

Exchange relationships between leaders and followers in Baptist churches.

by

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Declaration

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my mom, Joan Cooper (nee Genders).

“Diolch im fawr”

There have been significant people who have moulded my thinking about leadership over the course of my academic career. Notably Dr Rex Mathie, Mr Bill Booyse, Mr Neille Harvey, Mr Chris Ehlers, Mr Frank Kovaleski and Mr Doug Anderson. These men have modeled great leadership in the Baptist faith, inspiring and challenging me to be a better servant.

The completion of this degree is due largely to the support of my wife Linda, and children, Coral, Morgan and Jared, who, when the vision faded were ready to help clear the fog, and help me focus on the goal so that I will be able to say to them,

“Trust me China, I’m a doctor!”

Summary

This research into Baptist leadership examines the processes of Christian leadership in terms of human relationships in churches under the microscope of a leadership theory known as leader member exchange theory (LMX), and discovers the correlation between a high level of LMX in a local church and the positive outcomes of leader legitimation in a society where pastoral tenure and pastoral termination project disheartening statistics.

LMX theory is particularly suited for the study of the Baptist congregational leadership paradigm with emphasis on heightened follower participation in dyadic relationships between the pastor and church members. In the light of current convoluted leadership praxis, provides an appropriate theoretical tool for relational analysis.

The background to this thesis is the perceived growing inclination among Baptist pastors to adopt a leadership paradigm, which exalts the person and role of the pastor to the exclusion of the church members. This “great man theory” is being modeled from sources that focus on church growth rather than church health, and represents a departure from servant leadership, which has long been the model for Baptists in general. This “new” trend of charismatic leadership may be one of the reasons for the inclination toward shorter tenures and pastoral termination, among Baptists, particularly in the USA.

Understanding the peculiarities of congregational government is of particular importance to the research, with emphasis on the perceptions and expectations of church members regarding current leadership in their local church, and how the perception of personal value correlation translates into member satisfaction.

The Literature on **leadership** offers a multiplicity of innovative ideas, mostly focused on the **leader**, and after literature research into the subjects of transactional transformational, complexity theory, and servant leadership no single theory of leadership offers completeness, hence the term quantum or complexity will assist in moving Baptist pastors from average leadership.

Critical elements of LMX were identified in the literature and processed into the questionnaire, which was distributed to among Baptist churches in South Africa and the United States.

The results of the research are then analysed in the light of LMX theory, and the conclusion that in the congregational structure of Baptists, LMX theory offers valuable insights into member satisfaction.

The characteristic of practical theology is the critical correlation of theological insight and empirical observation that will result in a new theory of praxis, and the final purpose is to focus attention on the positive outcome of healthy leader member exchange in local churches and the extended zone of influence through enhanced legitimation of pastoral leadership.

KEY TERMS

Baptist leadership; Leadership charisma; LMX; Exchange theory; Followership; Legitimization; Servant leadership; Transformational leadership; Leadership credit; Quantum theology; professionalization; relational leadership, Baptist pastors, complex leadership.

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