Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The desire to understand, define and explain the nature of leadership has interested researchers and other scholars for the latter part of the twentieth and now into the twenty-first century. Yet, according to theorists like Rost, Bass and Greenleaf, despite thousands of theoretical and empirical studies, whether in the world of business, or Christian life, leadership remains a tantalizing enigma.

Literature, (e.g. Bass 1997:17) presents many different facets of leadership, Either as the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as particular traits or behaviors of an individual, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an affect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as an initiation of structure, and many combinations of the above.

In his book on leadership, Joseph Rost (1993:3), outlines the fundamental problem of lack of common definition and asserts that those who study leadership are mostly (*sic*) concerned with what he terms the "peripheries and content" of leadership.

"Periphery" refers to the traits, personality, gift cluster, management style and efficiency, in what I would interpret as the "managerial" aspect of leadership in organizations.

If we were to examine church leadership as the relationship between leadership and management, we immediately face a problem, with the question asked whether management is distinct from leadership, or whether management is an aspect of leadership, or whether leadership is the sometimes, occasional function of management.

Is leadership just one of the many assets a successful manager must possess? If so, care must be taken in distinguishing between the two concepts. The main aim of a manager is to maximize the output of the organization through administrative implementation. To achieve this, managers undertake the following functions:

- organization
- planning
- the hiring and firing of employees
- giving direction for the vision of the organization and keeping it on track
- controlling

In this scenario, leadership is just one important component of the directing function, and therefore a manager cannot just be a leader, he also needs formal authority to be effective. The formal authority associated with leadership can be seen in the examples of the position of school principal, the judge in a courtroom, as well as in the spiritual realm of some believers who sincerely believe that the pastor of a church is called by God, and carries authority by virtue of their position, even to the extent that this authority should not be questioned. This is explored in the research.

The problem of semantics in understanding words like power, authority and control, particularly in the Baptist context has interesting potential for research, and the over indulgence in their usage could result in comments like this:

> For any quality initiative to take hold, senior management must be involved and act as a role model. This involvement cannot be delegated. (Predpall, 1994).

This point of view sees management/leadership as the "managers of the corporate vision" of an organization, and thus they will always be "over and above" their followers. However, in the application of a management model of leadership in Baptist ecclesiology we encounter problems with the Baptist understanding of the priesthood of all believers, the understanding that Baptist leadership is usually a servant model, and my theory that leadership does not merely refer to the activity or personality of the leader.

In some circumstances, leadership may not be required. For example, self-motivated groups may not require a single leader and in fact may find leaders dominating. The fact that a leader is not always required proves that leadership as a part of management is just an asset and is not essential. While the problems of leadership/management are not seminal to this work, the references to management as leadership in the literature will require some clarification, which will lead to their bifurcation.

"Content" refers to what a potential leader ought to know about their profession or organization. In the context of church life, this would refer to knowledge of the latest programs produced by the Baptist Convention, books and theories about church growth, seminars and conferences, knowledge of biblical languages and theology which elevates the leader in professionalism and separates them from followers by their understanding of this valuable technical information.

Leadership among Baptists is convoluted. Hegemony of groups among local Baptist churches paints a grim picture, yet it is firmly entrenched in the life of many Baptist church members, and offers an attractive opportunity for research.

A multiplicity of books, (Greenleaf, Block, Covey, Heifetz, DePree, *et al*) advance mostly secular theories of leadership, as Bennis (quoted in Rost 1991:19) cynically remarks:

> As we survey the path leadership theory has taken we spot the wreckage of "trait theory," the "great man" theory, and the "situationists' critique", leadership styles, functional leadership, "leaderless leadership", the "new" leadership, and the "new, new leadership" *(ad infinitum).*

Sixty eight million hits on the Google search engine under the word "leadership" focus the attention of researchers on the enormity and complexity of the subject of leadership while universities and colleges engage specialized faculties to prepare individuals for their role in leadership, in what they often perceive as a uni-disciplinary study.

Nascent leadership theories, which have their origins in the 80's, have begun to focus on the complexity of leadership, and are exploring leadership in terms of relationships, and interaction theory, (Graen, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2002), moving away from the leadership control issues of transformational and transactional theories of the 1990's towards the complexity theory and networking, characterized often by uncertainty and unpredictability, typifying the influence of the postmodern era on leadership that focuses on relationships and integration.

In Christian literature, there is a wealth of books about leadership, some of them are a type of testimonial of great men, and the experience they have gained in the years spent as a pastor, (e.g. Prime & Begg, 2004; Hybels, 2002; Piper, 2004). This literature mostly details a paradigm of leadership that focuses on the successes of one or more particular leaders, and is known as "great man" theory or "heroic leadership". Other literature focuses on the struggles often associated with pastoral leadership, (i.e. Marshall, 1990; Kitchens, 1992; VanVonderen, 1995).

Despite years of leadership research Baptists also do not yet have a clear understanding of what it is and how it can be achieved. There appear to be a multiplicity of theories that address different aspects of leadership, but little cohesion as to how they all fit together, particularly in terms of a definition of leadership that will not conflict with Baptist principles.

A simple, scientific understanding of what makes a following would be good information for many leaders in our denomination who eagerly desire church growth because followers simply do not just materialize. According to Hollander (1997: 5) two important factors contribute to the making of a following:

- Legitimacy – the way followers acknowledge that the leaders role has been filled, and validating the basis for his or her attainment to that position. Legitimacy of leadership is complex, but we know that it is the result, among other things, of continual evaluation of leadership performance by the members and perceived values similarities between

the members and the leader.

- Credit – is another more psychological means of considering the leader-follower bond. As dyadic tenure increases, leadership credit is built or diminished, based on the followers' perceptions, and their experience of positive outcomes.

Efforts made in Baptist leadership studies, (i.e. Parnell, 1996) with its unique cluster of principles seldom include the pursuit of adequate definitions of leadership that are accurate and precise, particularly with regard to the autonomy of the local church. Rather, studies, (i.e. Campbell, 2003) focus on seeking to understand the incremental influence that individuals exert over others beyond mechanical compliance in some of the rapid growing churches.

This focus on the **leader** has traditionally been classified as "leadership study", but this typology does not sufficiently acknowledge other domains in which leadership operates, notably among followers, and in the relationships between leaders and follower.

In one theory of leadership called Leader-Member Exchange (Dansereau et al, 1975; Deluga, 1998; Blickle, 2000; Erdogan, et al 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2004) build a premise, which states that leaders have limited personal, social and organizational resources, therefore do not relate to all followers in a similar manner.

Some followers receive greater attention (or social exchange), which results in more exchange of information sharing, interaction, mutual support and informal influence. Other followers are treated in a more formal leader-follower, "business only" type of relationship, which naturally results in lower levels of social exchange. In the literature (Uhl-Bien, 1995)

After 30 years of personal observation, I conclude that the same can be said in the context of Baptist church pastors and members. For some reason, the pastor

and certain members are drawn together on a more intimate social exchange levels than others, which leads to further exchange of ideas, and plans and problem solving. The down side of this state of affairs is that other members may feel left out, particularly if they had a closer relationship with a previous pastor.

Perhaps because of an interest in a hobby, like golf or fishing, or rugby. Or perhaps because of a similar taste in literature. When that similarity is found and exploited, the beginnings of a deeper social and spiritual relationship may develop.

In much the same way that human relationships are complex, dynamic and full of surprise, Church leadership and followership involving human beings in relationship is equally complex and surprising, and presents many practical theological puzzles – the hunting ground for practical theologians!

Leader-Member Exchange theory (hereafter referred to as LMX) offers Baptists a means of understanding the reciprocal relationships that exist in our churches from a number of different perspectives:

- The development processes in relationships between pastor and members (see Appendix E)
- Leader-member value agreement
- The relationship between higher LMX and commitment to ministry
- Personal satisfaction and empowerment
- Lower dropout of members

Overall, the study of leadership in the context of local Baptist churches is particularly difficult, because notions of "power" and "authority", and other sociological leadership theories are supposed to be subsumed under the mantle of what is known as "servant leadership" and "congregational structure".

A study of Scripture can often lead to misinterpretation of leadership principles, particularly using examples from the Old Testament and apostolic era, where

God raised up lone figures as charismatic leaders to lead his people out of bondage. Mosaic principles, Davidic principles, and Elijah and Elisha principles of leadership offer intriguing manifestations of leadership practice for the modern day "Pastor/prophet leader". For example, Driver, (Ed. 1953, xxxvi) comments on the life of Elijah and suggests that he is closely associated with manticism and magic, and was different from the other prophets (nabi'im) of his day. His magical *(sic)* personality is conveyed through the stories of miraculous powers over dew and rain, the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, his physical prowess in running down from the mountain and beating the chariots, and, of course the use of his mantle to pass on his leadership to Elijah. While these accounts provide great examples of the activity of God in the life of one of his choicest followers, they do not, I believe provide a leadership model for the Baptist pastor.

