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Trinitarian Leadership as a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective on Empowering Leadership in Local Churches in Western Ontario

Alex Golovenko
Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP AS A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PERSPECTIVE ON EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL CHURCHES IN WESTERN ONTARIO

by

Alex Golovenko

Adviser: Stanley E. Patterson
Title: TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP AS A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PERSPECTIVE ON EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP OF LOCAL CHURCHES IN WESTERN ONTARIO

Name of researcher: Alex Golovenko

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Stanley E. Patterson, PhD

Date completed: October 2013

Problem

Most Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Ontario are not growing. Elders are present in every Seventh-day Adventist church. However, practices and responsibilities of elders differ from church to church. There is no network among elders for support and leadership development. The expectation is that the vocational pastor will solve problems and produce church growth, yet, contradictory, indecision exists among elders about whose responsibility it is to grow a church. Elders do not have certainty about biblical expectations laid upon them. They do not entirely function according to the job description outlined in the denominational handbook. Ideas about what the
biblical leadership is differ from church to church. In my opinion improving the Empowerment quality in Leadership will positively affect the growth of local churches.

Method

Leadership practices of local churches in Western Ontario District were examined through Focus Groups. Intentional teamwork among elders of all district churches was under development for three years. Lack of consistency among churches prevented further teamwork development. For the purpose of examining motivational factors of empowering leadership, the teamwork was continually worked on at the London (South) Seventh-day Adventist Church. All five conventional categories of leadership improvement were put in place before the new concept of the Trinitarian Leadership model (see formal definition in the Definitions of Terms in Chapter 1) was introduced to see if its motivational factor will improve elders’ commitment to church health and growth. Standards and expectations were monitored through the Natural Church Development (NCD) survey tool. It was used annually to measure quality of leadership of elders and ministry leaders along with other seven quality characteristics of church health. Recommendations and suggestions were made to enhance the work of a local elder.

Results

The initial cooperation and the teamwork of district churches produced a momentum for growth, which was not sustainable in the long run. Process of putting in place all conventional requirements for leadership did not produce an improvement in the Leadership Empowerment quality according to the NCD survey. The local church, where
the project continued and the Trinitarian Leadership model was introduced, experienced significant improvement in elders’ efforts and practices. As a result the final NCD scores revealed a strong increase in Empowering Leadership, corroborated in patterns of giving and general members’ participation in church life.

Conclusion

More research is needed toward developing the Theology of Leadership. The Trinitarian Leadership model has to be tested in other churches as well. The experience of local elders of the London (South) Seventh-day Adventist church is influencing churches in the district as they take preaching appointments to surrounding district churches monthly. The positive learning of the Trinitarian Leadership model by London (South) elders is yet to impact other district churches. It is anticipated that the church growth in London will attract the interest and provide an opportunity to guide other churches for growth.
TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP AS A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
PERSPECTIVE ON EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL
CHURCHES IN WESTERN ONTARIO

A Project Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Alex Golovenko

October 2013
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A project document presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Alex Golovenko

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Adviser, Stanley E. Patterson

Director, DMin Program Skip Bell

David Penno

Dean, SDA Theological Seminary Jiří Moskala

Russell Burrill

Date approved
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................. vii

LIST OF TABLES ...................................................................... ix

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................ ix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................... x

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

   Current Adventist Situation in Western Ontario ...................... 1
   Commitment to London Community ........................................ 5
   Statement of the Problem ..................................................... 8
   Statement of the Task ......................................................... 8
   Justification for the Project .................................................. 9
   Definitions of Terms ......................................................... 11
   Delimitations for the Project ................................................. 12
   Description of the Project Process ........................................ 12
   Expectation From the Project ............................................ 14

2. TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP ...... 16

   Why Trinitarian Leadership? ................................................. 16
   Trinitarian Lenses Reveal Models ......................................... 16
   Learning Leadership From God ............................................ 21
   Practical Trinitarian Examples in Biblical Narratives ............. 24
   God - the Alpha and Omega of Leadership ........................... 24
   Fractal Reproduction on Earth as it is in Heaven ................ 25
   Non-Trinitarian Leadership Models ..................................... 27
   A Question to Church Elders ................................................. 27
   Biblical Description of Apostolic Leadership ...................... 28
   New Testament Church Leadership .................................... 30
   Difference Between Terms Elder and Bishop ....................... 31
   Apostolic Church Two-tiered Leadership ............................ 33
   Elders as Overseers ......................................................... 33
   Eldership as Teamwork .................................................... 34
   Biblical Eldership is not Hierarchical ................................. 36
   Stewardship for Empowering Leadership ............................. 37
   Is Empowerment Really Biblical? ...................................... 40
### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW OF TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinitarian Interest Renewed</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership – Window or Icon</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away From Secular Models of Leadership</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Leadership for Human Leadership</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis and Theology Must be Aligned</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Church Development Paradigm</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns About the NCD Model</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist Version of NCD</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinitarian Development of NCD</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of the NCD Model</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowering Leadership in Literature</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Empowerment</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puzzle of Empowerment</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to Leadership</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment as Motivation</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority of Empowering Leadership</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trinitarian Pattern in Secular Research</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools for Evaluating Leadership Effectiveness</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Tool Measuring Empowerment</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity With Tools Used by Church Consultants</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>History of Leadership in Christianity</strong></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbiblical Roots of Hierarchy</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete Reformation</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning to Biblical roots</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Leaders in Evangelical Circles</strong></td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Renewed Interest on Leadership in Adventism</strong></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Theology of Leadership</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist Heritage of Leadership Practices</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Research Asserting Need for Empowerment</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Leadership</strong></td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

A. PASTORAL TURNOVER IN WESTERN ONTARIO .................. 186
B. AUTHOR’S PERSONAL SPIRITUAL JOURNEY .................. 188
C. QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP ..... 201
D. NCD VARIABLES FOR THE EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP .... 203
E. STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT ......................... 205
F. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS ................................. 207
G. SUMMARY DATA FROM FOCUS GROUPS ...................... 209
H. “MINISTRY CONVERSION” SERMON FROM MARCH 2009 .... 220
I. IDEAS FOR MINISTERIAL DISTRICT COORDINATORS ...... 228
J. SEQUENCE FOR MAXWELL’S 21 LAWS OF LEADERSHIP .... 230
K. DISTRICT NCD SURVEYS FROM 2005 TO 2007 ............. 234
L. VISION AND STRATEGY AFFIRMED IN 2011 ................ 238
M. REACH GOALS ............................................. 240
N. NCD SURVEYS OF LONDON (SOUTH) FROM 2008 TO 2011 243
O. 2012 NCD SURVEY AFTER TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP .... 246
P. THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AGAINST CHANGE DIAGNOSIS .... 249
Q. POWER POINT PRESENTATION WITH AN OUTLINE ...... 251

REFERENCE LIST .................................................. 260

VITA ............................................................... 274
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Trinitarian Lenses of NCD ................................................................. 17
Figure 2. Trinitarian Lenses on parables in Luke 15 ........................................ 18
Figure 3. Three Dimensions of Samuel’s Leadership ........................................ 20
Figure 4. Three Dimensions of Jesus’ Call to Simon Peter ............................... 21
Figure 5. Trinitarian Leadership – God as Leader ............................................. 22
Figure 6. Trinitarian Ministry of Christ ............................................................ 23
Figure 7. Three Colors of Love ........................................................................ 24
Figure 8. Three Colors of Leader ..................................................................... 24
Figure 9. Triune Practices of Leadership ........................................................... 26
Figure 10. Threefold Duty of Elders ................................................................. 29
Figure 11. Threefold Functions of Elders ......................................................... 30
Figure 12. Unity of Leader’s Office ................................................................... 36
Figure 13. Three Dimensions of Ministry ....................................................... 43
Figure 14. Trinitarian Diversity and Unity of Ministry ....................................... 43
Figure 15. Meyers Model of Trinitarian Leadership ......................................... 61
Figure 16. Benson’s Threefold Leadership of Christ ........................................ 63
Figure 17. Sweet’s MRI Trinitarian Model ......................................................... 64
Figure 18. Trinitarian Leadership of Jesus ......................................................... 64
Figure 19. Rainer’s VIP Trinitarian Model ......................................................... 65
Figure 20. Three Colors of Ministry ............................................................... 71
Figure 21. Three Colors of Love Virtues ......................................................... 71
Figure 22. Three Colors of Leadership ............................................................ 71
Figure 23. Three Colors of Community................................................................. 72
Figure 24. Energies of Community........................................................................ 72
Figure 25. Two Axes of Empowering Leadership.................................................. 73
Figure 26. Three Extremes of Disempowering Leadership..................................... 73
Figure 27. Anderson’s Trinitarian Leadership......................................................... 76
Figure 28. System-sensitive Leadership model ...................................................... 82
Figure 29. Threefold Empowerment...................................................................... 85
Figure 30. Three Roles of Elder’s Office................................................................. 94
Figure 31. Cole’s Threefold DNA of Church Order.............................................. 95
Figure 32. Barna’s Trinitarian Leadership............................................................... 96
Figure 33. Barna’s Effective Leadership ................................................................. 97
Figure 34. Ford’s Leaderhip model of Jesus......................................................... 97
Figure 35. Trinitarian Participation Leadership Model .......................................... 98
Figure 36. Edwards’ Threefold Function of Ministry of all Believers ................. 99
Figure 37. Trinitarian Leadership.......................................................................... 105
Figure 38. Elder’s Handbook Trinitarian Leadership ............................................ 107
Figure 39. Fenton’s Trinitarian Empowerment ..................................................... 109
Figure 40. Proposed Comprehensive Trinitarian Leadership ............................. 112
Figure 41. Trinitarian Leadership Presented to the Church .................................. 126
Figure 42. Summary of the Trinitarian Leadership ............................................... 141
Figure 43. Spike in Empowering Leadership in 2012 ......................................... 144
Figure 44. Initial Increase of Empowering Leadership, NCD scores ................. 149
Figure 45. Decline of Empowering Leadership in 2008, NCD scores ............... 153
Figure 46. Critical Imbalance in 2007, NCD Scores .................................................... 155
Figure 47. “Wave Effect” of the Minimum Factor, NCD Scores ......................... 156
Figure 48. NCD Three Colors of Leadership.......................................................... 160
Figure 49. Three Colors of Local Leadership......................................................... 161
Figure 50. Further Decline of Leadership in 2010.................................................. 163
Figure 51. 2005 & 2011 NCD Results Comparison for London (South) ............ 164
Figure 52. Author’s Personal Strength in a Community ........................................ 166
Figure 53. Author’s Personal Empowerment Balance Profile............................... 167
Figure 54. Growth of Leadership Quality in 2012................................................ 174

LIST OF TABLES
1. District Church Membership ................................................................. 3
2. NCD quality characteristics on the basis of 2 Pet 1:5-7 ................................. 48
3. Strategic Long Term Plan for London Churches ....................................... 129

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS
MBTI Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
KJV King James Version Bible
NCD Natural Church Development
NLT New Living Translation Bible
NIV New International Version Bible
SDA Seventh-day Adventist
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This learning journey was completed with the assistance and encouragement of many people I wish to acknowledge. I thank God for providentially placing people in my life and ministry who contributed to my learning and encouraged me to go forward.

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I am grateful to the London Seventh-day Adventist church and its team of elders for walking with me through six years of discovering leadership practices and willingness to try new approaches together. Especially to elder Clara Baptiste, who was always first to respond to my searching emails with advice and corrections.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduces my concern for the lack of teamwork among leaders in Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Ontario, and suggests a solution for church growth by improving leadership practices. The goal is to facilitate a shift in the leadership paradigm among elders from system-dependent and hierarchical structure toward that of mutual empowerment. The intention of this project is to contribute towards developing a theology of leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist context.

This chapter provides an overview of the problem, a statement of the task, justification, and expectations for the project; it also sets the boundaries for the project and describes its process and methodology.

Current Adventist Situation in Western Ontario

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Western Ontario, in my opinion, is facing a challenge to grow and develop in terms of church membership that should not be ignored. In fact, church membership has not matched the population growth of the past decades, and will face many challenges in the future as the population growth for the next 25 years in Western Ontario is projected to be as high as 32.6% (Ministry of Finance, 2012). Past decades have seen the closure of Seventh-day Adventist churches in Petrolia, Selton, Darrell, Exeter, Strathroy, Drezden, and a few other original Adventist churches that pioneered the work in Western Ontario. The Adventist Encyclopedia (Neufeld, 1976)
article on the Ontario Conference, based on 1975 data, still lists churches that are closed today, including Drezden, Exeter, and Welland. When I arrived at London in 2005, the eight remaining Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Ontario seemed to lack a local, supportive network, or a structure that could act as a forum for cooperation and accountability among regional churches. Due to the vast size of the Ontario Conference territory and the amount of attention given to the Greater Toronto area congregations, conference administrators were not able to provide much more than departmental support for local ministries. The Ontario Conference is divided administratively into 11 ministerial districts by geographical proximity of churches. Greater Toronto has five districts due to the number of congregations located in the metropolitan area. Western Ontario is one of these 11 ministerial districts, and will be referred to as a district. Cooperation and accountability of churches and their leaders at the district level was not present in 2005. For example, while pastors were supposed to meet monthly, scheduled meetings were not consistent and attendance was sporadic. From all appearances, the pastors lacked intentional, cooperative, working relationships with each other, and no corrective measures were taken by the conference leaders. In addition, no local forum existed for lay elders and local church leaders to meet and plan work for the district beyond serving individual local churches.

