



TITLE	Pastoral Leadership Practices in Evangelical Multiethnic Congregations: A Multi-Case Study
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OBJECTIVE	The purpose of the study was to identify and describe the best leadership practices of pastors of selected evangelical multiethnic congregations in the United States.

METHODOLOGY

The population for this study included 30 paid pastoral staff of five evangelical multiethnic congregations located in different geographical regions of the U.S. The pastors completed the Personal Best Questionnaire (PBQ), in order to help them describe what they identify as their personal best leadership experiences (Kouzes & Posner 1987), and other members of the staff were interviewed. The typical pastor was male (80%), married (93%), between 25 and 34 years of age (73%), Caucasian (80%), held a graduate degree (50%), and was licensed/ordained (90%).

KEY FINDINGS

“Although the researcher anticipated that the data from the case studies might not neatly fit the categories proposed by Kouzes and Posner, that was not the case. The five major categories were clear yet broad enough to serve well in the organizing and interpreting of the data” (p. 145). “The current research was useful in identifying more specifically some of the best leadership practices by pastors of multiethnic churches. Many of the findings of this research confirm those behaviors and practices that have been suggested in previous research. There are also direct applications not only for those engaged in multiethnic church leadership but also for those institutions responsible for training church leaders in the United States. Since these behaviors seem to be consistent with existing literature on multiethnic church ministry, institutions responsible for training pastors should evaluate whether their curriculum adequately prepares individuals who will be serving in ethnically heterogeneous contexts. An evaluation of the current research and the literature could help these institutions to include teaching material which is research validated and specific to the multiethnic setting” (p. 167). The author concludes: “General leadership theory provides adequate principles for all church leadership including those serving in

diverse contexts. What is needed is not another theory of leadership but tools to improve the effectiveness of leaders in diverse settings” (p. 169).

“An overwhelming amount of the participants (87%) mentioned that having clearly defined values was critical to the success of their best leadership experience” (p. 156), and “the vast majority (77%) of the respondents modeled the way by doing that which they expected their constituents to do” (p. 157).

Comparisons between senior pastors versus assistant/associate pastors revealed: “Senior pastors were more likely than associate pastors to initiate change because of personal convictions or challenging the status quo. Senior pastors were also more likely to use teaching and preaching to lay a theological and biblical foundation for change than associate pastors. This last implication may be related to the fact that senior/lead pastors usually have the primary responsibility for teaching and preaching in the church. Another implication from this study is that senior pastors are less likely to use open source approaches such as: forums, task forces or advisory boards, when searching for innovative ideas. This implication is particularly true of senior pastors who are also the founding pastors of churches.

Another implication drawn from the participants’ responses is that with regard to the practice of *inspiring a shared vision* senior pastors were more likely to use the term vision or related words (envisioned, imagined, visualized) than assistant/associate pastors who used terms such as determined, decided or who did not make allusion to any of these terms. Another implication is related to the fact that although the use of slogans was the primary means for all pastors to communicate the vision of a church or ministry, all senior pastors pointed to preaching and teaching as their primary means to communicate vision. Equally important is an implication related to the practice of *enabling others to act*. While 17 associate/assistant pastors practiced the cultivation of personal relationships with their constituents to accomplish these goals, none of the senior pastors mentioned engaging in this practice. Instead 67% of the senior/lead pastors used “vision casting” in order to foster collaboration. With regard to *modeling the way* senior pastors were more likely than associate pastors to undertake initiatives expressing their commitment to multi-ethnicity in all possible spheres: the personal, organizational and public. Associate pastors took initiatives in some of these spheres. With regard to encouraging the heart senior pastors preferred public recognition to acknowledge individuals’ contributions while associate pastors had no preferred setting” (pp. 159-160).

“Female pastors accounted for 20% of the participating pastors in this research. Women pastors were more likely to *challenge the process* in response to perceived needs and leadership directives than their male counterparts. This finding may be explained in part by the fact that none of them held senior/lead pastoral positions in their organization. It is significant to note that almost all woman pastors viewed themselves as risk takers while none of the male pastors viewed themselves that way. None of these women described their actions in the

area of *inspiring a shared vision* by using the term vision or related terms. The implication drawn from this observation may indicate that they do not see themselves as visionaries or that perhaps the act of envisioning is not perceived as one of the prerogatives of their role within the organization. It is also significant to note that in the area of *encouraging the heart* all women without exception preferred to acknowledge individual contributions publicly. The implication from this finding may suggest that their leadership style is more inclusive and participatory than that of their male counterparts since they might not be as concerned as to who gets the credit" (p. 162).