It will be seen that the language of church leadership in the New Testament is the language of pastoral care: "helper, guide, corrector, shepherd, teacher, caregiver, provider, guardian" – roles commonly but not exclusively assumed by leaders appointed by the apostles for the task. The way of leadership was by example and relationship. Bellville (1993: 38) notes that the language of modern leadership study focuses "more on the authoritarian/hierarchical language of secular society than on the pastoral/egalitarian language of the redeemed community".

This can be heard in the Baptist community as it speaks of leadership in terms of congregational **governance,** and eldership **rule.** These words are pregnant with significance.

The study of leadership from a multi-disciplinary perspective has become a type of linguistic portmanteau for fashionable neologisms with support from mainly anecdotal evidence, affirming my personal contention that in general there exists confusion over the terms "leader", "leadership" and "management", which Rost (1993) had clearly concluded is the case in society. And while many Baptists may hate or distrust the terms "authority" or "power", in the minds of pastors the terms have always been concomitant with leadership.

A study of the tenure statistics of those in Baptist pastoral leadership (Pierce, 1998) will demonstrate a fundamental practical theological problem regarding the use and abuse of power in local churches in South Africa and the USA.

In the minds of some pastors (this relates to conversations with 6 pastors is church BUSA, in PUSA and PSA) there was a perceived connection between current leadership practice and the term management, which, although a necessity in the ministry of the local church and in the life of pastors and members, does not really falls within the scope of the research and requires separate study.

In the literature research, the bifurcation was obvious. Kotter (1997, 1999) defines the essence of leadership as "coping with change" and management as "coping with complexity". Management activities include planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. In contrast, leadership activities involve setting a direction, aligning people (with the direction) and motivating and inspiring.

However, while it is obvious that both activities are to be found in pastoral responsibility, this definition fails to focus on the relational aspect of leadership, and represents what is known as the transformational theory of leadership.

The media, a major player in forming opinion in society, routinely use the term "leader" to denote individuals in authority, or people who have a following regardless of the values they represent, or the product they play a key part in producing, and this presents the beginning of a fundamental problem, because there is no neutral ground from which to construct notions of leadership; leadership and management terms are loaded with emotional, historical and societal content, and carry with them implicit norms and values. For example, some equate leadership with "holding high office" or "exerting great influence" – and in so doing they reinforce the tendency to value position and power, and illustrate a taxonomy which is hierarchical in nature. That tendency will ultimately

translate itself into leadership praxis.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians 4:12, he clearly explains that the purpose of a pastor as a leader is to "equip" the saints. According to Richards (1980:92) the term "katartismos" means "to straighten out that which is disjointed", hence to put the body in order for strength and growth. This, I contend, is not the macro purpose of one individual, but rather the interaction of many that leads to significant and often surprising change.

As a solution to the problems inherent in leadership therefore, Heifetz suggests that:

> We would be on safer ground were we to discard the loaded term leadership altogether and simply describe the dynamics of prominence, power, influence, and historical causation. (1996:19)

The problems can be clearly identified. Church management models that focus on "doing the right things" and "doing things right" are the hallmark of many modern churches. Pastors are less seen as those possessing the gift and calling of God, but are viewed as the (CRO) Chief Religious Officer of the church "corporation", and the members as the "shareholders". Pastors are conferred, (or call themselves) the "vision-casters" for the church's future, and are responsible to "manage" the vision, and in so doing often become more and more removed from the ordinary membership of the church as they become elevated to some esoteric solitude with indispensable gifts. They manage budgets, and chair meetings, hire and fire staff, and conduct God's business in the style of a corporation. They are in touch with the latest programs, books and other resources that they bring to the table as a professional, rather than a part of a greater whole.

Such leaders, as was epitomized in the research in Church BUSA, have become "managers of meaning" as to why the church exists, and what people's purpose is, or "managers of influence" to spread the Good News of the Gospel to the

community and beyond, in a direct top to bottom leadership style. Their churches function according to the cast vision of the pastor, whose job it is to get members to buy into that vision by transcending their own personal agenda for the good of the whole church.

One only has to search on www.pastorjobsearch.com to discover that church members often concur with this concept. The focus of pastoral search committees often lies in identifying the man who "has a vision for their church". Their questions to candidates betray their agenda:

> How many members did you have in your previous church?
> What was the annual budget?
> How many staff members did you manage?
> How many baptisms in the past year?

These questions give an indication of what Rost (1993) refers to as the "industrial paradigm" of leadership, which describes the tendency in pastoral ministry of moving away from servant leadership as it is described in the Scriptures toward a more managerial style of church governance, in which leadership is focused on the skills, personality and traits of the pastor.

Pieterse (quoted in Vos, ed. 1994:5) explains that pastors (*sic.* Preachers) live in a different world from their church members. It is a world of books and theological concepts, better houses and concomitant salaries, which he states leads to a difference in spirituality from their church members.

I would argue that this draws attention to a potential danger in leadership, particularly in the Baptist church context, of not giving credence to the substantial contribution to leadership on the part of the regular Baptist church members. If leadership is only "about the leader", then the substantial disparity between the "readers of books, theological thinkers who live in fine houses, and engage in some esoteric spirituality", and the "ordinary folk", will never be brought together, both to the detriment of homiletic engagement, and leadership praxis.

Traditionally, Baptist pastors approach leadership with one phrase foremost on their mind, namely that of the "servant leader", which is firmly rooted in their understanding of the teachings of Jesus and other Scripture. (I.e. Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 2:21-25, Galatians 5:13)

But it seems in recent years the phrase "servant leader" has suffered from a form of linguistic devaluation, in the sense that pastors have juxtaposed the order, viz. a "leader" first, and a "servant", a distant second.

In my observation, pastors are becoming increasingly detached from their congregations, as their attitudes and actions reflect the "management approach" towards pastoral work. In 30 years experience, I notice many of the recent graduates from seminaries I have met do not have fundamental shepherding skills, know little of pastoral visiting or caring for the sick or elderly, counseling the bereaved, they lack fundamental Bible knowledge are illiterate in the biblical languages, forcing them to turn to lexicons and commentaries for others opinion in their preaching. They generally demonstrate an understanding of postmodernism, but I observe that they have failed to make the connection with regard to leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers.

Boje & Prieto, (2000) describe a postmodern organization as:

> That comprising a networked set of diverse, self-managed, self-controlled teams with poly-centers of coordination, which fold and unfold according to the requirements of the tasks. Likewise, these teams are organized in flat design, employees are highly empowered and involved in the job, information is fluid and continuous improvement is emphasized throughout.

Castelles, (2000: 210) identifies the elements of the new organizational paradigm as business networks in a multitude of different cultural settings. There are technological tools that enable a greater degree of communication and

knowledge transfer. Global competition that forces networks to continually evaluate and redefine themselves. The State, which acts as a unifying and coordinating agent in generating new synergistic efforts which will produce new innovation, and finally the emergence and consolidation of the network enterprise in new and surprising ways.

In conversation with pastors, and looking at the books about leadership on their library shelves, I perceive that they are looking for answers to the challenges of serving God today, but are caught in a narrow and convoluted leadership paradigm influenced by literature and other media, examples of great men and women, and the historic interpretation of leadership within a congregational church government in their local church. And even more so because of their inability to define the essence of leadership.

The legacy of the previous generations of Baptist leaders, particularly in South Africa has focused strongly on the paradigm of the Pastor as "servant", above other models. It was the strongly advocated message of Dr Chris Parnell, influential pastor, theologian, General Secretary of the Baptist Union, and author. Rev Trevor Swart, also past General Secretary of the Union, made it his theme in his presidential year in 1994. The influence of these great and godly men has led many (including myself) to adopt the paradigm of "servant" as their model for leading. And many churches too, have an historical tradition of servant leadership. But with the changes in society, the fluctuating "fashions" of leadership, made popular through modern literature and media, the model of "servant leader" seems to be no longer seen as relevant to Baptist life and practice.

Ingram (1981:127) reminds us of a solemn fact that the Reformation and the consequent splintering of religious groups had as one of its progenitors the debate and controversy over clerical (in that case, papal) authority and this debate has filtered down through the ages, through different church traditions. Among Baptists in South Africa, there has not been significant writing concerning leadership in our congregational context.