The first attempt to focus local churches on intentional teamwork took place in December 2005 when the newly elected personal ministries director, Eustace Williams, called all church leaders, vocational pastors and local elders in Western Ontario district to meet in Windsor. The goal was to cast a vision of working together in ministries, each at a local station, but with a view of the whole field. Leaders were encouraged to plan
together, share information about their practices, including successes and failures, and to coordinate efforts among congregations, to give each other assistance where needed, supplying each church with the strengths and benefits of other churches, including exchange of worship leaders, preachers, and assisting with counselling and evangelism.

Table 1 reveals the membership trends in Western Ontario from 2007 to 2011, according to the internal conference membership statistics as published in the annual directories (Ontario Secretariat, 2008, 2012). At the end of 2011 the district had 1048 members, with growth evident only in London, Windsor, and Sarnia.

### Table 1

**District Church Membership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church location</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>% Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leamington</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London (South) &amp; Spanish plant</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North London</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarnia</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Spanish</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>1,048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Adventist church membership per capita in the Western Ontario district is three times below the Canadian national average of 1 member per 549 populations (Yearbook, 2011). The Western Ontario district at the end of 2007 had 945 members with a population of 1,439,360, a ratio of 1 per 1,523. There remains no official Adventist presence in three counties: Bruce, Perth and Huron.

In 2007 when I began this project, attempts by the Ontario Conference to organize a coordinated training of elders and to improve elders’ interactions elicited very little interest, resulting in insufficient attendance and ultimately cancellation in 2008. The constituents of these multicultural churches blamed the decline on the lack of pastoral leadership. The pastoral turnover has been frequent during the last 25 years with an average tenure of each pastor of less than three and a half years (see the Appendix A).

During a three-year period from 2005 to 2008, Natural Church Development (NCD) surveys were conducted in six out of eight congregations: North London, London (South), Leamington, Chatham, St. Thomas, and Woodstock. Results showed that Empowering Leadership was not the lowest indicator but an inert factor, manifesting no improvement. During these three years, the unresolved interpersonal conflicts and a lack of positive relationships among lay leaders resulted in ineffective pastoral leadership and a lack of cooperative teamwork, which undermined the efforts of pastors and instigated a cycle of blame and stagnation resulting in a lack of directional mission in the district.

I acknowledge that my understanding of pastoral ministry may be biased due to my immigrant status; hence, my expectations may be influenced by my upbringing and
journey through different regions of the world-wide Adventist Church. To provide the necessary background to my worldview, I share my personal spiritual journey in the Appendix B.

Commitment to London Community

I learned that local elders do not see church growth and expansion into new territories as their responsibility. Frequent turnover of pastors is blamed for churches zigzagging in new directions every three years. Trust of transient pastors is not very high and people withhold their commitment to major projects that would take longer time; hence, no significant change occurs. Elders and church members expressed their perspective that pastors use churches as stepping stones for personal career advancement, sometimes ignoring the community itself. A commitment to longer tenure and community involvement was deemed necessary to change leadership trends.

On January 1, 2005, I was officially installed as the pastor at the Sabbath School morning service of the North London church, and also during the Divine Hour at the London (South) church. For three years we lived on the North London church premises in a three-bedroom parsonage attached to the church, with my office in the adjoining room. With my personal cell phone number published on the cover of the weekly bulletin, the fishbowl experience was an interesting journey, making our family available and accessible to church members and community needs continuously. Imagine my frustration when a pastoral evaluation was conducted by the ministerial director among the church board members of the North London church showing a low score on “being accessible!”
During my first year, God’s providence orchestrated many events that propelled my ministry and experience to the level of leadership where I had exposure to the broader conference-wide work. At different times elders commented positively on how I brought a high intensity to church life. I was nominated by our elders and selected by constituency to serve on the nominating committee for the Ontario Conference in 2005. Interacting with people of influence at the Conference taught me to understand and seek spiritual leadership over positional and human influence. In June 2005 four leaders from both London churches and I attended the SEEDS Church Planting Conference at the Andrews University in Michigan. It is my practice to take people with me to the summits so they can realize a similar vision for growth. That same summer of 2005 I was ordained and sent as an observer to the 58th General Conference session in St. Louis, Missouri. My whole family spent two weeks mingling with believers from around the world. Soon after returning from St. Louis my ministerial peers elected me to serve as the Western Ontario District president/coordinator, adding supervising and mentorship duties to my portfolio.

In 2005, I introduced the NCD Church Health Tool to my churches and we began an intentional approach to balancing church health. In order to train the leaders of the London churches, I developed curriculums on teamwork, spiritual leadership development, and church health and growth. The North London church leaders journeyed through four months of the intensive training for small group leadership. A few groups were started but were short lived. At the South church a Cultural Diversity program began and functioned well over the next three years, involving every culture from over 50 ethnic groups. Each group chose a particular month and developed a schedule so people would know what to expect and when. Funding was made available so that even if there
was one person from a given ethnic group, he or she could invite a guest speaker, musical
performers, and the ethnic community to come and assist with presenting their culture.
Monthly, the church journeyed through different cultural values, learning to appreciate
differences for further missional involvement.

The following year our focus was on developing a Hispanic ministry, taking their
leaders to the SEEDS Conference for the Spanish track on church planting. Over the next
three years the group worked on setting up a Branch Sabbath School. In 2009, the Branch
Sabbath School moved into a separate rented facility. The group was organized as a
company on December 10, 2011, with over 30 members and is still growing through
evangelism to become a church.

In the spring of 2007, I travelled to Zaokski, Russia, by invitation to teach two
classes to their bachelor of arts in religious studies cohort: the Leadership and
Administration class and the Principles of Church Growth class. Returning home, and
being encouraged by my teaching success and experience, I sought to pursue more
education, enrolling in the Doctor of Ministry cohort with an emphasis on Leadership at
Andrews University.

When I arrived in London, Ontario, I did not expect to stay long term, being
accustomed to frequent moves by pastors; however, in the fall of 2007, the elders of both
churches asked me and my family to make a long-term commitment to work together in
developing both churches, planting a new church, and to complete the turn-around revival
process. During the same time I was in dialogue with the General Conference recruiting
office regarding a possibility of moving our family to Zaokski in Russia with a five-year
commitment to develop a church growth ministry. The associate secretary of the General
Conference, Elder Agustin Galicia, visited with my family in London, explaining details of the process. After prayerful consideration the choice was made to stay with London congregations and to put all my training into service in the North American context.

**Statement of the Problem**

The predicament of Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Ontario is a lack of biblical understanding of leadership practices. The denominational job description and policy expectations for local leaders are not being followed. Uncertainty exists regarding relationships between vocational elders employed by the Conference and volunteer elders governing local churches. The empowering leadership quality is not given due attention among tasks and priorities of local churches.

**Statement of the Task**

Being aware of the situation in the local district and adjacent Adventist churches of Western Ontario, I resolved to invest my time in intentional development of elders. The purpose of this project was set to restore a biblical understanding of leadership roles and to return to a consistent practice of theologically sound leadership in local Adventist churches. The process involved the engagement of local leaders through focus groups with elders and district conferences. Once the data of interviews was collected, the summary was shared with the Ontario Conference ministerial secretary. The desired outcome of this project was to make the lay leaders of the eight churches in the South-Western Ontario District aware of their responsibility to own and to communicate compellingly the mission of each local church, to nurture believers in their sphere of influence, as well as to restore their duty of overseeing the ministry of local parishes. The learning process was evaluated by NCD surveys on leadership.
Justification for the Project

It is my observation that over the last 20 years the churches in North America have grown increasingly more institutional, relying on professionals to do the work, and becoming more dependent on denominational directions. My personal experience and that of my colleagues shared during monthly ministerial meetings, confirms such attitudes from local lay leaders: they hope that someone of fame and popularity—from outside—will come and solve the lack of growth in their churches. In view of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of eschatology where a centralized hierarchical organizational structure will not provide the existential endurance in the end times, local churches need to be strengthened. Local churches must be adequate in ministries, and local lay leaders need to be empowered to facilitate spiritual support for congregations where it may not be available in the future through the official infrastructures of the organized church.

Over the past 10 years much effort has been invested in the equipping and training of willing leaders through the Personal Ministry Department of the Conference facilitating the annual Maranatha Evangelism training. Reflecting on a pattern of attendance and follow up in local churches of Western Ontario, the system has created more seminar-junkies than workers, whose only achievement is attending and not doing anything afterward. However, not much has been done to empower, to motivate, and to be held accountable for growth. It is my opinion that equipping without empowerment is unwise use of resources and time. The difference between empowerment and equipping needs to be examined; empowerment includes more than explanation, tools, and training but also deployment through motivation and liberation.
The current pastoral employment formula in the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Ontario, Canada, differs from their evangelical counterparts, where local churches have more paid support staff. Adventist pastors are fulfilling similar job descriptions under higher expectations from church members. The current expectation that pastors be caregivers and servants of the congregation needs to be brought into accord with the biblical mandate of evangelism and mission, making it necessary to involve all believers in ministry, especially elders and deacons. The spiritual health of the church depends on transitioning church members from spectatorship to a total involvement in serving, and elders accepting their biblical job descriptions as overseers and under-shepherds to the local flock of believers.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not have a significant community presence and is not noticeable in Western Ontario. Empowering elders and empowering congregations should set a precedent for growth that would bring the Seventh-day Adventist church in Western Ontario from obscurity so that it will no longer be ignored as a transforming agency in communities. As the Remnant Church, we have an urgent message and mission to other churches and to the unchurched community, and it will be noted only when our presence is established.

Church planting and outreach into new communities is possible when new leaders are empowered, mentored, equipped, and commissioned. Adding new members requires a support structure of empowered leaders.
Definitions of Terms

Conference: the second level of the Seventh-day Adventist church structure made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory. (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2013).

District: a geographical unit within the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventist churches, where for purpose of accountability and coordinating church work pastors meet together monthly. Ontario Conference has 11 ministerial districts.

Elder: a highest order of biblical spiritual leadership, the second tier of New Testamental leadership model. It is English term for Greek presbuteros. Multiple elders exist in local churches. Elders may be lay volunteers, or vocational professionals.

Empowering Leadership: the first essential quality characteristic as outlined by the NCD.

Natural Church Development (NCD): a survey tool for evaluating a local church health based on eight quality characteristics developed by Schwarz (1996).

Pastor: a functional role of an elder as nurturer, derived from concept of shepherd of the flock. It is currently used in churches as an official title for an ordained professional vocational minister. Church Manuals prior to 2010 used to define pastor as a ranking officer above elders (see detailed explanation on p. 102 of this document). Such an outlook has been removed. I will present arguments that it is not an office but a function which belongs to all elders.

Trinitarian Leadership: a new proposal of the comprehensive leadership model which incorporates the Trinitarian revelation of God in all roles, all functions, all purposes, and all tasks, which includes, but is not limited to, the servant leadership of Jesus, and considers the leadership of the Father and the Holy Spirit.
It is a fellowship of God’s followers, a collaborative community leadership, which is not either-or, but both-and approach to leadership models, as it attempts to reconcile multifaceted leadership theories as mostly valid and not self-contradictory, but as fractions of a greater design for leadership. The practical implication is the balance of the triple responsibility of elders as community influencers, nurturing pastors, caring overseers.

**Delimitations for the Project**

Current literature was reviewed, including: books on history of the empowerment concept, systems and culture sensitive leadership, networking of churches, spiritual development of leaders, and emerging effective leadership practices. A special attention was paid to the developing research on the Trinitarian paradigm of ministry, as the literature review in Chapter 3 will show that the concept of Trinitarian Ministry, leadership, worship and other approaches to church life are emerging as titles of dissertations and research.

Data was collected from the local Adventist churches of the Western Ontario District regarding eldership practices. An attempt was made to develop a teamwork approach to leadership within the Western Ontario district of Seventh-day Adventist churches from 2007 through 2009. All leadership practices were put in place in the London (South) Seventh-day Adventist Church prior to introducing the Trinitarian Leadership model as a key for elders’ empowerment.

