam Kitab-Kitab, Tema, Tempat, Tokoh, Dan Istilah Alkitabiah* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2007).

²⁶ Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, *Alkitab Edisi Studi* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2012).

a line. Thus, the crimes committed by the Israelites were covered. There was no escape from the guilt. Their siege was later linked to their exile into Assyria. Verses 1 and 2 describe the evil deeds of the priests whereas verses 3-16 describe the crimes committed by the political and spiritual leaders.

1 Sin in the State Sector

Hosea links the broken political leadership with the destruction of the nation of Israel as a whole. Hosea's prophetic voice will show Israel's leaders' domestic and foreign actions.

Opposition within the Land of Israel (verses 3-7)

This section contains the primary figurative forms of Hosea's prophecy. The figurative forms are as follows:

- 7:3 Conditions of kings and princes
 - 7:4a is said to be an adulteress = rebel
- 7:4b-6 Palace intrigue and rebellion
 - 7:7a It is said to eat up the judges = rebellion
- 7:7b Condition of the king

In verse 3, Hosea rebukes the Israelites for pandering to please kings and princes with their wickedness and lies. Hosea's poetic style contains the following parallels:

A	B
They pleased the king with their evil	
A'	B'

and the leaders with their lies. The above parallel shows that the prophet wants to highlight the irony of the state of Israel. There is a contrast between pleasure and evil and lies. As God's chosen people, their joy should be associated with practising righteousness, not evil (Deut. 6:1-2). On the contrary, the people had forsaken righteousness. Archer relates Israel's crimes and lies to the sin of adultery, specifically, disloyalty to God²⁷ unlike Butler, who states that the the Israelites' sins are related to the good news in the kingdom of Israel or the absence of punishment experienced by Israel. The connection between the two is apparent. Butler focuses on the political activity, in which, of course, there are spiritual leaders.²⁸

²⁷ Kenneth J. Archer, "God—Creation's Hope, Creation—God's Home: A Pentecostal Theological Response to Terence E. Fretheim's God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19 (2010): 198–212, <https://doi.org/10.1163/174552510X526214>.

²⁸ Trent C. Butler, *Holman Old Testament Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005).

Regarding the identity of the king in verse 3, *Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia* identifies him as King Hosea, who took the throne from King Pekah (2 Kgs 15:30) and reigned for nine years (2 Kgs 17:1-4). Hosea's reign was the last before the people were exiled to Assyria.²⁹ If the third verse refers to the king and the princes, then, in the fourth verse, Hosea makes a generalisation about all the Israelites in the phrase "if they are adulterers." Another reason is that the word used is כָּלֵם (כלם), which means all, each, every and the whole.

On the sins of Israel, Hosea provides several descriptions that fit the context of Israel at the time. Hosea's first analogy is the baker's hearth kitchen. In ancient Israel, a kiln or oven was a stone used for baking bread. Round bread, such as *roti canai* or *pita* bread, was baked in the oven using a specific technique at the right temperature and turned at the right time. If the technique is wrong, then, the dough would end up being a half-baked cake (v. 8). Israel was half-charred and ready to be wholly burnt.

Verse 5 says there will be a "feast of our king." Wycliff thought it was a king's coronation party or birthday party but we have no record of what parties were held. We consider the party in question the king's birthday. Perhaps a distant context related to the feast is when John the Baptist was beheaded (Matt 14:1-12). However, Butler maintains that the king followed a routine with his servants who would, after a service period, leave their jobs and celebrate, and at such parties, the king would invite his colleagues and friends to come celebrate.³⁰