It is interesting to note though that historically, there has been an overwhelmingly strong emphasis on the concept of "servant" in leadership, in what I would call a "minister as servant-only model".

In private conversation with an older Pastor, (PAR: 03.03.1999) when I remarked that the calling of a Pastor was also to "lead" a Church, it was interpreted as a "non-Baptist statement", as the correct expression should have been, "a Pastor is called simply to serve Christ through the local church", with no explanation of how this is concretized in practice.

In the first plenary session of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, 1997 Winter School of Theology, it seems, from the record as if there is also some questioning of the issue of leadership by members of the Convention (1997:12). The context is difficult to determine from the records, but a transcript of the conversation states:

> G. Nthane . . . I thought the Convention was us, the Churches. The Convention is the leadership, we, the leadership act as if it is two different things. The Churches and the leadership must find ways of working together.

It seems apparent from Mr. Nthane's statement that there is a dislocation between the Churches that make up the Baptist Convention and the actual leadership of the Convention, drawn from the member Churches. His statement sets a prime example of the necessity for leaders and membership to work out leadership together in terms of relationships.

There is a strong argument from Baptist ecclesiology that it is significantly unique among church structures in that it elevates the role of the follower (*Sic.* church member) as more than a voting participant in the affairs of congregational life, understanding that the priesthood of all believers has both privileges and responsibilities in the life of a local church. This complex, interactive influence

relationship, shifts the focus from direct leadership, where traditionally the pastor, or a small group of men and women with him make the decisions that determine the future, and puts leadership squarely upon the products of interdependent interaction in an exchange relationship between all interested parties in what Fris, (2006) and O'Murchu, (2004) refer to as "quantum leadership". It is precisely the interactive influence relationship of leadership that makes LMX theory as attractive as a tool for explaining leadership in the Baptist congregational context.

Evidence that Baptist leadership differs significantly from that of other denominations can also be demonstrated by the large number of Baptist pastors who are "fired" by the leadership of their churches, particularly in the USA. The problem of forced termination of Baptist pastors in the USA has received attention from the popular media and represents an enormous problem. In his Master's dissertation Pierce (1998), the author refers to his work as the "Exodus of Baptist pastors" – however, in further reflection, it is apparent that the exodus of the children of God from Egypt was an historic and redemptive event, while forced termination he discovered was the result mainly of leadership problems, and did not reflect any significant aspect of redemption.

This research therefore seeks to understand Christian leadership from the perspective of Baptist church members in 4 churches in South Africa and the United States of America, and what perception church members (as active participants in leadership) have of their own local church leadership paradigm; the possible effect this has had upon their satisfaction in the local churches, and whether they perceive that they personally play a vital part of leadership. In return for member satisfaction through their inclusion in the leadership quantum, and as a form of leader/member exchange, the members of the church in turn, I believe, legitimize the pastor as their leader, by granting him/her greater freedom, more authority, and particularly by helping create a climate for growth. ("leadership credit" or "zone of influence").

Many churches have failed to realize that the **whole** church, which is the hermeneutical community in which God wants His Word to be received and

interpreted (Stott, 2002: 72). And in the Baptist community of faith this thesis will focus on the relational characteristics of leadership, and seek to understand what role church members play.

Leadership is also a matter of power, but in the Baptist tradition, with its particular cluster of emphases on servanthood, using words like "power" and "dominion" cause personal discomfort. However, they serve the purpose of directing the researcher's attention to the ambiguity and paradox of what is ideal and what is real in the modern church. We increasingly hear of "power struggles" in churches as individuals and groups struggle for control. We find books about abusive church members and pastors, and their struggle for control, which is now a part of what leadership has become; in the words of John Stott, (2002: 36)

Power! It is more intoxicating than alcohol, more addictive than drugs.

In Baptist church praxis, there is, in reality no single model of leadership that can be identified as peculiar to our Baptist faith. This is borne out of personal observation over 30 years and in the research in which the four churches were studied. Though they were approximately of the same membership size, two were in South Africa, and two were in the USA. The results of the research demonstrated extremely different leadership praxis among each of them, and the reason for this may be that churches use Baptist principles, such as the autonomy of the local church as a license for ecclesiastical individualism in leadership praxis. Their individual praxis of leadership is complex, and may have evolved historically, as a reaction to previous experience, whatever; but there was commonality in that the Churches were all over 200 members, situated in a suburban environment, claimed allegiance to a larger Baptist body, and the lead pastors had a significant tenure of over 3 years.

Christianity has historically and biblically been grounded in oneness and mutuality, right relationships, equality, reciprocity and interdependency, and unless we envision leadership WITHIN this paradigm we depart from what we Baptists perceive as the biblical paradigm it and fall into the fallacious use of

preaching and teaching or the gift cluster of the leaders to maintain power, so that the leader is always perceived to be over, above and apart from their people.

In this rapidly changing, continually conflicting environment, I therefore argue that Baptist leadership must become the arena for practical theological exploration, as O'Murchu (2004:23) exhorts:

> Our theological parameters are expanding, not contracting. The context in which we do theology is becoming as important as the science itself.

If practical theological study is our attempt to understand our reality in both theory and praxis, we Baptists must learn to dialogue with our world not only with our agenda, but theirs as well. Hence, I also argue for the need of a "multi-disciplinary", rather than a "uni-disciplinary" approach to understanding the problems concomitant to leadership.

This is reinforced by the statement from Heifetz (1996:14)

> There is no neutral ground from which to construct notions and theories of leadership because leadership terms, loaded with emotional content, carry with them implicit norms and values.

Regarding leadership therefore, it is my opinion, concurring with Greenleaf (2002: 125) that:

> No single person is complete; no one is to be entrusted with all. Completeness is to be found only in the complementary talents of several who relate as equals.

Transferring Greenleaf's servant leadership model of *primus inter pares* from his Quaker roots to my Baptist paradigm, with the focus on congregational church governance, has helped me understand that Baptist leadership theory must be

studied in terms of reciprocity and relationships. Namely those relationships which are found between church members, deacons, elders and pastors, and those which are found in an individuals personal relationship with Jesus Christ, their Savior and the Head of the Church.

Greenleaf's relationship theory concurs with the latest research of theorists like Uhl-Bien (2005); Franiuk, Cohen & Pomeranz (2004). It can be described elegantly in terms of "quantum leadership", or Leader Member Exchange Theory (LMX).

Limning this leadership theory is not an easy task, because of the variety and nuances of leadership among autonomous Baptist churches. Yet the research demonstrated that two of the 4 churches had made significant adjustments to their by-laws to give leaders enough power to accomplish change, and thus ceased (in theory) to be congregationally governed.

Baptist churches in the 21st century have discovered that nothing is fixed, events are not predictable, and control is an illusion. There is a spontaneity that seems to have caused the rise of mega churches, which is causing main-stream churches like Baptists to re-examine their leadership paradigm, yet no adequate scientific theory with sound definition of leadership has emerged. Conceivably, a dozen Baptist churches in the same town may have 12 different approaches to leadership, and while terms like contemporary and traditional are floated, they do not adequately help us understand Baptist leadership.

We Baptists must cease defining the church in terms of its **leaders**, (e.g. "this is Rick Warren's church") but rather speak of **leader-ship** in relation to the church. Every church member is a leader in his/her own right. Some are the head of a home, the leader in a school, educator in a class or nurse in a hospital. Every single human being has a particular area of influence as a leader, which they do not leave outside the church door when they enter. They bring a sense of collective leadership to a group, which is more and more being overlooked, as the opinion of "ordinary" church members is being sought less and less due to the

professionalization of the pastor's role and the adherence to transformational leadership theory. This theory does offer insight into Baptist leadership, but with the evolution of leadership science there are now better tools to enable pastors understand leadership theory in a Baptist, congregational context.

I believe that follower arousal and motivating people into action for the Kingdom of God is a goal that many churches should seek, and it may be that healthy churches whose followers are aroused may in turn give follower legitimization to the leaders and play an important part in the recursive aggregation of church growth through the dynamic process of leadership. This previous statement affirms my conviction that leadership is not a person, but rather a dynamic, collaborative, reciprocal process between leaders and followers (in the tradition of Rost, 1993). Through the collaborative interaction of leaders and followers they produce creative expressions of identity that are often not the result of careful planning, but the serendipitous results that emerge unbidden out of an interactive network of individuals and groups causing an autocatalysis of church growth. This recursive aggregation, which is too complex to control, I believe sets the church free from charismatic leadership, and sees the future of leadership as a bottom-up process in which the pastor fosters the healthy climate for growth to take place.