**Description of the Project Process**

Theological reflection is needed to develop a biblical framework for solving the leadership problem in the district. The following themes are requisite: the history of the
church empowered by the Holy Spirit in the apostolic era, the New Testament theology of the priesthood of all believers, the role of church elders in the New Testament, the concept of balance and precedence in the healthy church according to 2 Pet 1:5-8, the biblical role of the church leaders, biblical concept of empowerment, and the theology of leadership from the revelation of God through the Scriptures.

Literature was reviewed on topics related to the project: developing a Trinitarian paradigm, NCD practices and developments, empowerment, tools for surveying leadership, history of church leadership, and current trends of leadership among evangelical churches and in Adventism.

District pastors were informed about the research project and its proposed outcomes and were invited to develop a shared strategy for elders and lay-leaders’ development. The NCD survey was used to determine the level of empowering leadership among churches and to monitor annually the leadership development.

A survey to understand people’s expectations and understanding of empowerment in the church was administered through focus groups. The Trinitarian Leadership model was introduced to the elders at the London (south) church after putting in place all recommended conventional leadership practices.

The NCD tools were used continually as a standard measuring apparatus of the churches’ advancement. Every year 30 people were chosen by the leadership from among those most involved in church life to answer a survey consisting of 85 questions regarding all aspects of church life. In addition, the same surveys were also made available to any church members interested and willing to contribute their opinions. Collected surveys were processed by the NCD Canada team and the results were
communicated back to the congregation, monitoring progress of vital quality characteristics.

It was anticipated that joint semi-annual elders meetings and annual retreats would facilitate unity and teamwork. The progress of spiritual growth was celebrated annually at district camp-meetings in 2008 and 2009. However, after three years of building momentum toward district-wide teamwork the effort was discontinued. Elders of the London (south) congregation continued meeting regularly to work on understanding and improving the *Empowering Leadership* practices.

**Expectations From the Project**

I expected that through this project lay leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist churches of Western Ontario would have been empowered. I expected to discover motivational factors that would liberate leaders of local churches for service. I believe that the biblical framework of empowerment produced in the process would unite pastors and lay leaders, grow leadership teams spiritually, assist lay leaders in discovering their calling, and transform local churches into earnest soul-winning agencies, which would cooperate in reaching into new communities and people groups.

It is expected that this project will set a precedent and an example for leaders’ development in the local churches of Ontario and the idea of Trinitarian Leadership will offer theological motivation for application in any Seventh-day Adventist church.

The outcome expected of this project is healthier churches, where all eight essential qualities will be growing and increasing in measure and balance. A fully implemented biblical paradigm should liberate local churches from status-quo management to a creative advancement into unchartered areas and people groups.
The motivation for change, I believe, comes from understanding the Trinitarian paradigm of leadership, from appreciating and modeling the leadership not only after Jesus, but considering also the leadership of the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is the main contribution of this project for advancing the comprehensive training for empowering leadership. Chapter 2 will focus on this teaching in detail.

As result of this project, the greatest hope is to see new churches planted and new communities reached with the Three Angels’ Messages of Rev 14:6-12, true to the purpose and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

My expectation from this project of empowering elders is greater involvement of church members in various ministries according to their giftedness, greater sense of ownership among church members of the mission, and responsibility for church growth and spiritual success. The church growth will not be dependent on pastoral performance only, and the stability of the district will be established through lay ownership of the vision and mission.

I appreciate this learning opportunity of refining my personal leadership. This study made me take an objective look at my whole life and ministry, helping me to notice blind spots, potential tripping points, and areas of improvements.

One day while waiting for the editor and browsing through displays in the Western University’s Social Sciences Center, my attention was caught by a picture of a wheel with the following words written below, “A single spoke cannot support a wheel. It takes many to start a revolution.” This best expresses how I think about teamwork and leadership that is needed for a growth revolution.
CHAPTER 2

TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY OF EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

Why Trinitarian Leadership?

A question may arise: Why such an emphasis on the Empowering Leadership of elders? Why can we not be satisfied with their role in teaching and inspired preaching during worship and Sabbath School? Why can we not just limit the elders’ workload to providing structural functionality at board meetings? Is it not enough for elders to simply assist the vocational pastor in organizing evangelism? What if an elder would just organize a small group among his household and friends? Why such an urgent cry for pastoral nurture together with episcopal supervision? Why do we need all these facets at once?

To answer these questions I invite you to consider the Trinitarian perspective on Leadership. The Trinitarian approach requires us to consider God as Trinity, not separating, partitioning, or favouring one Revelation of God’s over another.

Trinitarian Lenses Reveal Models

The concept of Trinitarian lenses was first introduced by Schwarz through the Natural Church Development as the Trinitarian view of God and the world (Schwarz, 1999b). He also calls it the Trinitarian Compass. The background image for figure illustrations, the green/red/blue, is borrowed from the Trinitarian Compass construct developed by Schwarz in 2005. I am taking it further, and the way I am using it is my
own with permission from NCD Canada. The Green area of the circle represents the Father and created world, the red represents the Son as the cross of Christ, and the blue represents the Holy Spirit with dove as a symbol.

This is how Schwarz introduced the Trinitarian Compass originally: first, the Bible reveals God as Transcendent, above us, the Creator who is greater than the Universe. Then we must consider God as Imminent, among us, Christ who walked this earth as a man from Nazareth, who died, rose, and is in heaven as a deposit of humanity in heavenly places. And to complete the understanding of God, we must always be aware of the Eminent Presence of God within us by the Holy Spirit. (Schwarz, 1999b, p. 10).

As I will labor to develop the Trinitarian Leadership model I will use this formula through graphics to illustrate how this paradigm is exists and is emerging in research.

The New Testament overwhelmingly presents God as Love, and the Apostle Paul speaks of Transcended God manifesting His Love by Christ dying for us (Rom 5:8), and also by pouring out His Love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). Just to
think: Love holds the whole universe, Love dies on the Cross, Love in our hearts – all in all God is working His Plan!

The story of Cornelius (Acts 10) illustrates how God desires that we would experience Him wholly, Triune. Cornelius being a godly, devout man believes the Transcendent God without a deep knowledge of the God of the Bible. He receives a vision from God to find Peter so that he would learn more about God among us. Peter tells Cornelius about Jesus of Nazareth, his life, ministry, death and resurrection, and God pours the Holy Spirit on the whole household. It is not enough to know only a limited revelation of God. God desires us to know and experience Him wholly!

As I read the Bible applying Trinitarian lenses, I see Trinitarian revelation nearly in every chapter. Being created in the image of God our human interpersonal interactions and personal conduct, leadership practices included, must also reflect the threefold dynamic relationship of God. Consider another example of three of the most popular parables of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 15.

*Figure 2.* Trinitarian Lenses on parables in Luke 15

Three stories of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son tell us about the Great Shepherd, the light, and the loving Father representing the incarnational ministry of Jesus
Christ entering the world to seek the lost, the work of the Holy Spirit illuminating those who are unaware of being lost, and the Prodigal Father (Keller, 2008) who is lavishly and extravagantly giving His Grace to the returning lost children. God’s leadership and empowerment operates in different modes and these three metaphors are used to illustrate threefold dynamics of leadership. The importance of these Trinitarian illustrations is in establishing a challenge to think of human leadership as a reproduction of Divine leadership principles.

Another example of Trinitarian model is that of Moses’ leadership. He was set as God (the “Father” concept) to pharaoh (Exod 7:1). To his people he was the redeemer, walking among them, willing to lay down his life for them, and serving as a mediator for them (Exod 32, Num 14). Moses empowered and delegated people for a shared participatory leadership while providing oversight. Others received the spirit from the Spirit which was upon Moses (Num 11:17). The Trinitarian dynamic of leadership was experienced and practiced by Moses.

Prophet Samuel was a type of Christ in the Old Testament and his leadership to Israel was threefold: prophet, priest, and ruler. He was not a king in the legal definition of position, yet his authority and influence was kingly: he judged Israel which was the king’s prerogative. The leadership of Samuel modeled a Trinitarian interaction of God
with his people: Judge-Priest-Prophet.

![Figure 3. Three Dimensions of Samuel’s Leadership](image)

Looking at narrative stories of Jesus’ call to Simon Peter, a threefold job description emerges. Peter was chosen to be in the innermost core of Jesus’ small group, one of the three: Peter, John, James (Matt 10:2); he is mentioned first, and Jesus singled them out to be with Him at special occasions. They were together at the transfiguration event (Matt 17:1), at the healing of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37), and at Gethsemane before the cross (Mark 14:33). Peter was the elder, the leader, the spokesman of the group. At the Lord’s Supper of the New Covenant, Jesus presented to them his model of leadership and told Simon Peter that he was to “strengthen his brethren” upon his conversion (Luke 22:32). These are the functions of stewardship: oversight, empowerment, and accountability, which were placed upon Peter pending his receiving of the Holy Spirit. Then, after the Resurrection, Jesus tells Peter to “shepherd his flock” (John 21:16). The same Greek word is used as elsewhere for the function of a “pastor”:\textit{ποιμαίνω (poimaino)}. The pastoral role here is outlined twice more (John 21:15, 17) with an additional pastoral term, \textit{βόσκω (bosko)}, used commonly for herdsmen in the field and used spiritually implying the pastoral duty to promote in every way the spiritual welfare.
of the church members. Peter’s understanding of these threefold duties led him to write to elders about pastoral and episcopal responsibilities before the Chief Shepherd, Lord Jesus (1 Pet 5:1-4).

![Figure 4. Three Dimensions of Jesus’ Call to Simon Peter](image)

**Learning Leadership From God**

It is my intent to present a biblical paradigm toward comprehensive understanding of Leadership, by asking the following questions: What can we learn about leadership from the Holy Spirit? What kind of leadership is exemplified by the Father? What is really the Leadership of Jesus?
The leadership of God cannot and should not be partitioned into compartments, but it should be recognized that the work of the Trinity is One Action. If we are to seek biblical theology of Leadership we must consider the Trinitarian model for Leadership.

The priority of the Godhead in existence of all is my reason for suggesting leadership as a priority among other characteristics needed for a healthy church. God is in the beginning, providing Leadership and Empowerment.

The first picture of God in the Bible is given at Creation where God decides, “Let us,” and speaks. The Voice is the first leadership act of the Father. Leonard Sweet (2004) explores the importance of the voice, sound, and hearing in redefining the leadership for postmoderns.

The Son was the active agent, the Word, shaping and acting (John 1:1). The Spirit softly hovering and holding things together, implied by the Hebrew word רָחַף (rahap) as used in Gen 1:2 and Deut 32:11. The leadership at creation was all-encompassing: decisive, authoritative, participatory, involved, partnering, forming, and connecting.

The us in the creation story and the Elohim Hebrew plural, in distinction from Hebrew dual ending aim indicating more than two, all suggests plurality and a
community within Who God is. Genesis 1:27 states that the singular image of the plural *Elohim* includes both male and female, a composite humanity. Hence, Divine leadership cannot be limited to the male gender only, and is not a masculine prerogative. A principle that must be considered for comprehensive Trinitarian Leadership is the impartiality of leadership for women on a par with men.

I am proposing to consider a biblical Leadership model which incorporates the Trinitarian revelation of God in all roles, all functions, all purposes, and all tasks. And for practical implementation of the holistic Trinitarian Leadership, it must be considered how one and the same person would embrace the “above” role of elder, the “among” role of a shepherd, and the “within” role of the overseer, all present and expressed to compliment and to complete. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of an ideal leader: the King, the Prophet, and the Priest.

*Figure 6. Trinitarian Ministry of Christ*
Just as the Divine Love is all three: Justice, Truth, and Grace (Schwarz, 2004), so the Divine Leadership is all three: Ruler, Servant and Guide.

Practical Trinitarian Examples in Biblical Narratives

Studying further the leadership of Moses as a model for empowerment, I was impressed again with the Trinitarian image of God’s leadership where Moses is commissioned to commission Joshua. Deuteronomy 3:28 describes God’s instruction to Moses: “charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people.” Joshua’s leadership is to come as a result of God leading Moses to lead Joshua. Of a significant interest is the wording used for empowerment and strengthening. The Greek Septuagint (Brenton, 2001) offers here the same word that the New Testament uses to describe the mission of the Holy Spirit—παρακαλέω, the Paraklete (John 14:16, 26). The Apostle Paul sees Jesus Christ’s leadership in the same manner: strengthening, as he writes in a letter to the Philippian church, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). Moreover, the Apostle Paul used the same Greek word παρακαλέω when he exhorted the Thessalonians “to encourage one
another” (1 Thess 5:11). The leadership of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is altogether strengthening and empowering, and we, the believers and followers, are invited to the same ministry of empowerment.