The joy of the princes in verse 3, fed by lies, merges with their drunkenness in verse 5, which says they sickened the princes with warm wine. Some nobles lied and the nobles present drank wine until they were drunk. In Israelite culture, drinking too much wine was a sin, much more in the case of a king. In addition, the side effects of drinking too much wine include feelings of the body being inflamed, dizziness and general body weakness so that one cannot stand up. Too much wine even makes one unable to reason properly because of the headache (dizziness) it causes. Hosea noted that all their kings had died. All the kings here refer to the kings who followed Jeroboam II namely Zechariah, Salum, Menahem, Pekahiah and Pekah, who died because of the evil conspiracy by the king who succeeded him (2 Kgs 15:8-30). Hosea explained the reason for the murder in the statement, "none of them cried out to me." In this context, he uses the word "qore," which means meet, encounter, call on and appeal. These researchers opt for the word "meet" to describe the "fear" of the kings because of the "premeditated murder." The fear here is the unwillingness to repent. However, if the word "calling" in verse 7 is linked with "calling" in verse 11, it could mean Israel sought refuge in other nations rather than in God. Mays argues

²⁹ Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, *Alkitab Edisi Studi*.

³⁰ Charles F. Pfeifer and Everett F. Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Vol. 1; Malang: Gandum Mas, 2011).

that the situation in Israel was an irony: "Like every revolutionary country has no faith in anything outside of itself, Israel is burning in its anger." Kuiper confirms that the Israelites actively took their fate into their own hands by appointing and deposing their king at will, carrying out assassinations and carrying out revolutionary plans. Thus, domestic politics, which ignores the people's welfare, indicates the presence of a destructive leadership model. Pakpahan explains in detail that Amos was a contemporary of Hosea. Amos' spotlight on the injustices of Israel's kings and rulers ruined both the kings and their kingdom.³¹

Opposing Foreign Policy Actions (Verses 8-13)

In this section (verses 8-16), there is an elegant arrangement of the prophecies of Hosea. Hosea begins with accusations and ends with judgment in this order:

7:8-11 Accusations

7:12-13 Judgment

7:14-16a Accusations

7:16b-c Judgment

In verses 8-13, Hosea reiterates his prophecy regarding Israel's destructive foreign policy in Hos 5. Israel had made alliances with Egypt and Assyria to defend its territory³² and its disloyalty resulted in the deportation of the population from their homeland. Hosea also repeatedly emphasised Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

The phrase "mixed up" comes from the word *יִתְבּוֹלֵל*. The use of the imperfect tense shows that Israel aligned itself with other nations.³³ Mixing oneself also means assimilation with other countries in terms of religion, politics and culture. In the process of assimilation, there must be a transfer of values between assimilated countries. The nations here refer to Egypt and Aram (Syria), which helped Israel to rebel against Assyria as it refused to pay tribute to the latter. However, Israel is influenced by other nations. Stuart rightly states:

Hoshea's failed foreign policies serve as an illustration. In 732 B.C.E., Hoshea, after killing Pekah, suddenly shifted from alliances with Egypt, the Philistines, and Aram-Damascus to alliances with Assyria. A few years later, she broke the alliance and came full circle, seeking Egypt. This bewildering policy caricatured the figurative

³¹ Gernaida K.R. Pakpahan, *Jalan Sunyi Kenabian Amos: Perjuangan Menegakkan Keadilan* (Jakarta: Hegel Pustaka, 2021).

³² James M. Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book Hosea: The Case for Persian-Period Yehuda* (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

³³ James M. Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book Hosea: The Case for Persian-Period Yehuda* (U.S.A.:Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

meaning of 'mixed'.³⁴

In verse 9, Hosea again describes the people's ignorance of their decline with a metaphor. The foreign alliance made by the king of Israel did not provide help but "devoured his strength." The word eating up uses the Qal perfect form, which means Israel's power was being "drained because of the tribute payments Israel had to make to its allies. Even so, Israel was not aware of its error. Thus Hubbard argues that Israel was a nation that committed blunders (stupidity) because agricultural products and all other natural resources were taken from them but they also were unaware. The emphasis on Israel's stupidity can also be seen in Hosea's second analogy that Israel had grown "much gray hair" but he does not know it. Gray hair connotes weakening, which was used to symbolise the approaching exile of the Israelites.