There is irony, too in this situation, in that although the church has been around for nearly two millennia, the term "leadership" is a relatively recent addition to the English language. According to scholars like Rost (1993:6), the term did not come into use until the late 19th century, although the verb "to lead" and the noun "leader" have been around for much longer. Furthermore, the suffix, "–ship" denotes condition, character, office or skill, for example clerkship, friendship and statesmanship (Webster's: 1989) which really clouds the definition issue further, as researchers seek to remove the idea that leadership are "the acts of the leader" from the understanding of Baptist church members.

Direct leadership is often necessary to resolve the inherent imperfections of personality and behavior. Some call it "putting out fires". But it is my belief that to

the extent that problems become the preoccupation of leadership, it will be inversely proportionate to forming initiative, motivation and inspiration. It is I believe the function of pastoral leadership to turn attention from Church growth to Church health, and work toward creating conditions that foster interactions through which positive change emerges.

In this post modern era there is a new way of looking at leadership in terms of relationships and culture, more than on control and measurement. This can be evidenced by popular church magazines, books and seminars. Yet in much of the Baptist literature, the concept of leadership is still veified in the person of a single leader or a group of leaders, and their activity in that pursuit, which, like Euclid's mathematical theorems, have remained unchallenged for centuries, until recent times. Much of the information on leadership in the literature is a type of *post mortem* on an individual person's remarkable success, style or life, usually couched in terms of "secrets" that are now ready to be shared without detailing any biblical conceptual model as a framework, or offering any definition of leadership praxis.

Like Greenleaf before, I believe that there is still an emerging new principle of authority, which holds that the only authority that deserves allegiance is the kind that is freely and knowingly granted by those being led to the leader in response to and in proportion to the clear evident servant stature of the leader. It is a leadership that expects the unexpected, and it is intensely relational.

Rost (1993) among others was a pioneer in exploring the concept of leadership that extends beyond individuality and power. He represents a school of thought that rejects the concept that leadership is centered about the leader, (their style, ability, behavior and charisma), but rather discusses the nature of leadership in terms of "influence interactions" between people who intend real changes that reflect mutual purposes. Uhl-Bien (2002), Reich (1987) and Hollander (1997) have also made significant contributions towards the subject that I cautiously refer to as "reciprocal leadership".

The study of Christian leadership in the literature has an almost open-ended agenda, and, by far the most thought provoking work in the literature on leadership for myself as a conservative Baptist practical theologian, was found in the work on "Quantum Theology" by Diarmuid O'Murchu (2004). His theological assertions are daring, and some of his conclusions disturbing, and at times it was extremely difficult to see beyond such daring assertions, and, while I reject his notion that we are to seek meaning for our existence from *within* the universe rather from *without* (pp115) and the fact that quantum theology is not really concerned with the nature of God, I found that his writing on this emerging science of quantum mechanics provided a challenging conceptual framework for the practical theological problem concerning the reciprocal and relational nature of Baptist leadership, simply from the sense that quantum describes the impelling creative force that is non-linear, organic and characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability. It:

- seeks to understand the interrelatedness of all aspects of existence at microscopic level, and
- it reminds me that theological pursuit in my field is really a journey without a destination, and
- The church is somehow greater than the sum of all its parts.

In this thesis, I simply did not want to reproduce the thinking of other conservative scholars, but sought to expose Baptist leadership in the light of a broad spectrum of theological and sociological thought and O'Murchu's appeal to quantum in the field of theology fits quite neatly into the study of Baptist leadership.

He asks that we turn away from the classical model based on cause and effect, determinism, reductionism, rationalism and objective truth, (sometimes referred to as the "Newtonian paradigm") and turn to the emerging science of quantum mechanics to provide an epistemology for his theology and the practical theological problem.

While I make no claim to understand the depth of the math and physics of the new quantum science, there are certain philosophical presuppositions with a new nomenclature that I conclude has bearing on Christian leadership in general and Baptist leadership in particular.

Leadership theory can be explored and explained using quantum, as we seek to advance practical theology as a true multi-disciplinary science to enable conservative practical theologians like myself, understand the problems of faith and praxis. Steering a course away from deterministic theory and direct leadership only that focuses on one particular personality type which may be best suited for leadership in a certain social context, or certain management practices that are best suited to grow a particular church in a particular context is my challenge. Quantum leadership offers a probabilistic understanding to Christian leadership, because the universe itself is probabilistic rather than deterministic. It requires both direct and indirect leadership, the latter of which will encourage member participation.

From my personal background and experience it has always been an enigma to me that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is bigger than the sum of all its parts. As a pastor, I have had dealings with many of the "parts", (sic – people) and frankly they do not evoke the most holy thoughts and the most passionate leadership practice. But it has always been the sense that somehow the Church is bigger than these parts, this person, this committee, and this failed leader. To put it simply: There is more to the church than meets the eye!

1.1   THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Literature study, (Enroth, 1992; Onley, 1994; Baldwin, 1977; Parnell, 1996) and personal observation and 30 years experience helping colleagues in ministry has helped identify a theological puzzle in Baptist churches, in the tendency among pastors to move away from the servant model of leadership toward what is known as the "great man theory". The result of which brought to light diminished levels of member satisfaction in some churches and greater degree of conflict in

churches where low quality relationships exist between leaders (*sic.*) Pastors) and followers.

Furthermore, the lack of unanimity in defining leadership, including the general perception that leadership (the processes of leading) simply means the skills of the pastor, and their inclination towards good managerial leadership practice provided the "hunting ground" for the development of this practical theological problem.

In this thesis, I propose to test a new hypothesis for Baptist leadership, based on a definition adapted from the work of Joseph Rost (1993) and Mary Uhl-Bien (2002) that calls for leadership to involve the whole community of faith in the local church.

This research study among the members of Baptist churches demonstrated that members of churches too, have expectations and perceptions of leadership, and when these expectations are not met, there may be a correlation with the lack of legitimization of leaders by followers in the church, and the loss of the sense of satisfaction among those members, leading to raised levels of conflict.

From the point of view of transformational leadership theory, it is necessary that pastors have expectations of their followers whose higher needs they seek to satisfy, but generally pastors expectations are that they should lead, and the members should follow but it is also my contention that church members too have expectations of leadership.

This directs attention to what is referred to in leadership theory as an "exchange relationship" in the literature, an area of academic interest.

To put it succinctly:
Baptist leadership practice is prone to exclude a large majority of the membership from leadership, the result of which may have led to member apathy and dissatisfaction. This is evidenced by empirical research among church members

of 4 Baptist Churches of similar size in somewhat similar social context. The results of the research are correlated to the theory of leadership known as leader member exchange theory (LMX) to determine whether member satisfaction relates to leader legitimation, and whether high quality relationships exist within these churches.

1.2   THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

After the completion of my Masters dissertation (Pierce, 1998) I perceived:

1. Baptist church leadership is evolving along secular lines where the focus is on management of people as resources rather than on biblical servant leadership. This has led, I believe to diminished levels of satisfaction among followers who have aspirations of more inclusivity in leadership; and the lack thereof may account to possibly greater levels of conflict in churches.

2. There is no clear, consistent definition of Baptist leadership within the congregational paradigm. I conclude that if an individual Baptist pastor cannot define what he/she is doing. Then what they are doing in the name of leadership could merely be "leadership by default" or "management by design". Which in practice allows for the substitution of management of people as resources in the place of biblical leadership.

3. The term "servant leader", which for decades has been the "label" applied to the biblical model, is ambiguous for many Baptists, yet the term is cemented into Baptist vocabulary. In the empirical research, using Greenleaf's definition, I will also seek to identify whether pastors of churches are seen by the members to be "servant-first" or "leader-first" leaders by their followers, and whether the research demonstrates any connectivity between these two approaches and the legitimization of leadership by followers in local churches as a result of member participation.

4. The focus of much of Baptist leadership is the same as leadership focus in the corporate world, namely, "trait theory" or the "great man theory" (leadership is what the leader does) rather than on what

Rost (1993) and Uhl-Bien (2005) call "influence exchange relationships". And while the social leadership culture is changing to a "post-industrial" paradigm, Baptist church leadership seems to be fixated in whatever individual churches determine it to be, with the overwhelming emphasis on transformational leadership theory of the pastor casting his/her vision for the church.

5. Baptist leadership is also observed in the managerial context of "What leaders are supposed to do" rather than the biblical context of "What leaders are supposed to be". In the research, I explore the expectations and perceptions of the followers with regard to leaders, and in their opinion which qualities they are to represent, using LMX theory (a relationship-based approach to leadership).