God - the Alpha and Omega of Leadership

The reason I am emphasizing a God-Trinity-connection for empowerment is because without an external source of power and authority, there cannot be true empowerment. The popular contemporary concept of empowerment is focused on self-empowering. This new approach is best illustrated by a new book from the authors of *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus* (Manz & Neck, 2005) entitled *Mastering Self-Leadership: Empowering Yourself* (Manz & Neck, 2010). They provide a set of behavioral and mental techniques to increase one’s effectiveness from within. My argument is that leadership has its source in God, and must draw its power from God.

The necessity of leadership and the inevitability of its emergence are discerned from the presence of the central point of leadership throughout biblical history expressed as a Temple, or Palace (Spriggs, 1993). The author points out that in the book of Revelation there is no more a temple nor even sun needed, yet there continues to be a very real sense of leadership, for God the Father and the Lamb are on the Throne. Hence, the ultimate model of leadership as indicated by Rev 21:22 is God. Because of God’s existence, leadership as empowerment is essential.

Fractal Reproduction on Earth as it is in Heaven

One should not foster the idea that the Father’s leadership is restricted to the Old Testament and the Son’s and the Spirit’s leading roles are only in the New Testament.
The Godhead always works together.

Instead of clustering leadership into three opposite directions of commanding, serving, and participating, all these clusters working together should be considered inseparable parts oriented toward a centered unity of purpose, not situational, but complimentary, including the commanding aspect.

When praying “your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” believers must accept that God’s leadership is the beginning of all things.

In a secular book on leadership and the new science observations are made that fractal patterns, present in the world as a “self-similarity” (Wheatley, 2006, pp. 123-126), reveal a mystery of inherent design. I specifically like the broccoli’s illustration: the same shape appearing at many different levels, details may differ, but the general shape remains the same. This concept of inherent order prompts me to seek God’s model of leadership as the only archetype that works. The God-like leadership must be fractal in everything we do. It must affect and be an integral design of all leadership and must be placed as the top in significance among other factors.
Non-Trinitarian Leadership Models

In most cases Christian leadership gurus focus only on a leadership model exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth, while on earth, neglecting the leadership of the Father and the leadership of the Holy Spirit throughout history.

The Father empowers the Son by giving to Him, His throne, power, and glory. The Spirit empowers. The Son empowers by surrendering to the Father the Kingdom. Empowerment is shared and reciprocated within the Triune God. The first disciples were told to wait until they received the power. True empowerment today is repeating dynamics of godly interaction among people.

Even if the ideal of Christ as Leader is considered, one must take principles in the larger context of God – the Three in One.

A Question to Church Elders

If the Apostle Paul would visit one of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Ontario today, what would he have to say to the elders? What devotional thought would Peter or James offer at the elders’ meeting? If Jesus would tell John the Revelator to write to the angel of one of the Seventh-day Adventist churches, what would he say? The intent of those questions is to probe how biblically sound is the current leadership structure in local Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Seventh-day Adventist scholar Dederen in his article on the government of the church, states that leadership in the earliest church was in the hands of the apostles, and it had unmistakable recognition (2000, pp. 552-553). Who are the real leaders of churches today? To understand the biblical model of church leadership one must consider not only the exegetical learning but also the historical development which led to the current
popular and dominant perspectives on leadership. Secular influence over the two millennia of Western Christendom shifted ecclesiastical practices of leadership from the scriptural ideal. The contrast must be seen to appreciate the need of returning to the biblical paradigm of leadership.

**Biblical Description of Apostolic Leadership**

The fact that the apostles called themselves elders indicates that the office of elder was the primary human office in the early church, with Christ being the head leader (Eph 5:23) and the chief pastor-shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Peter identifies himself as a “fellow elder” (1 Pet 5:1), using a unique term, used only once (hapax legomena) in the New Testament, which adds a prefix to the word presbyter: συμ-πρεσβύτερος, meaning a co-elder. The Apostle John begins his last two letters using the title of an elder (2 John 1; 3 John 1).

Seeking the best English term to convey the deep meaning of the Greek word πρεσβύτερος, we must consider its etymology and Hebraic roots. As one author points out, its meaning is derived from leadership based on “seniority, prominence, experience, and wisdom... a reverence that recognizes ability, service, knowledge, example, and seniority” (Lewis, 1985, pp. 18, 21). He points out that the term suggests a leadership built on respect and reverence (Lev 19:32). The spiritual maturity which comes with age and experience, and is recognized by the community, makes one an elder. The term communicated dignity of an individual.

The Apostle Peter states that the elder’s office includes two additional responsibilities besides leadership: “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder...shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers” (1
Pet 5:2). Thus he charges elders with additional duties: to pastor or shepherd the flock and to provide the oversight or episcopacy.

The same concept is presented by the Apostle Paul when he sent from Miletus an invitation to gather all Ephesian elders-presbyters of the church (Acts 20:17). When he speaks to them at the meeting, he charges them to be episcopes-overseers (ἐπίσκοπος) and to pastor-shepherd (ποιμήν) the flock (Acts 20:28). Following figure illustrates the threefold duty of biblical leadership.

In the embryonic Christian church the elders were to provide supervision and nurture to their congregations. An elder was also considered to be a pastor and a bishop. These were not hierarchical offices, but different functional descriptions of the same
office: leader, nurturer, and overseer (Piper, 1999; Thompson, 2006).

New Testament Church Leadership

Considering chronology, it must be noted that the very first letter to become a book of the New Testament was Paul’s first communication to the Thessalonians that does not mention elders or deacons. The word for leadership used here (1 Thess 5:12) comes from the Greek root προϊστήμι (proistemi) and has a meaning “to care for, to give help, to show interest in, to engage” (Thayer, 2007). Commonly used contemporary translations render this term mainly as “to be a leader” (NLT), “to be over” (KJV), and do not fully represent the original intent of the word. It was the only word the early church adopted from Greco-Roman government, avoiding words such as “leader” ἡγεμών (hegemon), “ruler” ἀρχηγός (archegos), “master” κύριος (kurios), reserving such for Jesus and for God (Paulien, 2012). While the term ἀρχων (archon) meaning “ruler, prince, official, authority” is used in the Gospels, it is applied to the Jewish leaders (i.e. John 12:42). In the book of Acts the term is again used as reference to Jewish leaders (Acts 3:17; 14:5; 25:2) and never referring to Christian leaders. Hegemon in reference to

![Diagram](image.png)

*Figure 11. Threefold Functions of Elders*
the new Christian leadership is used only twice (Acts 15:22, and Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24). The warning of Jesus recorded by all three synoptic gospels (Aland, 1982, p. 226), (Matt 20:25-27, Mark 10:42-47 and Luke 22:24-26) not to copy Gentile models of leadership was important to the early church. When considering the larger context of this particular teaching of Jesus on power, it came after the request to interject a position of power into a community without positions. The worldly model of power hoarding, hierarchy of comparative greatness derived from being above others, received “shall not be so among you” verdict of Christ. God’s model of leadership revealed through Christ is about servanthood, self-sacrifice, and being a slave to others.

Worldly leadership models are considered an abuse by biblical standards. The Book of Revelation speaks of such abuses in the early churches as a heresy of the Nicolaitans and the teaching of Balaam, where both names, first from Greek and second from Hebrew are equivalents and indicate “lording over people.” A direct meaning of the name Balaam is “who devours the people” and for Nicolaos “the conqueror of the people” (Doukhan, 2002, p. 34).

Since letters were not confidential and were supposed to be read aloud, copied, then sent to other churches for the benefit of other Christian congregations, the warning against abuse of leadership was understood and communicated widely.

**Difference Between Terms Elder and Bishop**

The difference between the terms was in their context of origin. The term Elder/Presbyter had been borrowed from the Jewish synagogue context, and signified dignity and social standing, whereas bishop-episcopos or overseer-superintendent was
commonly used in the Greek community and signified the duty. A secular use of the term *episcopos* implied a financial officer, a manager, a steward (Schaff, 2006, p. 415).

A chronology of the letters in the New Testament also indicates that the term *elders* appeared earlier, in the context of Jewish Christianity. Thus events described in Acts 11-16 took place between AD 45 and 52. The term “overseer” appears in Acts 20:17, 28, events which took place in AD 58. Chronologically, in AD 61 Paul’s letter to the Philippians is first in the New Testament collection to speak about leaders as “overseers” (Phil 1:1). Later, in AD 63, writing to Timothy (1 Tim 3:1-2; 5:17-20) and in AD 65 Paul uses terms elder and overseer interchangeably (Titus 1:5-7). As a church historian points out “the interchange of terms continued in use to the close of the first century, as is evident from the Epistle of Clement of Rome, and the Didache, and still lingered towards the close of the second” (Schaff, 2006, p. 416).

An earlier use of this term *episcope* is employed during the election of an apostle to replace Judas. Acts 1:20 uses the same root word ἐπισκοπή for an apostolic office. Evidently this takes place before elders emerge in Jerusalem’s church.

It appears that the conflict described in Acts 6 requiring apostles to appoint leaders for resolving miscellaneous problems, points out the absence of any other level of leadership besides Apostolic, which needed to be freed for ministry of the Word. Yet even in this account, the word διάκονια does not refer to a new office but to a ministry, and is applicable to both—the Apostles (v. 4) and the Seven newly elected to serve tables (v. 2). Further use of the term διάκονος by the Apostle Paul (i.e., 2 Cor 6:4) indicates that even Apostles considered themselves deacons, servants, and ministers. All this suggests
interchangeability of terms and not distinctions of offices. The deacon’s office emerged a few decades later in church practice.

Apostolic Church Two-tiered Leadership

Three decades after the events described in Acts 6, in a letter of Paul to the church in Philippi, dated by scholars to be around AD 60-62 (Hawthorne, 1983), it becomes evident that the two-tiered leadership of the elders and deacons system emerged in the early church (Phil 1:1). The New Testament writings allow people to see a development of the church in Ephesus from an embryonic stage, described in the book of Acts; through a mentoring stage, reflected in the letter to Ephesians; to a corporate organization, of which Timothy was in charge. Yet, the Apostle Paul is appealing to the same two-tiered structure (1 Tim 3:1-13). In this passage the term of bishop/episceope is interchangeable with elder/presbyter. Lightfoot (1892) pointed out in the nineteenth century: “It is a fact now generally recognized by theologians of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament the same officer in the Church is called indifferently ‘bishop [overseer]’ (ἐπίσκοπος) and ‘elder’ or ‘presbyter’ (πρεσβύτερος)” (p. 95). The apostolic responsibility of leadership was in the office of an elder.

Elders as Overseers

The use of the term “overseer” in Acts 20:28 is of particular interest, as it has a dual application, an accountability among elders, and an oversight of the parishioners in their care (Gets, 2003). The phrase “keep watch over yourselves” (Acts 20:28) suggests coaching and mutual accountability, elders looking after each other’s conduct, and then keeping guard over the flock, over other believers. This aspect is of particular significance and interest in my research as coaching, mutual mentoring, and
accountability among elders. Today this is almost non-existent and needs to be restored. This quality and practice is possible only in the setting of teamwork of multiple elders.

Eldership as a Teamwork

The New Testament model calls for the elders to govern every church. Paul and Barnabas travelled to appoint elders in every church (Acts 14:23), and Paul would later write to Titus recommending that elders be appointed in every city as authority (Titus 1:5). The plurality must be noted. Not just a single elder, but multiple elders for every church and in every city were the model for the New Testament Church. In Paul’s first letter to Timothy it is evident that a presbytery, a board of elders, was formed to appoint others by the laying on of hands (1 Tim 4:1). James recognizes elders as having a special authority for prayer (Jas 5:14).

The Apostolic Church was built on teamwork of multiple elders serving as pastors and overseers, undershepherds of Christ, preventing establishment of human hierarchy. Strauch (1997, p. 41) says “it was never our Lord’s will for one individual to control the local church. The concept of the pastor as the lonely, trained professional – the sacred person presiding over the church who can never really become a part of the congregation – is utterly unbiblical.” He quotes Radmacher saying “multiple leaders will serve as a ‘check and balance’ on each other and serve as a safeguard against the very human tendency to play God over other people” (1977, p. 7). One author argued that the New Testament church model does not replicate Moses’ centralized system of a chief leader over elders, but suggests equality of elders in an elders-led church, where a pulpit-pastor is also an equal elder (Miner, 2007). Somehow today the perception of an elder’s role is limited to only preaching, an activity in rhetoric alone, which is only a part of what
pastoring of the flock really is. It is pastoring, the care of multiple needs and the spiritual feeding of the flock, which has always been the role of an elder, both in Scripture and in church history. I grew up with a different cultural paradigm of church leadership. Churches were served by elders. The vocational ministers, ordained above eldership for itinerary mission work were called propovednik (проповедник), meaning preacher, not pastor. In word of Milner, “preachers may or may not have been elders, but pastors were always elders” (2007). However, Miner is considering only a congregational form of church, and leaves no place for the five-fold ministry as presented in Eph 4:11-12, and for the apostolic and evangelistic role of vocational pastors in a representative form of church governance.