In verse 11, Hosea uses a third analogy for Israel's actions; Israel is compared to a stupid dove ((פִּינֹנָה). The expression, silly dove, describes the foolish and unreasonable Israelites (as before), who flew here and there to cooperate with other nations but were eventually captured by other countries. Envoys had fled to Egypt (2 Kgs 17:3-4) and Assyria (2 Kgs 15:29), seeking help without realising the danger of the alliances. Hosea makes an ironic allusion to the actions of the Israelites. The irony is that as God's chosen nation, they could not determine what is good and right. In verse 12, Hosea, through God's command, still warns the leaders of Israel not to join forces with other nations. Hence, the tense used for the word "stretch" is *qal* imperfect. Likewise, the terms "to lower" (אָרַךְ) and to beat ((אִסַּף use the *hipil* tense, which means affirmation or statement of something. Thus, the real punishment comes from God, not from Assyria. Assyria was just a tool God used to punish Israel's sins. The purpose of the punishment of God was to discipline the Israelites. The New English Translation translation says, "I will discipline them when I hear them flocking together."

God announced judgment on Israel because Israel continued to drift away from Him. God's heart was always toward their redemption as a loving husband but they would never accuse Him of lying. The people made covenants with foreign nations in self-defence because they thought God could not help them. Seeking political support from foreign nations and worshipping Baal meant Israel's rebellion and flight from God. However, the Pulpit Commentary states that the first part is an appeal implemented in the second part (perish). Thus, the prophecy of condemnation gives rise to a cry of woe, while the latter explains the character and nature of the cry of suffering.

³⁴ Alice A. Keefe, "Hosea," in *The Old Testament and Apocrypha: Fortress Commentary on the Bible* (ed. Gale A. Yee, Hugh R. Page and Matthew J. M. Coombs; Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2014), 829.

2 Sin in the field of religion

Regarding the culture, Radmacher states that in its state of disaster, Israel's spiritual leaders did not cry out to the LORD with their hearts but their voices rang in self-pity. They screamed, wept and even wailed in their beds to ask Baal for help. This action recalls the episode in 1 Kgss 18:20-29 where Elijah confronted the 450 prophets of Baal, King Ahab and Jezebel especially verse 28 which reads, "So they called louder and cut themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, so blood was flowing from their bodies": According to the religious beliefs of the Canaanites, even the long drought signaled the storm that the God Baal was temporarily defeated by the God of death and imprisoned in hell. The worshipers of Baal will mourn his death in the hope that their tears may facilitate his death, the resurrection, and restoration of plants.³⁵

We agree with Nelson Study Bible's view regarding the Baal ceremony carried out by Israel and its goals. In verse 14, cutting more (יִתְגַּוְרְרִי) is done for wine and wheat. The word *לִאֲרֵנִי* comes from the *hithpolel* imperfect third person masculine plural verb. The verb used here suggests an action done by oneself to oneself and together with others. Browning indicates that wine had important economic, social and religious significance in Old Testament times (Isa 51:7; cf. 28:7-8).³⁶ Although wheat was a staple food commodity then, the weather strongly influenced its production. In the last sentence, Hosea repeats the word rebel, which shows (again) the reluctance of the leaders, both the state and religious leaders, to repent.

Verse 15 again reiterates Israel's "ungratefulness" for God's good works, for it was the LORD who taught Israel to be strong and even made their military strong (Ezek 30:24-25), as in the time of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25-28). However, this power was used against God. Hosea used the phrase, "and yet they plotted evil against me," to describe the adultery with Baal. We agree with John Gill's observation that "strengthening and training the arms" is associated with historical events in which Hazael and Benhadad, King of Aram, persecuted Israel during the time of King Joahaz (2 Kgs 13:1-9); but God provided security during the reign of Joash and of Jeroboam II. However, the people again refused to repent. Wiersbe relates this to Ps 78:57, which shows that God called the people to turn to Him; instead, they rebelled and lied to Him.³⁷

Verse 16 notes the end of Israel's "foolishness," which is to keep going to Baal. The treachery is described as a "bow of deceit" namely the failure of Israel's

³⁵ Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1455.

³⁶ Browning, *Kamus Alkitab*.

³⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Hidup Bersama Firman-Renungan Harian Pasa Demi Pasa Seluruh Alkitab* (Jakarta: Renungan Harian, Yayasan Glori, 2012).

alliance with other nations.³⁸ The word 'turn' comes from "יָשׁוּבוּ," which means return, go back, come back to the act of worshipping Baal, which Andersen and Freedman view as the state of the absence of God. Hence, the nickname demeans Baal. Idolatry is often condemned as worship of other gods (Deut 32:21; Isa 44:9-20; Jer 16:20). Hence, we prefer to follow the KJV translation, which states that, "They return, but not to the Highest."

The play on the words 'return' and 'repent' emphasises God's proud expectations. Hosea closed the passage by repeating the verb in verse 10. The people of Israel did not turn to God at all or even repent. They returned to false worship with arrogant actions.³⁹ Thus, chapter 7 ends with the irony of the humiliation of Israel, which expected God to help it against Assyria. The dead leaders are the same as stated in verse 7, which complements the downfall that Israel would experience.⁴⁰

C **DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP ACCORDING TO HOSEA 7:1-16**

A leader is in a position to influence others or those under his/her leadership. However, heroic larger-than-life conceptualisations of leadership are increasingly at odds with recent findings, which note the harmful impact of confident leaders on their followers. Leadership is regarded as destructive leadership or, in the world of leadership, as Destructive Leader Behaviour (DLB)⁴¹ or even toxic leadership,⁴² when it departs from the act of a leader who transforms by directing his/her followers to be ethical, morally aware and motivated and to engage in good deeds.⁴³

The fact of leadership proves that the leader's failure lies in self-interest which does not highlight the interests of the followers. Lipman describes destructive and toxic leaders as those with profoundly dysfunctional personality traits and who blames followers for seeking leaders in challenging and often frightening situations. In addition, both leaders and followers rationalise their

³⁸ Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*.

³⁹ Kenneth L. Baker and John R. Kohlenberger, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

⁴⁰ David Allan Hubbard, *Hosea: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1989).

⁴¹ Christian N. Thoroughgood et al., "Destructive Leadership: A Critique of Leader-Centric Perspectives and Toward a More Holistic Definition," *Journal of Business Ethics* 151/1 (2018): 627–649.

⁴² Anthony Erickson et al., "Destructive Leadership: Causes, Consequences, and Countermeasures," *Organizational Dynamics* 44/4 (2015): 266–272, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2015.09.003>.

⁴³ James M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

views, support each other and promote destructive leadership systems.⁴⁴ Organisational climate leads to negative actions whose effects are short and long-term. Erickson notes that:

Destructive leadership is a combination of selfish attitudes, motivations and behaviours that negatively affect subordinates, organization and team performance. Destructive leaders operate with an acutely inflated sense of self-worth and self-interest. Such leaders consistently use dysfunctional behaviour to deceive, intimidate, coerce or unfairly punish others for getting what they want for themselves.⁴⁵

The irony of destructive leadership is that not only does it impact the leaders. It also affects the followers who benefit personally from the destructive actions of the leader. Although the fact has not been explored, there is indication that the practice occurs. Thoroughgood et al. offers three reasons behind the practice of destructive leadership, even in the context of state and religion. First is the vulnerability of the followers. Ignorance of their followers' vulnerability leads to destructive practices by leaders. People will obey their leaders without first screening them. Second, followers respect the leader. Approval of destructive leadership is possible when highly respected leaders have strong charisma. Third, long-serving leaders make changes and developments without the knowledge of their followers.⁴⁶

D DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP AND HOSEA 7:1-16

Hosea 7:1-16 provides a grisly description of the leadership that existed in Israel in the eighth century B.C.E. Leadership in that context refers not only to the leader of the state, which is the king, but also to spiritual leaders who are the priests. Thus, it can be said that Israel's leader at that time of Hosea was a destructive leader. The corruption and lack of integrity of the leaders wreak havoc on the leaders and on Israel as a whole.