Based on the above 5 observations, using the literature, I was able to adapt the leadership definition of Joseph Rost (1995) so as not to conflict with my normative biblical hermeneutic and to correlate the adapted definition to Baptist leadership with the interactive dynamic relational theories that are current in sociological leadership theory.

Leader member exchange theory (LMX) is particularly applicable to the congregational government paradigm, where follower participation at the very highest level of leadership is desired, and where unhappy followers readily express their support or distrust of leadership.

Researchers like Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995; 2005) have done extensive empirical research in high LMX relationships that detail enhanced levels of satisfaction and effectiveness as well as mutual influence, honest and open communication, greater access to resources, and more commitment (beyond role expectation). This sounds like a desirable state of affairs for any local Baptist church! Which makes it attractive to a researcher like me?

Leadership, I believe is more than just the leader, and even more than the leader-

follower exchange relationship, but as recent studies are demonstrating (Uhl-Bien, 2005; Gronn, 2002) leadership is seen more as an interactive dynamic of how people decide and act and present themselves to one another. This focus is a distinct break away from the prevailing notion that position in a church or within the denomination is a reflection and indicative of leadership status or power.

It is a radical new understanding that leadership does not only come from the calling of God on the life of a Pastor only, but also on the lives of the congregation members, who together, with those appointed as pastoral leaders make up the leadership of the church. It is a decidedly non-hierarchical relationship theory, and as such presents itself as an area of interest to Baptist practical theologians like myself.

1.3   THE IMBALANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Baptist churches in theory possess a distinctive structure with a diverse application, commonly called congregational government.

Within this structure, there is no commonality with regard to the leadership paradigm. I refer to this as the "imbalance of leadership" that exists within every church.

This may, in part, be due to the principle of the autonomy of the local church, which has in many ways given license to churches to develop individual leadership paradigms, hence in the research: (names encrypted to protect identity)

- some churches have an elder type rule, like PSA in South Africa,

- some, a pastor-team led rule like BUSA, in the United States of America

- some are ruled by powerful families like B2USA, in the United States of America

- some are deacon ruled, like CSA in South Africa

- some are committee ruled like CUSA, in the United States of America

- Some are ruled by individuals like P2SA, in South Africa.

In conversation with members of a church that had extended a call to me in the USA, I inquired as to the leadership style of the previous long tenured pastor, and was told in no uncertain terms that he was a "benevolent dictator", which perhaps represents one end of the spectrum, while on the other hand attending a farewell dinner for a retiring pastor, it was expressed that one of his "meaningful" contributions to the life of the church was that he always raked the leaves in the church yard. This is just an indication that the gamut of pastoral leadership practice in Baptist churches is extensive and complex.

Furthermore, the dilemmas of Church leadership have historically been issues of national importance for Baptists when, for example, at the Pietermaritzburg Baptist Union assembly in 1983, the Hatfield Baptist Church was forced to leave the Union because of its leadership paradigm of "ruling eldership". (Minutes of Annual Assembly, Pietermaritzburg, 1983)

One has only to move in Baptist circles today to realize that in fact "lip service" is paid to congregationalism and servant leadership, (and that, in some watered down ambiguous form) in reality, churches are still "ruled" by elders, deacons, pastors, at the very least in an oligarchic way.

Most churches that question structure are now left to their own devices for the sake of Baptist unity, or because of the "sacred cow" of the autonomy of the local church, which prohibits outside interference from the greater Baptist family. But in fact what often transpires in practice is that those who are legitimated as leaders push the boundaries of leadership as far as they can, especially during longer tenure, causing an ever-widening gap between the leaders and followers, and

sometimes cause dissatisfaction in the church and denomination.

This research has indicated that this level of dissatisfaction is higher among the older members of the local church who have a longer history and deeper roots in the Baptist community than in newer members and recent converts whose attachment to the church is more a matter of relationships than through historical roots.

Observation in churches, which are changing their leadership paradigm is that older members seek to maintain their own historically evolved "imbalance" of leadership and trying to change the paradigm can have catastrophic effect for the pastor, the members, the witness of the church in the community and the good name of the Savior.

In the confusion that exists regarding Baptist leadership, recurring phenomena caught my attention as a researcher, namely the increasing trend towards forced termination in Baptist churches, and particularly since the most significant reason for termination was defined in research (Pierce: 1998) as "leadership style".

In my Baptist understanding, the most important two aspects of life are built on relationships. Primarily, a personal, covenant relationship with the Father God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in his atoning sacrifice on the cross. And secondly relationships on a horizontal level with other human beings.

In this latter relationship, Hendricksen, (1954: 309) comments on the biblical injunction of John 15:17 which states that we are to "keep on loving one another" as follows:

> Our love for one another is an extension of Christ's love for us. It is "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts" so copiously that it overflows into the lives of others.

Furthermore, the metaphors used in the New Testament to describe Christ's

Church all involve relationships of proximity, and the common usage of the term "one-another" in the Scriptures is indicative of this unity and closeness of the desired relationship that God seeks among his covenant people.

I believe that the re-focus on the relational aspect of leadership is so important for the Baptist denomination in the face of literature and testimony that seeks to exalt the leaders above their followers. It will encourage pastors to cease their focus on church growth, but rather on church health!

The understanding of Baptists in times past, I am led to believe (from urban legends and conversations with older Baptists) was that a Pastor was "the" servant leader of the Church, by virtue of their calling from God, and their ordination into the high office as preacher of the Word. His authority was supposed to be from God, and also by virtue of his position.

However, it transpires that authority of individual pastors in the local community and in the overall Baptist Union, was more related to the size of the church they pastured, the financial contribution that local church made to the national body, and the popularity of the preacher (particularly in terms of preaching ability).

Max Weber, (1954) one of the brilliant progenitors of sociological theory of leadership has paved the way for us to understand the different types of authority prevalent in society, refers to this as "legal" authority (authority by virtue of office) and "charismatic" authority (by virtue of personality and gifts). However his schema and its historical development may not be enough to describe the ideal Baptist leadership paradigm that steers well clear of control and authority. He elaborated the movement forms associated with charismatic leadership, including the emotional character of the community and the appointment of officials based on their loyalty to the charismatic leader. However his notion of charisma is commonly used to refer to a personality type, which, according to Melucci (1996:336) may lend itself to the neglect of the social relationship between leaders and followers, in that it minimizes the legitimating role of the latter.

As an observer of Baptist church life, there has been too much focus, in these last decades, on individual leaders and there have been too many cases of moral failure, of poor leadership, other agendas, and a distinct leaning towards the calling of God as a "job" that have led to the transference from "legal" authority to a more "charismatic" authority based on the skills, talents, giftedness and personality of the leader, in these present times.

I do believe today there is a renewed interest in pastoral leadership as a relationship, not the least of which is the result of a postmodern influence, which is, itself embedded in relationships. This was borne out in the research among 3 of the 4 churches.

Research (Bauer & Green, 1996; Deluga, 1998; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Schriesheim, Castro & Cogliser, 1999) demonstrates that when followers are included in the processes of leadership, a higher level LMX takes place and greater member satisfaction will lead to the greater fulfillment of mutual vision, and higher degree of leadership legitimacy, seen in increased latitude in the leader's actions and longer tenure. Which church would not desire such intended outcomes?

The central focus of this thesis is on Baptist leadership as an influence and exchange relationship, and will focus on the re-emerging role of the congregation as active participants in local church leadership based on the biblical servant leadership and followership model.

LMX is a strong descriptive theory. It focuses on the contributions people make toward the life and ministry of a church in terms of commitment and involvement. Secondly it makes the dyadic relationships in the church the center of study. It is also noteworthy because it directs attention to the communicative aspect of relationships. Finally there is a growing strong body of social scientific research that substantiates how the practice of LMX theory in secular management has resulted in positive outcomes, such as organizational commitment, work climate, innovative ideas empowerment,

1.4   TANGENTIAL ISSUES

There are a number of tangential issues that this research has uncovered which impinge on the subject of Baptist leadership that are significantly worthy of note and represent sub-problems in this study, which may be worthy of further research, namely:

1.   The noticeable decline of congregational identity, where the name Baptist, for example is being removed from advertising. The question I reflected upon as a researcher was not "Does the Baptist denomination have a future?" but rather, "Does the future have a Baptist denomination?"

2.   The confusing role of deacons as the "ruling/governing" body in churches, particularly in the SBC in the United States

3.   Member dissatisfaction and apathy as a direct result of non-inclusion in leadership

4.   Significant abiding conflict in churches resulting in (among other things) the delegitimisation of pastoral leadership by the followers, and the rising occurrences of pastoral termination.