The word pastor proper is used only once in the New Testament. Paul’s letter to Ephesians outlines persons who are gifts to the Church, in contrast to spiritual gifts as listed in the twelfth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians and his letter to the Romans (Burrill, 2004, pp. 74-75). In Eph 4:11, the singular use of the term pastor as an office in the whole New Testament, the pastors are teachers, suggesting that the chief role of a pastor is to feed the flock through teaching, which is a primary role of elders, confirmed by another Pauline letter (Titus 1:9). To construct an additional level of ordination and a rank above eldership from this passage, would mean that apostles, evangelists and prophets should also be ordained as levels of hierarchy. Consistency of how these terms are used indicates that these are functions of elders and deacons, and not above standing levels of church hierarchy.

A distinction may be noted in Acts 15:2 between the two groups, one is that of the apostles, and another that of the elders in the Jerusalem Church. Such separate clusters
are listed due to a transition of the eldership role from the Jewish patriarchal system and the synagogue to the new model of the church. The apostles here are the itinerant travelling elders-missionaries, and the elders in this passage are the local administrative leaders, pastoring the assembly, and taking care of the day-to-day church operations. This is a descriptive and not a prescriptive occurrence. It does not warrant a creation of a different level of leadership as it does not place either circuit or domestic elders above each other.

Biblical Eldership not Hierarchical

This biblical trend of equality of elders and absence of hierarchy of rulership in the New Testament calls one to consider perceived differences not as hierarchical layers, but as triple features of Apostolic Eldership. Speaking against the secular trend of hierarchies and a calling to return to the re-imagined biblical church leadership, Viola (2008) emphasizes the unity of church leadership, the singular use of the term pastor as an office in the whole New Testament p office, expressed in character maturity (elder), function of care (overseer) and gifting of visions (shepherd).

*Figure 12. Unity of Leader’s Office*
Viola’s understanding of empowerment is in listening to the Lord together, affirming each other in their Spirit-endowed gifts, and encouraging one another toward Christ (Viola, 2008, p. 155). His main emphasis is driven by Jesus’ teaching recorded in Matt 20:25-28 and Luke 22:25-26, that Gentile hierarchical leadership of position has no place in God’s kingdom where character and relationship matter most. Furthermore, he refers to Jesus’ teaching found in Matt 23:8-12 directed toward brotherhood, and away from guru-like specialists, or honorific titles. His plea is to stop the separation of the clergy role as it is disempowering the believers, who are the Body of Christ.

Viola points out that positional leadership framework in church was patterned after the military and managerial structures. He continues to point toward the Biblical mutual ministry which “comes forth naturally when God’s people are equipped and hierarchical structures are absent...the church operates by life – divine life” (Viola, 2008, p. 154). The New Testament principle of “one-another” mutual pastoring, caring, and serving (George, 1991, pp. 129-131) makes hierarchy out of place, and unacceptable, even among elders.

**Stewardship for Empowering Leadership**

A missing link in establishing the Empowering Leadership environment in our churches is, in my opinion, the concept of Stewardship. We know from Paul’s letter to Titus that “a bishop/overseer/elder must be blameless, as the steward of God” (Titus 1:7). What does it mean for an elder to be the ruler of the house, οἰκονόμος? What does an elder steward?

Stewardship is not about money and material things only. While the Old Testament concept of setting an overseer “over” the house (Gen 39:5; 41:40-43), having
“dominion” over the earth (Gen 1:26, 28), being in charge of one’s goods has a materialistic aspect, the New Testament takes stewardship to a higher ground. The “management over the house” (οἰκονομία [oikonomia]) is given an added meaning in the work of the Apostle Paul.

Paul still uses the managerial term προϊστεμι as being “over” (1 Thess 5:12) in describing the responsibility of church leaders. Interesting is the addition of a preamble that these also “labour among you,” almost as if Paul, cognizant of Jesus’ warning “not to lord over” (Matt 20:25), is setting the proper way of being “over,” and avoiding the term of overpowering κατακυριευω he uses a common managerial term. He also uses this concept of managing in his correspondence with Timothy (1 Tim 3:4-5).

Paul considers his ministry to be the stewardship of the mystery of God’s Plan of Salvation, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, and now should be preached: the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph 3:9). The word “stewardship” is a revised version rendering. Older English translations, such as the King James version and its derivatives render these passages with the word “dispensation,” which provides a metaphor for what stewardship is: dispensing the deposit, distributing what is invested, giving out what is placed inside. The New King James version uses the word “commission,” and the New International version speaks of “administration,” all carrying the same idea of freely giving what was freely received (Matt 10:8).

Earlier in the same chapter Paul says: “surely you have heard about the stewardship of God’s Grace which was given to me for you, how by revelation He made known to me the mystery” (Eph 3:2-3). In his letter to Colossae he says that his responsibility for the church, which is the Body of Christ, is the stewardship given to him.
by God (Col 1:24-25). Paul’s letters to the most secular church of his day, Corinth, also stresses this aspect of stewardship. He is inviting church members to consider elders, leaders, and ministers, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, acknowledging that faithfulness is one of the stewardship qualities (1 Cor 4:1-2). Paul goes on to say that stewardship is not even a choice a leader has, it is a responsibility, even if against one’s will, to preach the Gospel, and woe is to one who does not accept it (1 Cor 9:16-17).

The Apostle Peter also speaks of the leader’s responsibility to steward the manifold grace (1 Pet 4:10). The power which a leader receives from God is not inherent in his office, or in his calling. It is God’s power to be stewarded, dispensed, distributed, and allotted. Hence, the empowerment of leaders is the proper function of stewardship: investing God-given power into people we serve.

Stewardship is all about the Gospel, about administering God’s Plan of Salvation given to the Church and its leaders to save a dying world. Elders are God’s stewards of His Grace and the Eternal Gospel to be distributed and administered to the whole world. Moreover, church elders must consider the responsibility outlined in the message of the three angels, as going into the whole world (Rev 14:6-12), not a status quo maintenance for nominal members, but as an outreach responsibility.

A recent evangelical author states that leadership calling “is built on the theology of the godly steward (Rodin, 2010, p. 48). According to Rodin, stewardship is a restoration of God’s image in all relationships, especially in leadership.

When an elder learns of his duty as a steward, then pastoral and episcopal responsibilities will be not discretionary, but would become a necessary and essential
duty of a leader’s life and ministry. I believe that the right understanding of stewardship would more effectively strengthen elders’ commitment to pastoring and mentoring, than the current perspective of money-orientated stewardship.

**Is Empowerment Really Biblical?**

Many have concluded that “empowerment” is not a Biblical concept, and could be gleaned only by examples, indirectly (Battaglia, 2004). In Battaglia’s project document an “evolution” of the empowerment concept in leadership was reviewed, and conclusion was made that empowerment has a “myriad of shades” (Battaglia, 2004, p. 67). I was at first surprised with such a conclusion. Yet, in looking for “empowerment” concepts in the Bible, I could not find the word used itself. Although it is a contemporary buzzword, it is not a new term, as it came to be used in the seventeenth century with a legal undertone: “to invest with authority, to authorize” (Empowerment, 2003). However, even a contemporary version of the Bible, as in the New International version, does not have this word or its derivatives.

**Old Testament Narrative Theology of Empowerment**

Searching through more contemporary versions, I came across a dynamic equivalence translation: the New Living Bible, where in the story of Moses, God commissions him, saying “Go and perform the miracles I have empowered you to do” (Exod 4:21). The same passage in the New International version is treated as “given you the power to do.” Studying the leadership of Moses in the Bible, I noted that God did something to make Moses a leader—God strengthened Moses.

But it is the wording in the King James Version that made me see a picture of God leading, by upholding the hands of human leaders. “And the LORD said to Moses,
‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand’” (Exod 4:21). The connection between “hand holding” and empowerment here is not unique, but representative of a trend. In Isa 45:1 the NLT renders, “This is what the LORD says to Cyrus, his anointed one, whose right hand he will empower.” The older King James Version says “whose right hand I have held.” The hiphil causative form of the Hebrew word for strength כוח (chazaq) used here describes God’s leadership. Prophet Isaiah describes redeeming work of God as “strengthening the weak hands, and making firm the feeble knees” (Isa 35:3, NKJV).

A closer look at biblical passages describing empowerment indicates more of the “hand-connection.” The Hebrew expression to have power, to be empowered, was expressed verbatim in Gen 31:29, “it is in the power of my hand to do.” Rabbinical commentaries assert that יַד, hand, is indeed a metaphor for power (Goldwurm & Scherman, 2002, p. 325).

This role of God the Holy Spirit, coming alongside and upholding, will later be described in the Greek New Testament as παρακλητος (parakletos), the Comforter. When Moses held his hands up, the nation was empowered supernaturally to be victorious, when he let his hands down, the power was also gone. It took the empowerment of two more leaders to support his hands, to empower him, and as long as his arms were lifted, the nation of Israel was again supernaturally empowered and continued into victory (Exod 17:10-12). It is a picture of empowerment that produced more empowerment. Empowerment is not unidirectional. Here we have an illustration of a leader receiving an empowerment from his team members and supernaturally conveying more empowerment.
to other team members. Shared empowerment is inseparable from shared leadership and would prove transforming for church environment today.

New Testament Energy of Power

Empowerment as the work of God is more prominent in the New Testament. The final instruction of Jesus was to wait to receive the power (Acts 1:8). The work of the Holy Spirit was to empower Christ’s followers to become leaders.

Three Greek words are generally used to deal with power: δυναμις (dunamis), ἐνεργεια (energeia), and κρατους (kratos). The New Jerusalem Bible renders the Greek term ἐωεργέω as “empower.” For instance, in the letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul speaks of God empowering his apostolate as much as Peter’s (2:8). The use of this word is almost always associated with supernatural activity, miraculous, receiving extra power, or God working directly through someone. All three terms are used describing God’s empowerment in lives of believers in Eph 1:19, “his [God’s] incomparably great power (dunamis) for us who believe. That power (energeia) is like the working of his mighty strength (kratos).” Another combination of empowering with power, energoma and dunamis, is translated as miraculous power or working of miracles (1 Cor 12:10).

Empowerment is the miracle lacking in this world!

Another application of the Trinitarian compass is illustrated by the Apostle Paul listing three dimensions of ministry derived from the triune God (Schwarz, 2001). “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in
All” (1Cor 12: 4-6).

The curious detail is hidden in translations: the word rendered “activities” in Greek is ἐνεργημα (energoma). It is common to talk about charismata and diakonia, gifts and services, but the energomata sounds “too-new-agey,” talking about different energies and powers God grants to believers.

To paraphrase—God empowers all differently! Only recently did scholars considered the diversity of empowerment among the energies of community (Schwarz, 2012a). Just as each believer has different giftedness and is called for different ministries, so there are different empowerments. First Corinthians 12:11 attributes the energizing
work of empowerment to the Holy Spirit. James 5:16 teaches that the prayer of a righteous person has powerful effects or is empowering. In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul brings together words δύναμις and ἐνεργεῖν, regular words for power and the word used for powerful effects, saying that when we are filled with God (3:19) then His power works in us.

Considering this, Empowering Leadership in the church is the work of God performed through godly people affecting the lives of others.

**Empowerment and Equipping**

Presently there is a substantial misunderstanding over the definition and usage of Empowerment. I have been working on this research for about five years and have documented a few of my personal experiences and insights. In 2009, my four boys and I, together with our Forest City Pathfinders Club, attended the camporee *Courage to Stand* in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Among many memorable joyous moments was also a sad realization of how “empowerment” has been misconstrued. Elder James Black, the youth leader of the North American Division of SDA, in his sermon Saturday morning said, “I am sick of this ‘E’ word. Everyone is talking about ‘empowerment’! Give them [the youth] access!” I do not want to assume what he meant by “not needing empowerment.” I think there was a confusion of “empowerment” with “equipping,” which the church has been offering all along: more and more “equipping” through seminars and workshops.

This perspective can be illustrated by an article from a seminary textbook for Adventist pastors where the author is equating equipping with giving “authority and power to make decisions” (Kiltcher, 1991, p. 102). At the time, a concern was expressed that pastoral insecurities prevent them from sharing their power with laity. Giving the
access and resources is an essential part of empowerment, yet empowerment includes more than resources and access.