Destructive leaders are leaders who lack true integrity, as they care only about themselves and not about the community's welfare or of their followers. A leader's integrity plays a significant role in his/her leadership style when carrying out a leadership mandate. A study by Kausez and Ponder, who conducted 20 years of research on professionals on two continents, showed that the most critical factor in leadership is integrity.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Lipman-Blumen, *The Allure of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians—and How We Can Survive Them* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Erickson et al., "Destructive Leadership."

⁴⁶ Thoroughgood et al., "Destructive Leadership."

⁴⁷ Cited by Antonius Atosökhi Gea, "Integritas Personal Dan Kepemimpinan Etis," *Humaniora* 5/2 (2014): 950–959, <https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v5i2.3197>.

From the explanation above, we also get a picture of what makes leaders destructive—power orientation. Hosea highlights the issue of power orientation with the image of kings in the royal palace who kill each other through deceit. In addition, personal interest is also highly noted by Hosea. The kings were busy promoting their own interests and satisfying their private desires and taste.⁴⁸ The environment sometimes encourages and supports destructive leadership, especially among the upper class (elite) of society, who take pride in their own success. However, Thoroughgood et al. note that the problem lies not only with the leader but also with the people who follow the wrong values of the leader without putting up a fight.⁴⁹

Holmquist shows that such leaders who had destroyed the organisation, the people associated with them and even themselves. Holmquist considers such leaders and their leadership harmful, toxic, dark and destructive and has developed various theories of destructive leadership to explain the phenomenon, its dimensions and processes.⁵⁰ Thus, it takes a deliberative leader to succeed in government and religion. The concept of deliberative leadership, as promoted by Jürgen Habermas, provides space for rational discussion between all parties.⁵¹ The term deliberative comes from the Latin *deliberare*, which means to consider rationally or carefully. According to Habermas, deliberative leadership approaches the ideal model in the following situations. First, it is inclusive, which means no party is excluded or excluded from participation in discussions of topics that are relevant to them. Second, being free from coercion means everyone can freely engage in arguments without being dominated or intimidated by other participants. Third, it is open and symmetrical, meaning each participant can initiate, continue and question discussions of relevant topics, including deliberative procedures.⁵²

Deliberative leadership means those elected to power are always aware that democracy means government by the governed. In the study of the state, awareness makes the leaders to always open spaces for communication with citizens and to be sensitive to the needs of the wider public. The public interest always seems to urge the leaders in the political system, making them willing to

⁴⁸ Frans Pantan, “Kompilasi Bahan Ajar Christian Leadership” (Jakarta: STT Bethel Indonesia, 2007); Naftali Untung et al., “Kepemimpinan Karismatik Dalam Meningkatkan Iman Kaum Muda Di Gereja Bethel Indonesia Kota Jambi,” *MATHEO: Jurnal Teologi/Kependetaan* 9/1 (2019): 8.

⁴⁹ Thoroughgood et al., “Destructive Leadership.”

⁵⁰ Daniel B. Holmquist, “Hosea 7:1-16 and Destructive Leadership Theory: An Exegetical Study,” *Emergent Religious Pluralisms* 10/1 (2017): 126–137, <https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/elj/vol10iss1/6ELJ-Holmquist.pdf>.

⁵¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

⁵² Hugh Baxter, *Habermas: The Discourse of Law and Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 20–22.

sacrifice themselves for the sake of their citizens. In other words, deliberative leadership provides a public space for citizens to express and press their opinions and wishes critically and freely at any time in order for them to see a more democratic nation and state.⁵³ Deliberative leadership presupposes the integrity of a leader who has certain moral qualities. First, leaders must dare to act according to their conscience and not be opportunistic. Second, leaders must lead transparently, meaning people can see what they are doing. They must be able to explain the considerations and rationality of the decisions they make. The leader should not engage in monologue or single-handedly issue policies without public consideration. Third, the leader must have ideal notions of advancing his /her nation without enriching or corrupting himself/herself through power. Fourth, the leader must be willing to take criticism and be held accountable for his/her leadership. Fifth, the leader must be fair, willing to admit mistakes without putting the blame on subordinates. Sixth, the leader must lead communicatively, which means being open and acknowledging the contributions of others and being humble. Moreover, the leader must obey the constitution more than the constituents.