5.   The urgent need for pastoral leadership to turn away from the distraction of church growth towards the direction of church health.

1.5   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of practical theological research for me as a Baptist practical theologian is to discover theological puzzles or research "gaps" and apply the concepts of understanding, explanation and change to arrive at a new theory of praxis.

This will result in human beings being used more powerfully for the Kingdom of God, in what DeKiewit, (2007: 6) calls "being useful channels in the hands of God".

The discovery of information as an end in itself is not productive; however I do recognize that as a practical theologian, I approach my subject with preconceptions and not a *tabula rasa*. For this reason I include something of my personal journey as a part of the research methodology

Heitink (1999:163) offers a useful limning of his practical theological theory, which is sufficient as a "theory of the actions" of human beings in empirically orientated practical theology. His methodology involves a 3-fold process:

- Understanding: The hermeneutical perspective that introduces theological content. This includes present day phenomena that Baptist leadership is facing.
- Explanation: The empirical perspective that introduces social-scientific theories. This will be accomplished by examination in the research of 4 Baptist churches of similar size and social context. For the purpose of international interest, two churches were in South Africa, and two churches were in the USA.; and
- Change: The strategic perspective that orients action toward intentional outcomes, which include primarily the empowerment of ordinary people in church leadership.

1.5.1 THE HERMENEUTIC METHOD

The goal of this work is to gain a deeper understanding of a puzzle, which may lead to an altered theory of praxis. The means of achieving this goal involved a method of continuous reflective interaction between theory, literature and empirical results, known as a hermeneutic methodology.

The hermeneutical method is employed in other academic pursuits, in simplicity it can be explained by means of this diagram: (Routio: 2007)
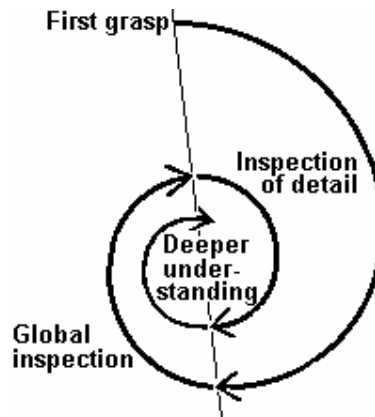
This would be particularly applicable if there were limited data or information, but in the case of Baptist leadership the opposite is quite true. There is a wealth of information, a long history of tradition, and a global perspective. However, I have always had renitence in the application of scientific enquiry to the church, until, in the pursuit of deeper understanding, I was taught Heitink's model.

Heitink's argument is that God cannot be the object of scientific enquiry, and following the shift towards a more anthropological understanding of theology (Heitink, 1999: 110) he suggests that it is not God, but human beings' experience of God that should be the object of enquiry.

Heitink's own words throw light on the discipline of practical theology in general, and the method employed in this thesis in particular.

> We may distinguish between the direct and indirect object of theology. Faith is the direct object of theology, God, the indirect object, cannot be the topic of enquiry. God is only the direct object of our faith.

Van der Ven (1993: 101) indicates something of the difficulty of the task of connecting the social and religious aspects of life when he states:

> In traditional hermeneutics . . . an ecclesiology that endeavors to connect the social and religious aspects of the functions of the church is an impossible if not hopeless task.

As a Baptist practical theologian it is too difficult (nigh impossible) a task to assume an attitude of dissoluteness from the problem, as I have been personally involved with Baptist leadership in my own *sitz im leben* for 30 years.

According to Gadamer, human beings inevitably belong to a cultural tradition because of their historical finitude (1989: 280-282). Put another way, cultural tradition determines their attitudes and behavior. This is because cultural tradition is the source of human beings' "prejudices." A prejudice he states refers to "a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined" (1989: 270). Gadamer asserts that human beings are all possessed by their prejudices, which not only constitute their historical identity but are the very thing that enables them to experience the world (1980: 133). It is now evident that prejudices are the cultural resources with which social actors respond to the "text". The "text" is the social actors' own cultural heritage and can be regarded as a message transmitted by the past. One of the principal "prejudices" of leadership for example is the inclination among pastors to adopt a "great man theory", which leads (using the Gaderian example) to a confrontation with what was discovered in the research.

Van der Ven (1996:102) concurs with this position when he states that:

> On the one hand the subject cannot be approached separately from the involvement of the subject with the object. The subject has to be optimally aware of this involvement. The subject has to be as open as possible to the object by temporarily postponing this involvement, as it were, and putting it between brackets. This never works completely, but the Endeavour is of essential importance.

Heitink (1999: 163) has described practical theology as the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society, and this is accomplished through deepening our knowledge of God and of ourselves. His methodology can be explained by referencing his popular diagram.
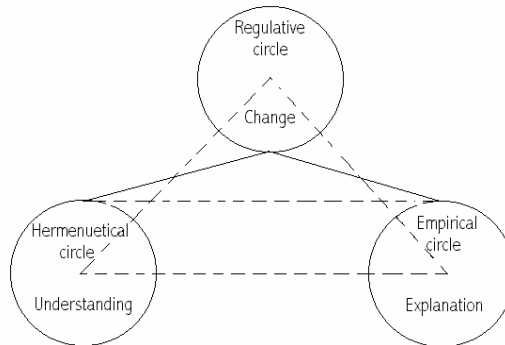
A methodology of practical theology. Heitink's model.

This model brings together the natural sciences, represented by the empirical circle, and the human sciences, represented by the hermeneutical circle, and the third circle represents change which is inherent in any form of action.

The hermeneutical circle includes the researching of ideas (definitions) and theories (LMX), which not only include written texts, but also the actions of human beings in this research as they perceive leadership within the Baptist paradigm.

The empirical circle helps the research by looking at the specific praxis of leadership in local congregations, by seeking to discover whether in fact relational exchange between leaders and followers is taking place, at a significant level, and whether the result of this exchange had led to increased legitimation of leadership and other positive outcomes.

The regulative circle forces the practical theological researcher to aim at change because practical theological theory cannot be content with an analysis and

interpretation of praxis, but must also deal with the consequences of actions. In the tradition of Heitink (1999:202), practical theology is the theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society. This must lead to some form of action.

The church is involved in two types of praxis. One is the task of passing the faith to new generations, and the other is the task of communicating the faith within the context in which it is located. These two types of praxis are interrelated in Heitink's practical theological theory of action to three different arenas for ministry: the individual, the community of the church, and the broader society.

The focus of this research is for the intended purpose of changing the focus of pastoral leadership, from church growth to church health through the nurturing of more significant relationships between pastors and their congregations.

1.5.2   LIMITATIONS TO THE RESEARCH

There have also been limitations to the research because the Baptist denomination is extremely diverse and schismatic. The Baptist principle of the autonomy of the local church in fact impedes social research and analysis, and makes it difficult to generalize data. Particularly in the USA, any attempt to question the leadership by an "outsider" like myself may be seen to question the authority of the pastor in the church. I was very cautious in making sure that the pastor understood that I did not want to "stir up trouble" in the church, but to rather collect data for academic research.

Furthermore there is somewhat of a cultural issue in seeking to understand why there are still "white" and "black" churches in the USA, particularly in the Southern states. Sewell, 2003:1 states that in white churches (in the USA) members often make the majority of the decisions of the church, whereas black pastors are most often the central decision makers in their congregations. Unfortunately, because of the lack of time and exposure to black churches. I was unable to explore this phenomenon.

There have been limitations because of living both in South Africa and the USA, where there are different societal factors that affect the paradigms of leadership and the tension of moving between one country and the other.

1.5.3   THE NEED FOR THIS RESEARCH

People attending Baptist Churches are becoming less interested where their allegiance lies in terms of denomination, than they are in whether the Church itself is a caring, warm community. This is evidenced by the poor turnout at business meetings and the loss of interest expressed in matters of national denominational importance, and the evidence of a lack of understanding of the structure of Baptists by the ordinary person in the pew.

The "loyalty level" to denominations is probably on the "endangered species" list, and it's not a case that it will become extinct, but that it will surely evolve into something different that what it is at present. And crucial in this evolution is the position, function, role of the local church pastor. The question that needs to be asked from a practical theological perspective is "In terms of leadership, what are denominations like the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, and the Southern Baptist Convention going to become in the 21st century?"