The best biblical example of the difference between equipping and empowerment is shown in the story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17:20-51). King Saul offered David equipping: weapons and military ammunition. But David refused the king’s equipment as he was already empowered by God. The key word in the passage is “hand,” used seven times in the pericope. Verse 37 implies the power in the paw and hand, and God’s deliverance was “into David’s hand” (v. 46); there was no sword in David’s hand (v. 50). David’s victory is attributed not to human equipment but to Divine Empowerment. One theologian uses this same example to state that empowering precedes equipping, as “David went forth under-equipped by Saul’s standards, but empowered by the Spirit of God” (Anderson, 1997, p. 109). Another theologian uses the same illustration (Sweet, 2012, pp. 86-87) to say that a person is to “choose God’s power over our power” (p. 91). Equipping may not empower, but empowering does equip.

**Leadership and a Healthy Church**

Since 2005 I have been administering and coaching leaders to practice the balanced approach to church health through applying the eight quality characteristics as outlined by the NCD (Schwarz, 1996). However, my personal recent discovery of a new biblical dimension added to my passion about this objective paradigm.

At the request of the Zaokski Adventist Seminary, March 2007 found me on the plane flying to Russia to teach ministerial students. I had all the theory and presentations ready, yet, I suspected that if I introduced it as a “German empirical research” it might
not be well received. I knew I needed a better introduction than logic and research results based on more than 40,000 churches worldwide.

As I prayerfully browsed through my Bible I opened to the list of virtues in the second letter of the Apostle Peter, where he explains what would guarantee a church’s effectiveness. Much persuasive research has been done during the last four decades to show the necessity of all eight elements to be present in healthy churches. Yet, these have been known ever since the Apostle Peter listed them in his letter: “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love” (2 Pet 1:5-7). Peter ends with a categorical statement: “If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off (2 Pet 1:8-9). Furthermore, Peter asserts that these qualities guarantee that “an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:11). What better formula is needed for success and hope? The preceding verse says that if we do these things we will never fail and will prove our election and calling sure.

I had learned this list as a “ladder” of virtues with successive steps to become a loving Christian. For the first time I saw this list not as a progression but as a comprehensive list of qualities necessary for a balanced Christian life, and thus for a balanced church. What really caught my attention was the number of spiritual disciplines—eight! It matched the eight quality characteristics outlined by Schwarz in measuring the health of a church. There, in Peter’s letter, I found what I see as the
biblical verification of the church measuring instrument. A detailed article on the biblical support for the NCD tool was published recently in the “Ontario Conference Highlights” (Golovenko, 2011).

**Eight Qualities Matched**

To begin with, Peter calls for giving all diligence, making effort, being earnest in accomplishing, promoting, and striving after the purpose. That is an excellent picture of *Empowered Leadership*. The Bible speaks of diligence as the main quality of successful leadership (Prov 21:5; 12:24). The Apostle Paul spoke of diligence and enthusiasm as spiritual gifts of leadership (Rom 12:11).

Next, Peter introduces the purpose: evangelism, sharing the faith. In so doing, one must add virtue and goodness: not simply a sterile and disconnected from life “evangelism,” not a prepositional statement of beliefs, but a genuine care for the needs of people, a *Need-Oriented Evangelism* of offering goodness; a faith with virtue. The method Jesus used when He “mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (White, 1905, p. 143).

Doing the good works of evangelism flows from personal giftedness; therefore, knowing one’s gift is important. Peter says that people must have knowledge added to the goodness of their faith-sharing. When a ministry is informed by an awareness of God-given gifts it becomes truly effective. *Gift-oriented Ministry* is an essential requirement for genuine ministry.

The spiritually-gifted life will manifest true *Passionate Spirituality*, self-control, and submission to the Spirit, where carnal desires and sensual passions are under
disciplined control of the Spirit. Patience is the product of spiritual discipline. Patience is used as a defining label of sainthood spirituality when John the Revelator states: “Here is the patience of the saints” (Rev 13:10; 14:12). It is patience that perseveres and collaborates with other believers, making the Body of Christ structurally fit and effective. *Functional Structures* are the norm for a living Body. It is impossible for a healthy church to be dysfunctional as that would be a contradiction of terms.

Next, Peter speaks of godliness, which is just a synonym for a worshipful life. A life of devotion is not formality but is inspired by the Presence of God. It presents such an Inspiring Worship, where even an unbeliever observing will end up worshiping by falling on his face and saying, “Truly God is among you!” (1 Cor 14:24-25).

In addition, Peter speaks of brotherly kindness, describing the ideal of Christian fellowship as a community created through *Holistic Small Groups* where total care and nurture is provided. The φιλαδελφία (philadelphia) “brotherly love” concept is not just random acts of kindness but the “one-anotherness” principle where a κοινωνία (koinonia) fellowship supplies total mutual care for individual needs. All this is possible through *Loving Relationships*, the agape love, which crowns the Christian life (Col 3:12).

Table 2 illustrates matching eight quality characteristics of the NCD tool with eight qualities of a healthy church according to the Apostle Peter (2 Pet 1:5-7).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities listed by the Apostle Peter</th>
<th>NCD Quality Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving all Diligence</td>
<td>Empowering Leadership</td>
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</table>
Adding Virtue to the Faith
Adding Knowledge to Virtue
Temperance
Patience
Godliness
Brotherly Kindness
Charity
Need oriented Evangelism
Gift oriented Ministry
Passionate & disciplined Spirituality
Effective Structures
 Inspiring Worship
Holistic Small Groups
Loving Relationships

For the Apostle Peter this was a common theme. He lists these quality characteristics for a healthy church also in his first letter (1 Pet 4:7-11) naming disciplined spirituality, passionate love, hospitality, gift-based ministry, stewardship as leadership, inspiring worship, and evangelism.

As years have passed since my discovery of the eight quality characteristics as not only empirical principles, but a biblically-based paradigm, I am persuaded that the sequence is also purposeful. The diligent leadership mentioned first by Peter is here for a reason. Recently the NCD research proposed that leadership is primary and holds a central place among the eight necessary qualities of a healthy church (Schwarz, 2012b). I must propose that empowering leadership is the essential step toward church health.

**Leadership in the Eschatological Church**

A denominational leader of the Seventh-day Adventist church has considered the road ahead for the church, and points out that the church was raised up prophetically for a special mission, requiring a unique theology and organization (Patzer, 2003). These three elements—theology, mission, and organization—require leadership which is not worldly,
leadership that is biblical and inspired by God. An Adventist understanding of the unique purpose and mission necessitates leadership that is derived from the Bible and the Divine revelation. Awareness of such dependency of leadership on the Divine source is being considered more and more in Christian circles. Rodin asserts that “Godly leadership is the miracle of God’s use” of people’s gifts (2010, p. 21). Rodin’s reference to the importance of self-awareness of leaders must be connected with the fractal awareness of human leaders being created in the image of God, hence, our leadership practices must reflect Trinitarian interaction. Blackaby asserts that “God alone sets the agenda” and “the leader’s job is to communicate God’s promise” (2001, pp. 69, 72).

**Necessity of Continuing the Reformation**

Restoring the biblical perspective of *Empowering Leadership* is also required by continuing reformation. Just as the Reformers laboured to emphasize the “priesthood of all believers,” it continues as a needed proclamation of what God hopes for in His church. The practice of every believer being a priest is yet to be embraced by every believer. Priesthood is a position of leadership. As the Reformation continues I propose we modify the slogan and embrace the “leadership of all believers.” Everyone who meets Christ and accepts Him as Lord, Saviour, and God, is to lead others to Him, and that makes every Christian a leader! Leading people to Christ is what Paul means by calling himself a debtor (Rom 1:14-15). It is an existential duty of every believer to lead people to Christ and into God’s Kingdom. In the words of one author “every saved person this side of heaven owes the gospel to every lost person this side of hell” (Platt, 2010, p. 74). Every Christian is to receive the Holy Spirit, for without the Spirit one cannot enter the
Kin

Kingdom of God (John 3:5). Every believer is to be an empowered and empowering leader.

Unique Adventist Responsibility

The Seventh-day Adventist people take a special pride in applying the word Remnant to our movement. The title is sought after by many denominations because of the promise that salvation and deliverance will be found among God’s called Remnant (Joel 2:32). Rev 12:17 gives two identifying characteristics of the Remnant — keeping commandments and having the Testimony of Jesus which is defined as the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev 19:10). As stated on page 49 of this document, I believe that proper leadership is based on Divine revelation, hence, the prophetic spirit is essential for any and every leader. I once asked the congregation how many Seventh-day Adventists should keep the commandments, and the answer was undivided and immediate: “ALL!” Then I asked how many should have the testimony of Jesus, the Gift of Prophecy, and the same congregation was not sure. The invitation before every “remnant” Christian is to be obedient to God by keeping what He commands and to be in a constant relationship with Jesus Christ, to “hear” His testimonies into their lives, and to receive from Him prophetic messages for the present. With that comes the responsibility of communicating and leading. Every remnant believer is to be a leader. Hence, understanding leadership as God designed it to be is indispensable for believers.

Jesus is seen as the Absolute Empowered and Empowering Leader. This same Jesus invites all to overcome, as He overcame, so that all may sit on His throne (Rev 3:21). Having the prophetic guidance through the writings of Ellen G. White and accepting the universal stewardship of the Everlasting Gospel are the imperatives that
every believer and every local church should receive. It is urgent that the Empowering Leadership would be embraced by every believer. Even as I focus on challenging elders to do their pastoral and overseeing duties, the larger goal is to invite every Christian believer to consider Empowering Leadership as their individual goal and purpose. Only then, the Body will be aligned with its Head; the Great Shepherd, who Sees Over all.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown that the Bible presents an interchanging and all inclusive model of leadership where elders are pastors and overseers. Leadership in the Bible is always a teamwork done by a presbytery of elders and is never the responsibility of a single person. This conclusion leads to a practical recommendation that even in small churches, house churches, or small groups, where only one elder is needed pragmatically, an apprentice must be introduced, and a connection to other small churches must exist for accountability and mutual empowerment.

A biblical paradigm of Stewardship as the ministry of dispensing God’s Grace is a unifying denominator for all leaders and dismisses any and all hierarchy. That is why the Adventist understanding of mission is inseparable from the vision of the priesthood of all believers and calls every believer to empowering leadership.

Empowerment should not be confused with equipping, these are different categories, yet both have their place in a healthy, balanced church. The NCD program presents eight quality characteristics as necessary for balanced church, and these are not mere scientific arbitrary definitions but are biblical values derived from 2 Pet 1:3-11.

Empowerment is the work of God and is accomplished through all three revelations of the Trinity. One must consider God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the
Empowering Leader. To choose only part would be heretical, to focus only on the role of Christ for the Leadership model would be insufficient.

The preeminent role of God in the beginning of all things as leader suggests the preeminent role of Leadership among all qualities of a church. True Empowering Leadership must be a fractal of the work and relationship of the Triune God.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW OF TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP

Introduction

The underlying intent in my introduction of the Trinitarian Leadership concept lies in an effort to provide a comprehensive framework for reconciling multifaceted leadership theories as mostly valid and not self-contradictory, but as fractions of a greater design for leadership.

Belief in God as the Intelligent and Involved Designer moves me to consider that a fulfilling leadership in human interactions has to reflect and represent the Divine design, and function according to universal leadership principles. Hence, I consider a fractal pattern of the Divine leadership—Trinitarian model. To ignore the Divine revelation for leadership practices and “to allow modern thought, culture and convention to determine what is normative” is “outright arrogance” in the words of Anderson (2001, p. 21). He appeals to have theology determine the church practice of Christianity, and asserts that we are experiencing “the Trinitarian foundation for practical theology emerging” (p. 39).

The Seventh-day Adventist context is especially positioned to examine such a framework in practice, as the church is undergoing leadership challenges and is committed to seek biblical truth. At the 2010 General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist church held in Atlanta, Georgia, a request was made for an official church
study of ordination, and in response the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) was established in 2012. The two primary questions to be answered are:

1. What is the theology of ordination from a Biblical perspective?

2. What should the implications of this theology be for Seventh-day Adventist practices?

In an article entitled “Wanted: a theology of ordination” Adventist Today editor stated “we had never developed any theology of ordination until the 1991 Annual Council. It was then published in the 1992 revision of the Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Manual” (Newman, 2010, p. 5). As I look through the Minister’s Manual it provides more a definition and argumentation for the traditional three-tiered system, rather than diligent examination of Biblical evidence. The fact that twenty years after an admission is made that theology is lacking and needed in this area is an indication of openness for further theological search. I recommend discovering the theology of leadership before advocating any practical pragmatic models.

The recent developments in the NCD network of churches from many Christian denominations, furthermore allows examination of the relationship between leadership which is empowering, and other aspects of church health and functionality. Schwarz asserts that theological misconceptions and hindrances “are, to put it metaphorically, not like a localized ulcer or an organ that is not working well; rather, they are like a contamination of the blood” (Schwarz, 1999a, p. 49). Correct theology is essential for spiritual leadership practices.