In the church context, deliberative leadership becomes essential. The legitimacy of leadership in the church comes from God. Church leaders consider themselves being chosen by God to represent Himself to the people. God only uses leadership as a means (cliché) to legitimise power, even though it is possible also for the leader to pursue various personal ambitions behind the scenes. Nevertheless, the reality today shows that leadership crisis is also eating away life in the church. Many leaders no longer serve with pure motives because behind their cloaks of greatness, they are self-serving, seeking position (power), wanting to get rid of rivals or even looking for money. Corruption in the church, whether money corruption, corruption of power, of time or of ministry, is no longer taboo for many leaders. The struggle for power/position by leaders in the church and religious institutions is prevalent today in Indonesia. These attitudes show that leadership in the church (religion) has also experienced severe problems.

The church will only have a better future if its leadership pattern is transformed. We live in an increasingly open and advanced world; therefore, the church needs to adopt deliberative leadership strategies. In the church, leadership must be deliberative and rational as well as democratic and transparent. Whatever the leader does must be communicated to the people, who must always be involved in every church policy and activity. The people are not the object of the leader's decision but the subject who must always be asked to participate in the church's life. It is not enough for leaders to be self-righteous in the name of

⁵³ Aletta J. Norval, "Democratic Decisions and the Question of Universality: Rethinking Recent Approaches," in *Laclau: A Critical Reader* (ed. Simon Critchley and Oliver Marchart; Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 142.

God. They must listen to the people's input and criticism of the church's policies and agendas. The church is a community of faith where the leader and the people realise that the highest sovereignty lies with God, not the leader.

In addition, as a community of faith, leadership in the church must reflect the leadership of Jesus. God, as a source of leadership, means He is role model to the shepherds of the people. That does not mean there would not be shortcomings. However, what is absolute required is the spirit of service. Jesus said: "Whoever wants to be great among you, let him be a servant, and whoever wants to be prominent among you, let him be your servant" (Matt 20:26-27).⁵⁴ At the Last Supper, when Jesus washed his disciples' feet, He said: "I am in your midst as a servant" (Luke 22:27). Leadership that serves sincerely, as exemplified by Jesus, must be a leadership guide in the church. Jesus' example emphasises that loving service must be the main characteristic of a spiritual leader. The characteristic will stimulate other attitudes such as humility, selflessness, positivity, caring, open heart to all without distinction, willingness to sacrifice oneself and denying oneself for the sake of God alone. Without these attitudes, leadership in the church will not be a blessing to the people but a problem. Thus, destructive leadership could also spell suicide for the church in the future.

E CONCLUSION

The findings from the exegetical study of Hosea 7:1-16 show the presence of destructive leadership in the state and religious life of Israel during the ministry of the prophet Hosea. Destructive leadership shows the lack of integrity by the kings, who forced themselves into power by killing their predecessors. Disgraceful acts by leaders to gain leadership positions today include collusion, corruption, nepotism, black propaganda, slandering political opponents to bring them down and other manipulative actions. Meanwhile, destructive leadership in the religious sphere is noted among the priests who did not carry out proper sacrifices to YHWH. In today's contexts, destructive leaders carelessly minister to the congregation. Their teachings are not from the Bible, which causes the community to move away from rather than closer to God. Another reason is the wrong orientation by leaders when carrying out the mandate given by the people. Such leaders view leadership as power orientation and self-orientation. Self-orientation is translated into a hedonistic life to satisfy the stomach's desires rather than leadership goals.

Hosea 7:1-16 also expresses the ignorance of the people of Israel regarding the depravity of their leaders. They do not jointly reject the leader's actions or negative influence but follow them as an opportunity to break their covenant with God. Hosea describes their treachery as adultery that hurts God's heart. Another factor is that the people seem to support the activities of their

⁵⁴ Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Iman Dan Hati Nurani* (Jakarta: OBOR, 2014), 79.

leaders because of the problems they might face if they do not. However, destructive leadership does not accommodate the needs of the community.

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