1.5.4 THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Gaining popularity as a preacher may soon open the door for the publication of literature, which sometimes deals with individual's perceived reasons for success. And while much of this does focus on the spiritual dimension and the work of the Holy Spirit, there is a lot of emphasis on personal leadership style, and a heavy accent on the autocratic paradigm. C. Peter Wagner's book, "The New Apostolic Churches" (1998) is one such powerful example of a highly popular book which details the success stories of great Christian leaders, but who, for the most part do not operate within a congregational model but rather are moving towards an "apostolic model". These books powerfully impact on pastors, whose desire is not

only to serve God faithfully, but to evidence growth in their Churches. The popularity of Warren's The Purpose Driven Life (1992), has had a huge impact on churches and leadership in the USA, both by creating a sense of expectancy among church members that "things are going to change", and presenting a paradigm for focusing the church's activity on 5 main purposes.

Literature is replete with books, seminars, CD's (almost every format imaginable) of how a leader should lead. But this literature (readily consumed by pastors) has major flaws, in that it is deterministic, and mostly personality ("great man/woman") centered. I have concluded that leadership is not the personality, traits or skill of the leader! This is not only true in business, organizational, even military leadership, but also in Baptist church leadership in a congregational paradigm as well.

Emerging models of contemporary church leadership structure and the rising instances of calls for change in leadership among South African Baptists at their annual Assembly necessitate that Baptists readdress the matter of leadership in a congregational paradigm as a matter of importance, and move away from the fundamental problem – the problem of control by the minority of the majority (oligarchy)

After reading and reflection on the subject of authority, and trying to understand the writing of Max Weber, and Johannes Van der Ven, regarding the different types of authority, I came to a dual realization that leadership in the 21st century is moving rapidly away from authority, which in turn necessitates the formulation of a new theory of leadership praxis.

Finding material relevant to the search was relatively simple. The difficulty was in focus. Trying to find a definition of leadership in the literature that would not conflict with my normative biblical paradigm was no easy task. To this end, I came upon numerous references to the writings of Joseph Rost, Max De Pree, Mary Uhl-Bien among others. It was their work that led me to the formulation of a definition of Baptist leadership that I could test in the research.

However, my single fear was that Rost's work in the early 1990's (1993) was not sufficiently current, and I believed that progress in leadership theory must have been made.

I was right. I discovered the research by Dr Mary Uhl-Bien, and her theory of LMX and its later development into complex relational leadership theory.

Having the work of these two writers at my disposal, I recognized that I had enough primary literature sources to give me a significant understanding of the subject of Christian leadership. I began to review the history of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa with relevance to authority and leadership, and saw that there were continual problems among the pastors in local churches, among the executive members of the denomination, between the Baptist Union and the Baptist Convention.

In assessing each piece of literature, I gave consideration to the credentials of the author, and whether the theories they propounded were supported by empirical evidence, and particularly recent scientific findings, and whether they were in any way prejudicial or objective.

In the early stages of my literature review, I found that the scope of my search was broad (e.g. O'Murchu; and studying engineering articles on structural integrity in order to validate the biblical integrity of Baptist structure) but as the problem statement crystallized, so the literature field narrowed.

I re-read my Master's work on "The Exodus of Baptist Pastors", (Pierce: 1998) and was reminded that it was in the area of leadership that most pastors and churches, according to my research, had difficulties which led to forced termination.

I used a different variety of publications, from books I was able to purchase or loan, to periodicals, and popular media, and the internet. I examined literature

from other academic disciplines, like education, social scientific theory, psychology, military leadership theory, and theology. I used the library at the University of Pretoria, as well as the Library at Bell University in Brisbane, Australia.

I discovered that leader-focused Christian literature mostly directs attention on small group and personal efforts, which still require active followers, and the need for leaders to develop skills that engage those followers in productive and satisfying mutual pursuits.

The libraries of colleagues I visited contained numerous "ring-binder symposium" data with expensively produced advertising, making pronouncements about improving leader effectiveness based on a sharpening of their personal and interpersonal skills.

The focus remained deterministic and individualistic, sometimes with a propensity towards excellence at the cost of ones belief system. This literature is replete with "how to" books that focus on the skills of the leader, the personality of the leader, the ethics of the leader. The result I believe has been church growth without depth and the inclination towards superficiality and immaturity, and a diminishing of Baptist leadership distinctives, based on the congregational paradigm of member inclusivity in leadership.

Furthermore, in the more popular Christian literature, the focus of books on leadership are usually written by pastors who are more maverick geniuses and aggressive leaders and are exceptionally gifted and have great success stories. Churches like Willowcreek and Saddleback are prime examples of the type of leadership to which many pastors would, I believe aspire. It is a relatively simple task to veify leadership in the persons of Rick Warren and Bill Hybels and try to "be like them" in one's own local church situation.

Quite simply, what this body of literature fails to address is that most Baptist churches have a significantly different structure than California and Chicago.

Most churches, especially in the USA, I believe are content within the framework, which their culture and tradition has provided. Few churches fall into the attendance range of the mega church, no matter what their aspirations. And few men and women have the genius of Hybels and Warren.

It would be intellectual suicide to attempt to study the phenomena of these mega churches as isolated segments of reality, and then to attempt to duplicate method and model them in another *sitz im leben.*

Yet, in the quantum universe, all of life must be understood to operate within the context of relational interaction. Everything is affected (rather than caused) by everything else. Thus, through the medium of literature, satellite conferences, guest appearances and the internet, what is happening in Willowcreek leadership became the "hot topic" at pastors' conferences and other leaders' meetings. We cannot possibly begin to understand ALL the dynamics at a micro level that caused such phenomenally powerful churches to emerge but we can extrapolate leadership concepts from these churches and others at a macro level to assist in the formulation of a significantly more Baptist biblical theory of leadership. I wonder just how many churches have studies Warren's "40 Days of Purpose", (Warren, 1995) **without** significant change or dramatic growth, and in fact perhaps the sensations of regret and unmet expectations has fostered more harm to the purposes of the church than good?

If we are to try to understand fully the growth phenomena of not only mega churches, but any church from a leadership perspective, it would only be possible if we could examine all the constituent parts in their totality to the most acutely microscopic level, and even if we were able to do so, we would still be faced with the understanding that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Therefore quantum theorists speak more in terms of probability and interrelations and interactions. And it is precisely at this point that quantum theory becomes a useful tool in understanding Baptist leadership as a reciprocal exchange relationship.

In the secular environment too, a body of literature has emerged that focuses attention on leadership as a relationship and interaction between leaders and followers. (E P Hollander, 1996; J C Rost, 1993; Uhl-Bien, Graen, 1996 *et al*). Some of the relevant literature directs attention on the dynamic relationship between leaders and followers in a relationship of reciprocity.

Empirical research in the 1990s (Hollander, 1996; Lord & Maher, 1991 and Wallace, 1996) demonstrated that followers are perceivers who have expectations and attributions about leader performance and who accordingly legitimate or de-legitimate the leader based on certain criteria (consensus and consent). They also define and shape the latitude for a leader's actions, in what Hollander (1997) describes as an "idiosyncratic credit" system, and Rost as the "zone of consent".

This process of legitimization and de-legitimization of leadership based on followers' satisfaction is important to this thesis, as I believe it will demonstrate the level of leader member exchange in the research.

There are basically 3 aspects of leadership in a congregational paradigm that I believe can be studied, namely:

- The leader/s
- The followers
- Relationships between the above two

This is a perfect fit for LMX theory, which focuses on the operationalization of relationship-based approaches to leadership.

The central focus of this theory is that effective leadership processes occur when leaders and followers maintain mature leadership relationships, which lead to the many benefits that these relationships bring.

Newer research (2005) now focuses on the relational leadership emphasis in terms of non-hierarchical relationships that are nurturing and supporting, thus they exercise influence and thus could be legitimized as a means of leadership.

The importance for Baptist leadership among other things is that Graen and Uhl-Bien draw attention to the life cycle of leadership making, which is particularly relevant to the legitimization of leadership in a non-traditional church situation where authority is not seen in the formal "position" of the pastor, but is a development of relationships between leaders and followers, with special reference to the fact that not all these relationships occur at the same level.

Their interpretive diagram is found in Appendix C

1.5.5   PERSONAL OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE

The poet Francis Thompson said:

> Thou canst not stir a flower without troubling a star

This is a beautiful reminder that as a practical theologian, I am a part of something greater, as I seek to analyze and reflect on something like reciprocal leadership, I must try to understand that what is written here may in some way affect the whole. In reflection, using quantum theory this work may cause what is referred to as a "collapse of the wave" so that new patterns of leadership may materialize.

But why does this need to happen?