The theme of Trinitarian leadership is becoming more popular. For example, a staff member from the North Western Missouri Fellowship of Christian Athletes
(NWMOFCA) teaches campus sports coaches on how knowing Who God is, informs people on they are to lead (Nashleanas, 2012). He is referring to the teaching of the Doctrine of Trinity (Driscoll & Breshears, 2010), as the defining model of Christian conduct, hence leadership. He proposes that by observing God’s revelation of “Who He is,” leaders will learn how to lead.

From narrative revelations of community in Gen 1:26, where “let us” suggests teamwork, to the first verbal revelation of God’s Character in Exod 33:19 as gracious and merciful, coach Nashleanas suggests leaders are to glean practical principles. In the Great Commission recorded in Matt 28:18-20, he sees the coaching principle of delegating and passing on authority into the field through disciples. The curriculum for the group discussion following the presentation starts with the question of how knowing God as Trinity will affect your life and leadership.

The Seventh-day Adventist set of doctrines also places the understanding of the Trinity at the very foundation, immediately after the primacy of Scriptures (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988; 2005b). Thus, the doctrine entitled “The Godhead” should be fundamental in informing our practices, including leadership.

I believe that in developing the Theology of Leadership more and more will turn to the Trinitarian Leadership model.

**Trinitarian Interest Renewed**

The relational concept of the Trinity is a controversial subject as evidenced by the best-seller success of a novel, *The Shack* (Young, 2007), presenting a non-manipulative and interdependent relational leadership of God in Three Persons. The author presents the Trinitarian dynamics appearing to be “messy” and chaotic, not following rules and not
setting expectations, but the time is “on God’s side” to sort things out and to orchestrate His purpose.

A minister from the Church of Nazarene did a research on the impact of Trinitarian understanding on becoming a church relevant to postmoderns. He strongly asserts that “a proper understanding of the Triune God is critical to everything the church is and does” (Hulsizer, 2006, p. 16). Reflecting on different theological perspectives of Trinitarian community he quotes A. W. Tozer saying, “What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God is erroneous or inadequate” (p. 11). It is also my conviction that until the church has the right vision of God as Leader, of the Divine Trinitarian Leadership, leadership will remain erroneous and inadequate.

A correct understanding of the Godhead as Trinity would lead to correct leadership practices, and a heretical approach to the Trinity would result in a faulty leadership practice. For example, the Sabellian Unitarian Modalism view of the Trinity (Brown, 1988) would result in a situational leadership where different modes are practiced at different times depending on the situation. An Arian perspective on a subordinate view of the Trinity would result in a hierarchical leadership.

A dissertation on the adaptive work of Trinitarian Leadership asserts that because theology is “reflection on the application and contextualization of doctrine” then our leadership practices must be Trinitarian (Loyd, 2009, p. 22). Our understanding of God provides a platform for “human existence in both relationships and interdependence” (p. 25). While this scholar is more interested in the community aspect of Trinity, I use it as
an illustration of how new studies are becoming more attracted to the Trinitarian model in every practice, including leadership. The same dissertation also addressed the history of leadership theory development stating that there is no widely accepted general theory of leadership. I might add that the theology of leadership is also lacking.

We are experiencing a resurgence of interest in Trinitarian implications on leadership, as solitary, monarchical, hierarchical, and authoritarian patterns of leadership are proving inadequate. Another dissertation develops the theme of Trinity, power and leadership further, asserting that for Christians, given our doctrine that we are created in the image of God, we must expect significant correlations between the life and character of God and our life and character, including our leadership practice. “The way in which we understand the nature of God and the way in which we envision and enact leadership within Christian communities are inexorably linked, whether recognized or not” (Zscheile, 2007, p. 43). The author analyzes the individualistic trajectory of the Enlightenment period as a culprit of contemporary leadership practices. Deistic ideas eliminated not only the Trinitarian paradigm but the role of the Holy Spirit in leadership. The author analyzes contributions of Moltmann, LaCugna, Zizioulas and others on developing an understanding of Christian leadership today, acknowledging the limits of analogy between the Trinity and human community (pp. 49-51).

I understand Zscheile’s obsession with the importance of the Trinitarian paradigm. “Beginning with the Trinity in thinking about Christian leadership also means ending with the Trinity,” he writes (Zscheile, 2007, p. 52). Of importance to him is also the eschatological importance of this Trinitarian resurgence in understanding and practicing leadership. The tendency to focus on Christ’s leadership alone and apart from
the Trinity as community, repeats the error of Greenleaf’s (1977) monumental work on servant leadership which presents Christ apart from the Trinity as a moral model for us to emulate. Only “if Christ’s self-emptying servanthood is seen within the framework of the mutuality and partnership of the Trinity, the picture changes. In the Trinity, the act of self-emptying for the sake of the other is not one-sided, but a mutual and interpersonal exchange. It is in the power of the Spirit that Jesus relinquishes all to the Father, not simply as a heroic individual act of self-denial” (Zscheile, 2007, p. 55).

This work presents the Trinitarian leadership as a collaborative community leadership, which is not either-or, but a both-and approach to leadership models. This perspective affirms my search for a comprehensive, all inclusive model of leadership. The following paragraph best expresses where my search for leadership and teamwork begins:

Leadership communities in the image of the Trinity embrace a level of mutuality, reciprocal acknowledgement of each other’s gifts, vulnerability to one another, and genuine shared life that transcends simply getting the job done. Thus cultivating a community in the image of the divine community—a community of reconciliation, interdependence, mutuality, difference, and openness—becomes central to leadership in a Trinitarian perspective. This includes both the community of leaders and the community led by the leaders. (Zscheile, 2009, p. 57)

Leadership – Window or Icon

I am indebted to Hulsizer’s research for the brevity of defining why I am so fascinated with the Trinitarian Leadership. He quotes Driscoll who states that everything must be a window revealing God, or it becomes an idol. For too long, people have focused on Leadership as an “idol” not as a “window” through which they must also see God (Hulsizer, 2006, p. 13). An understanding of Leadership must move from a “necessary yoke” to put up with for the sake of organization, productivity, or
achievement, and become one of venues through which people understand God, just as worship, ministry, and spirituality are windows into revelations of God. My intent is to transform understanding of leadership from being a tool for an organization or tasks to being a revelation of Who God is, and How He leads us.

Away From Secular Models of Leadership

The recent “bankruptcy of the leadership paradigm” (Sweet, 2012, pp. 35-38), the 2007-2008 collapse of systems built on marketed leadership paradigms, calls into question the “leadership myth” (p. 25). Sweet’s work is calling the church to turn away from a secular model, which he summarizes by quoting the former US president D. Eisenhower definition of leadership as “the art of getting someone else to do something you want done” which led the church to become “a place where everyone is trying to get everyone else to do what they want done but don’t want to do themselves” (p. 26). “Such leadership has led us to the place where everybody is trying to get everybody else to do something, and no one ends up doing anything” (p. 24).

There is also a renewed interest in practical relevance of the Trinitarian interactions in more scholarly circles. One dissertation on Trinitarian vision of leadership reviews governing dynamics of the Triune God in action to address the problem of leadership in the Church today (Meyers, 2008). The author decries secularization of ecclesial leadership (p. 4), critiques most popular evangelical leadership experts, Bill Hybels, John C. Maxwell, Rick Warren for seeing no significant difference between leadership in the church and in the secular world (pp. 5-9), and argues for leadership to be the gift of the Holy Spirit and not a human talent, quality, or a skill of management (p. 79). Hence, Meyers invites Christian leadership to abandon secular models. The author
asserts that the verities of the Trinity cannot be fully stated in human definitions of leadership or abstracted into a formula away from their participatory relationships.

Meyers develops the Trinitarian model of leadership, and defines it as a “participation in Christ’s High priestly ministry of leadership, which includes character formation and relational communion in the Spirit through Christ toward the Father” (Meyers, 2008, pp. 5, 59). This model of leadership is derived from God’s desire for fellowship; hence, it is about being in a relationship and leading others into the same relationship.

I embrace his work totally, as he proposes that no single model of leadership, even the servant/shepherd role, can represent the true leadership, as it does not invite participation of all people into active ministry. Meyers dedicates whole chapter to invite believers to consider the Wesleyan view of Trinitarian soteriology, ecclesiology for leadership, the “perichoretic coactivity of all the Persons of the Trinity” (p. 50) as an invitation to all “into communion in the Spirit with the Son and through the Son with the Father, and with one another in Christ (p. 33).” The author’s summary of Wesleyan Trinitarian theology builds the case for non-hierarchical unity in diversity as a foundation.
for leadership (p. 66). He asserts multiple times that early Methodists “were becoming transcripts of the Trinity” (pp. 50, 54, 56, 57, 64, etc.), to use Charles Wesley’s insightful image. This image of leadership becoming a *transcript* of Trinity is another metaphor for the imagery of fractals I use in this document.

Such a participatory view of leadership prevents hierarchy and invites mutual relationship of all gifts, placing leadership as one among many. While it hints to the comprehensive view of leadership as participation in all gifts, this work does not look beyond leaders’ participating in the work of the Triune God, and does not consider the threefold role of a leader, which would resemble comprehensive functions of the Trinity, as presented in my previous chapter, needed for complete leadership. This complementary leadership of all Three Revelations of God: Father, Son, and Spirit, speak against an exaggerated view of leadership as a “monotheistic all sufficient Solitary Ruler, non-relational dictator, controlling” Father.

**Divine Leadership for Human Leadership**

An argument has been made that beliefs enacted produce values, which in turn establish behavior (Malphurs, 2013, p. 21). It is important that our leadership practices be based on our fundamental beliefs in who God is, and how He acts.

A similar Trinitarian concept for practical theology is introduced in a dissertation in a Presbyterian context. Benson (2005) advocates a necessity for Trinitarian understanding of God and His image in human nature as the context for a community reliant and responsive ministry and leadership. The author invites Christian believers from a transactional legal contractual relationship to a transformational communion.
He presents the threefold leadership of Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet, being the Ruler, the Servant, and the Visionary. The main appeal is to consider leadership of God as a primary cause of human leadership.

![Figure 16. Benson’s Threefold Leadership of Christ](image)

Recent work on the divine design for church life presents another Trinitarian perspective of three DNA strands for a healthy church: MRI—Missional, Relational, Incarnational (Sweet, 2009). Sweet, dubbed a postmodern prophet, again challenges the traditional status quo theologies of leadership and doing church. Here’s how he outlines the “threefold nature of the divine disclosure” (p. 49). First, the missional movement of God the Creator. Christ came sent by the Father for a Mission; hence, leadership is about being sent and also sending, a missionary that produces more missionaries. Second, relational Son, the Redeemer, reconciles human relationships with God. Third, the incarnational Spirit empowers participation in both the mission and the relationship of God. Sweet points out that leadership of incarnation is about “suffering alongside,” a “concept for which William Tyndale invented the word *compassion* to convey its
meaning in the first English Bible (1527)” (p. 51).

Sweet points out that before Christians were called “Christians” for the first time in Antioch (Acts 11:26), the followers of Jesus were called a “people of the Way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). One biblical insight used by Sweet in which I see a pointer for the Trinitarian leadership is Jesus’ assertion of being the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

Jesus modeled the incarnation of being among, within, and in the midst of those being served. Relational leadership is all about the Holy Spirit uniting people. Sweet
says, “No story is too late for revision” (p. 142). I would paraphrase it that “leadership is due for revision.” Jesus exemplified Trinitarian Leadership, where the Father, Son, and Spirit led as One. In Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwelled bodily. And all are invited to such fullness (Col 2:9-10).

An interesting insight came to me from the book *Breakout Churches*, styled after a secular bestseller *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001), where the author suggests that the “Who” must come before the “What,” yet it also must be co-worked together on a “simultrack” (Rainer, 2005, p. 91).

Developing the Vision Intersection Profile (VIP) factor, Rainer presents three aspects of the intersection: Community Needs, Leadership Passion, and Congregational Gifts (pp. 111-118). As I looked at his diagram I immediately connected it with the Trinitarian Model where the *Father* paradigm concerns the general needs of community, the *Son* aspect provides model for commitment to serve through leading, and the *Spirit* work is expressed in corporate congregational support through individual giftedness.

![Figure 19. Rainer’s VIP Trinitarian Model](image-url)
Praxis and Theology Must be Aligned

More and more theologians are noticing that a person’s practical ministry must be aligned with the theological understanding of God. Barth considered “the task of theology...to clarify the presuppositions of church praxis.” Barth’s statement that God is “no fifth wheel on the wagon, but the wheel that drives all wheels” (Anderson, 2001, p. 17) explains how the interworking of the Trinitarian model must define practical ministry. The author appeals to the Trinitarian approach as a safeguard against utilitarianism and pragmatism in any practice.

