
THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE research

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE	The Relationship Between Pastoral Leadership Characteristics and Church Size and Growth
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OBJECTIVE	The purpose of this study was to determine if leadership practices of senior pastors were significantly related to the size and growth differentials of the churches they lead.

METHODOLOGY

The sample population was limited to Willow Creek Association members churches in North Carolina and Virginia (N = 377). Church size was the number of people who regularly attend the church and church growth was measured over two time periods (six months and four years). Ninety pastors participated in the study (24% response rate) by completing the Leadership Practices Inventory. Cronbach alpha in this study were .65 Model, .82 Inspire, .78 Challenge, .67 Enable, and .86 Encourage.

KEY FINDINGS

None of the five leadership practices were significantly related with church size. Inspire a Shared Vision was significantly related with six-month church growth in membership, while Model the Way was significantly related with church growth over a four-year period. Encourage the Heart was significant in its relationship with the measures of change in church membership over both time periods.

The author reports: The primary finding, that three leadership characteristics of the LPI are related to church growth, has not previously been established in research but echo the thoughts of recent theorists "...therefore, the findings of this study suggest that pastors would do well to develop and practice these leadership characteristics. However, it does not follow that pastors can neglect the leadership characteristics which were not found significant in this study (Challenge the Process and Enable Others to Act)" (pp. 79-80).