In personal experience, after almost two years of seeking a position as a Baptist pastor in the USA, I discovered an unusual paradox in pastoral search. On the one hand, the most common phrase concerning leadership I encountered among church members who had formed a "search" or "call" committee was "there needs to be checks and balances in the leadership of the pastor", which to me signified the attempt by lay leadership in the local church to restrict the control of power of the pastor or pastoral team, while on the other they were extremely

interested in concrete evidence of successful ministry, identified by larger numbers in church attendance, finance, baptisms, and the personality of the pastor. The committees sound "an uncertain trumpet", and perhaps it is indicative that Baptists struggle in apophatic darkness describing mostly what leadership must not be.

After almost fifty pastoral interviews, it became apparent from the type of questions I was asked by the committee that the questions were in reaction to the power "plays" of the previous pastor. It would seem from my experience in interviewing in this situation that during the *interregnum* lay leaders seek to strengthen their own position in anticipation of the next incumbent, by adding more rules to their governing document known as the "by-laws" of the church. There seemed to be an uneasy tension in 3 of the 4 churches where the research took place, and some pastors who were contacted to participate in the study flatly refused.

After 30 years of pastoral ministry, in which I perceived the annoying statistic of pastoral termination and shorter tenures in Baptist Churches. (Pierce: 1998) I was forced to resign from ministry in a church in the Southern Baptist Convention by a powerful group of families who had organized a coalition in the church and used every means to force my resignation. Healing from this trauma has taken years, emotionally, spiritually, financially, the impact on my world was traumatic, but it was also a time in which I could use the skills taught by practical theologians like Prof Jaco Dreyer of UNISA, and the pastoral skills of some great pastors to reflect on my own experience and address the academic community with my research into the bigger picture of Baptist leadership.

Forced termination has become a growing trend and puzzle for me as a practical theologian, and as Mason (1996) so eloquently puts it:

> puzzles are the hunting ground of practical theologians

And so, rather than seek a "cause and effect" solution, I chose to focus my intellect (using quantum theory) on the collapse of one possibility, so that other may materialize. As a simple Bible-believing Christian, I had an understanding of this in a very simple way, namely, "When the Lord closes one door, He always opens another."

In many churches I have visited, after a short period of time I notice what I can only refer to as a "dark dissatisfaction" among some of the members, particularly with regard to leadership. One only has to ask the right questions to discover undercurrents of disloyalty, even hostility towards the pastor, or the deacons or the elders, whoever is in authority. It does not require a great leap to become part of this group.

There's a song, "Leaders and Followers" (1998) by a punk rock band called "Bad Religion" that is a scathing comment on the charade of what much of Christian leadership has become:

There's the image of a man
Who commands a high opinion
But he hides his hatred with a sheepish grin

And beside him flanking closely
Are the boisterous hollow masses
Who lap up whatever trickles in

This intercourse of nature,
This vulgar social pastime
Reflects the lowest mark of our progress

And the few who ride peripheral
Maintain subtle advantage
Fighting hard to abstain and redress

Do you know your place
In the big charade?
Are you more than they?

Leaders and followers
Leaders and followers

Recognition by proximity

And a brand new face
Just a smidgen of success pie
And a pinch of social grace
You can play with the big boys
Or you can tell them what to do
But sooner or later there's another one like you

The voyeuristic public
Of which we're all a part
Maintains perspective on the human play

And while many have desires
Of joining in the show
Many turn and go the other way

Tell me do you know your place
In the big parade?
Are you fear and shame?

From my personal perspective, the vulgar, superficial image of leadership and the "voyeuristic public" that this song portrays is reason enough to seek to address the puzzle.

My previous research (Pierce, 1998) indicated a growing synthetic separation between leaders and followers, marked by increased professionalization of the role of the pastor, and the replication of what the literature refers to as a "transactional" type of leadership in churches. This is counterbalanced by member apathy and frustration. Simultaneously, Baptist churches I believe are moving away from the traditional structure of congregational government towards a mostly hierarchical or oligarchial form, based on, I believe the accumulation of legitimization "credit" or leadership latitude afforded to the pastor (and his "team") as leaders, by the congregation.

In this emerging paradigm, less attention is given to the purpose and place of the congregation as leaders, the decline of the congregational government model and the role of deacons as leaders and servant leadership in general while the real agenda is more focused on a business metaphor of goal attainment (particularly numerical growth, and increased budget), status, recognition and esteem, qualities of a secular managerial style than biblical leadership. I believe

that the expectations of followers with regard to leadership are not being met, and that this directly influences the legitimization of the pastor of a local congregation as the spiritual leader. This is of particular relevance to Baptist practical theology because of their unusually high regard for a normative biblical hermeneutic for all of church life and practice.

As a conservative Baptist practical theologian, I too am faced with the acute tension between Scripture and science. On the one hand, I find that the sciences provide useful diagnostic tools in assisting me to understand the practical theological puzzles I face, but because of my high view of Scripture, I defer to it firstly for any solution to those puzzles. This Baptist view of Scripture is clearly explained by Hudson Reed: (1983:357)

> Differences of opinion among us have not been able to break the bond of loyalty to the Scriptures as the Word of God…We have always thought of ourselves as people of the Book. All Christians hold to the authority of the Bible, but Baptists have a peculiar view on the supremacy of that authority.

1.5.6   ETHICAL ISSUES

As a Baptist practical theologian, I have a sense of responsibility to guard the interests of those involved in this work, particularly the empirical research aspect. A number of respondents took the initiative to complain about their pastor, their church, and Christianity in general, and in no way did I wish to put the position of pastors as leaders at risk.

I needed to consider the effects of these findings at a local church level, should any person be able to identify individuals and churches involved in the study, so I devoted meticulous care to guard the identity of individuals and churches. I removed any data that contained identifiers or pseudonyms that would give an indication as to the location of the people involved in the study.

This privacy was also facilitated by the fact that research was done both in South Africa and the United States of America.

I believe that in some ways a practical theological researcher enters into a personal or moral relationship with those we study, and though we are committed to better praxis, this does not override the rights of others.

I made it known publicly to as many as I could that I was engaged in empirical research that was addressed primarily to the academic community. In one church I was prevailed upon to identify the problems with their particular leadership, but I reinforced my belief in total anonymity.

Respondents were allowed to freely consent to taking part in the study, or not, and I particularly gave the understanding that there was no requirement for them to participate.

I used no data-gathering devices, such as cameras, tape recorders or such like. I stored the data on my personal computer using a USB disk key, which I kept on my person. I did not ask anyone's help in typing the document

I also made a point of asking the permission of the pastor of the local church to conduct research into leadership among his church members, so as to avoid conflict and not to give the impression that I was out to point any negativity to men and women who are on the front line of God's work, irrespective of what their understanding of leadership may have been.

I was also sensitive to the fact that these pastors may be under a load of personal conflict and pressure. I made a point of telling them that I had been terminated from ministry, and this thesis was part of my response to that termination.

I realize that this type of research is, in a sense, an intrusion into the lives of the people being studied, and their walk with God. In some cases, respondents indicated that the replies were their personal feelings, and in other cases, they told me that there were others that thought like they did. However, I did not make

any attempt to collect data from people to whom I was referred, but to randomly choose individuals.

I also made it known to respondents that the results of these findings could be made known to them if they desired

I did however, make certain that the respondents understood that the gathered data would be shared among people who had an academic interest in leadership, and probably be put in the library of the University of Pretoria.

I have given the appropriate acknowledgement to those who significantly assisted me with this thesis, and referenced the material taken from the literature according to the exacting specifications of the University of Pretoria.

1.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 presents the confusing scenario of popular leadership theory which has developed over the last century and which has influenced the church's understanding of Christian leadership. For the most part leadership has focused on the traits, skills and personality of the pastor. But in the minds of Baptist church members, this presents a practical theological puzzle because of their adherence to the principle of congregational church government. Complicating the issue further is what I refer to as the imbalance of leadership, which represents the confusion that exists in local churches with regard to leadership practice because the autonomy of the local church gives license to any slant of leadership.

The minds of Baptist people are loaded with information and perceptions about leadership, some of which has been gained through their history with the local church, some from the careers they have pursued, or what they have heard. Much of it comes from the secular or political paradigm.

The practical theological problem that exists is that there are diminished levels of member satisfaction with leadership which leads to conflict and possible lack of

ongoing legitimization of the leaders in local churches by the members. The research seeks to understand the members' perceptions of leadership and whether high levels of exchange take place according to a theory of leadership known as Leader-member exchange or LMX.

The research was conducted at 4 Baptist churches, 2 in South Africa and 2 in the USA, where there were similarities in the size of the congregation, their situation in a suburban environment, and where the pastor had tenure of more than 3 years.

Finally in this first chapter, the theory of literature review was detailed with reference to primary and secondary sources, as well as the observation and life experience of the researcher which led to the discovery of the practical theological puzzle.