The term *Trinitarian Leadership* is becoming more in use by students of leadership. More and more authors explore the Trinitarian nature of leadership. For instance focusing on leadership of Jesus alone, ignoring the community of Father and Holy Spirit may develop a “tendency to Christomonism” (Hjalmarson, 2009, p.1). He gives a direction toward understanding the Trinitarian leadership and its practical importance, as well as the differentiation between team and community:

If the nature of Godself is community, it makes sense to draw some distinctions between community and *team*. A team is not the same as a community. A team usually has a clearly identified leader and so it retains an element of command and control. A Trinitarian perspective on leadership must reject hierarchy.

I cannot claim to be first to use it, but the idea of understanding a divine interaction of leadership as a model to be practiced for human benefit is so far as I can determine unique to my manuscripts. I have discovered thus far, that the use of the term “Trinitarian” as related to leadership is applied as an adjective not as an adverb that impacts function as I herein propose.
Natural Church Development Paradigm

From the birth of Church Growth movement in 1960s numerous church growth experts proposed various principles for church health and growth. In spite of different approaches there are certain common trends that are emerging. Decades of research culminated in the comprehensive concept of the Natural Church development conceptualized by Christian Swartz who introduced the eight essential quality characteristics for healthy churches, namely: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, effective structures, inspiring worship, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships (Schwarz, 1996).

One of the major promoters of this paradigm in North America, Bob Logan, used to speak of 10 principles, two of which were focused on leadership: effective pastoral leadership and developing and resourcing leaders (Logan, 1990). Wagner (1976), who was one of the first practitioners of the Church growth movement, and a student of theoretician McGavran, suggested seven vital signs for church health (p. 159). The “vital sign number one of a healthy, growing church” was a powerful leadership (pp. 55-57), even though his terminology was different, as he focused more on a pastor who has the power (p. 65), he laid a precursor to consider empowering leadership first. Wagner’s second sign of church health was “well-mobilized laity” (p. 69), which is equivalent of the gift based ministry of NCD. The third sign was in being “big enough” (p. 84), which simply meant being effective structurally in NCD terms. The fourth sing suggested by Wagner was expressed by a formula “celebration + congregation + cell= church” (p. 97). He explained it as a combination of celebration worship services and congregational life in cells. NCD took this concept and presented two separate qualities, inspiring worship
and holistic small groups. The fifth sign by Wagner was more a descriptive statement of reality than a prescriptive principle to follow – homogeneity, “bird of a feather flock together” (p. 110). NCD developed this further into a principle of loving relationships. Sixth sign was considered a pragmatic evangelism (p. 135), which NCD dubbed a need-oriented evangelism. The connection from the seventh sign is not very obvious. Wagner suggested that it is about having “priorities straight” (p. 147), and spiritual development was that priority, over social activism. Hence, NCD presents passionate spirituality.

Schwarz’ NCD did not emerge in a vacuum. Schwarz presented a positive challenge of Empowering Leadership as a comprehensive model. He placed the Empowering Leadership as the very first essential quality needed by a church to be healthy, calling for a balanced concept of church and asserting that a healthy church would grow all by itself, “organically,” without practical steps for developing an empowering environment were introduced in the Implementation Guide, presenting the need for a continuous process of empowerment. The source of empowerment was considered in the external structure of coaching. Even though the source of power was not identified expressly, the intent was to show spiritual gifts as the power that is already inherently present and needs to be released. Self-development and personal growth goals were identified as factors of empowering leadership (Schwarz & Schalk, 1998).

Concerns About the NCD Model

The NCD Implementation Guide (Schwarz & Schalk, 1998, pp.47-54) provided practical observations and checklists which I applied in my church:

1. Empowering leaders are being empowered themselves through being mentored continually. A coaching structure is necessary.
2. Gifts of leaders are to complement and complete each other, not compete.

3. Clear goals must be set in writing, for both long- and short-term objectives.

4. Leaders are to develop a personal growth plan and be accountable for it.

Two observations raised my concern. First, it suggests that when leaders are willing to work on themselves, a rapid progress and improvement could be made in a relatively short time. What will happen if leaders are not motivated, are not willing to change their practice and styles? Second, when the church begins to grow, the standards expected of leaders also increase. Growth is expected from a healthy church and when the objective of growth is reached, Empowering Leadership may become a stumbling block if leaders are not living up to higher expectations. This indeed became the challenge in my project as I will describe in the implementation story in Chapter 4.

**Adventist Version of NCD**

A contextualized approach to implementing the Natural Church Development program in an Adventist context was developed by a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Andrews University (Folkenberg, 2002). Folkenberg appeals for leadership on every level to invest in equipping and educating people and adds to Schwarz’s concept by listing the following guidelines:

1. Leaders must be clear on and engaged in mission and vision for the church.
2. Leaders must be constantly and actively communicating vision to people.
3. Leaders at every level must invest themselves in equipping others.
4. Leaders must delegate and not hoard all the work.
5. Vocational pastors should be constantly upgrading through education.
6. Vocational pastors must be in a mentoring relationship with the elders.
7. Leaders must do the work of visitation in tandem, training others.
8. Every person involved in ministry must have a clear job description. (pp. 38-45)

However, in his work Folkenberg still separates the power of vocational pastor from local elder, and there is no hint here to consider investing all the power in elders at
the local church level. In advising on five action steps he recommends Maxwell’s 21 laws of Leadership (Maxwell, 1998) as a motivational factor. My church had invested time and studied these principles together with the church board through 2005 and 2006, we even considered a sequential approach to vision, which I will describe under Implementation in Chapter 4. Yet, I am convinced that it is insufficient for motivating leaders toward creating Empowering environment. I believe it is the Trinitarian theology that is needed as the motivating factor.

Trinitarian Development of NCD

The most interesting feature of the NCD research, in my opinion, is the Trinitarian model (Schwarz, 1999b). The Trinitarian lenses are considered the “heart” of NCD, but the first two editions of the NCD guide (Schwarz, 1996, 2000) did not include the Trinitarian approach. The first outline of the Trinitarian compass for eight quality characteristics appeared in the third edition (Schwarz, 2005). The precursors were in the works as Schwarz presented this model for gift-oriented ministry first, taking it from 1 Cor 12:4-6, describing three dimensions – gifts, workings and service, and how they relate to the Triune God through balance of power, wisdom and commitment (Schwarz, 2001). The second work focused on the Trinitarian compass for Loving Relationships as a balance between Justice, Grace and Truth (2004).
The first time Schwarz’ perspective of *Trinitarian lenses* on leadership appeared was in his third edition of the *NCD guide*, where he explains empowering leadership and a job description of a leader as a balance between three functions: explanation, motivation, and liberation from those who lead to those who follow (Schwarz, 2005).

Only recently Schwarz published a Trinitarian perspective on Small Groups Community (2012) and Leadership (2012), presenting detailed explanation of the role empowering leadership has in a community, connecting this quality with the energy of power in his paradigm of small groups.
Schwarz asserts that empowering leadership is unique among eight qualities, and is at the centre of community life. It keeps the entire system in balance.

I anticipated that Schwarz’ search for the Trinitarian model of leadership would consider the leadership of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a model. Attending the release of two books when Schwarz toured Toronto in May 2012, I was a bit disappointed that he focused more on practical applications of balancing six wings - vision, experimentation, capacity, strategy, training, and progression. I hoped that more discussion would be given to the theology of Leadership and the Trinitarian model. Consequently, the Trinitarian model continues to be sought for and needs to be better understood.
Schwarz practical application approach sees leadership and empowerment as two different axes where it is not either/or, but both wings must be developed and balanced.

![Two Axes of Empowering Leadership](image)

**Figure 25.** Two Axes of Empowering Leadership

Consistent with earlier direction Schwarz sees the empowerment quality of leadership in balancing three roles: motivation, liberation, and explanation, and warns that a one-sided approach to leadership—unbalanced leadership—will only cause problems as it will be misdirected and misdirecting. Leading as an Expert-guru, or as a Driver-cheerleader, or as a Comrade-buddy have one thing in common—disempowerment.

![Three Extremes of Disempowering Leadership](image)

**Figure 26.** Three Extremes of Disempowering Leadership
Here, I must recall my main theses that Trinitarian Leadership leads to a truly balanced leadership as God acts in unity of Three at all times. The Spirit never acts independently of the Father and Son, the Son does not act separately from the Spirit, and the Father does not act alone.

Criticism of the NCD Model

Schwartz’s model of diagnosing the health of a church is often ignored or criticized. Criticism that I have heard has no theological or biblical grounds, but simply relies on methodological doubts and conceptual disagreements. I have presented my personal persuasion of the biblical foundation for the eight quality characteristics based on 2 Pet 1:3-11 in Chapter 2.

Recent criticism of Schwarz came from his working independently of the church growth movement. A group of Beeson Doctor of Ministry students at Asbury Seminary did their own study to identify necessary qualities of a healthy church, again placing the Empowering Leadership first (Law, 2002). Another Beeson dissertation disagrees with Schwarz (Kinder, 2002). It provides more insight on the reason of critiquing Schwarz, mainly the insufficient sample of membership from surveyed churches, suggesting a larger proportion of the church members being involved in the survey of church health to provide for more accurate results. Kinder still did not improve on the understanding of Empowering Leadership, placing it first again, as the foundation for the rest of the qualities to take place. Describing what Empowering Leadership is, the author actually reduces it to servant leadership only. There is no comprehensive reflection on how the Trinity interaction may propose a model for leadership. Other participants expanded on
quality characteristics of a healthy church without getting into the Trinitarian model (McKee, 2003).

**Empowering Leadership in Literature**

Considering Schwarz’s warning of disempowerment when leadership is one-sided, another theologian shares an even stronger warning by calling it “abuse” (Anderson, 1997, pp. 189-193). Withholding mentoring, teaching, and guidance altogether, and using only a one-sided approach to control is not just a mistreatment but spiritual abuse. In speaking of servant leadership he uses an illustration for comprehensive ministry where the driver is also a mechanic. Explaining leadership abuse, he uses an illustration of the dysfunctional family: a domestic disorder in the family of God (pp. 205-207). Leadership that is one-sided and not comprehensive is a dysfunctional leadership. While it may be stable it leads to disorder. He makes a theological argument with consideration of the Trinitarian interaction for the necessity of empowerment before equipping. Anderson concludes on leadership by presenting a Trinitarian picture of empowering leadership as a composite and comprehensive act of
God: wisdom, work, and will (p. 201).

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 27. Anderson’s Trinitarian Leadership*

**Importance of Empowerment**

A strong case is made by Dennis (1995) throughout his book for the pre-eminence of Empowering Leadership for the health of any team in a business environment. Examples focused more on planned behavior and reasoned actions through narratives, but Dennis does not explore deep cognitive motivation. Reading his narrative of secular scenarios as examples of empowering leadership, one cannot help but notice that the author is describing the function of the Holy Spirit in the Bible without crediting the spiritual aspect of leadership as the source. Even though God is not named as the Source of empowerment, a spiritual reader sees the quest for spiritual qualities. Dennis’ objective was to show how Empowering Leadership must come first, before any other aspect of healthy development.

A research on the nature of empowerment in the workplace (Turner, 2006), provides a suggestion to the connection between hierarchy and the source of power, calling for an autonomy of self-management as the environment for empowerment. I like
this research because the equality of power and similitude in nature proposed by the author is reflective of the interaction and relations within the Trinity where “original, unborrowed, and underived” (White, 1898, p. 530) life and power exists. Turner’s work presents a strong case for shifting the responsibility for decisions and actions from hierarchy to total participation. Such is the model needed for spiritual growth of Christian churches, which is the main purpose of this study. A strong emphasis is placed on the concept of transformational leadership, making it almost parallel with what the empowering leadership should be. When one compares the transforming work of the Triune God as the model for empowering leadership, the intrinsic value of this work is evident.

Puzzle of Empowerment

Hartman’s (2004) study on behavioural patterns of empowering leaders admits that the process of empowerment is not understood; it is not visible how empowerment works, but the results are manifested through certain behaviors that make it objective for the study. The most appreciated insight in this research is the factor of psychological and intellectual influence required for an empowering behavior to occur, thus suggesting a holistic connection of the triune aspects of human nature. All behaviors observed by this secular research, such as delegation of responsibility, freedom granting, revealing information, opening timing and opportunities to act, are only, in my observation, partial descriptions of the Divine acts toward humanity. Secular research seeks to describe what God has modeled from the beginning through the Trinitarian Revelation.

The Center for Creative Leadership invites leaders to consider an inspiring alternative: partnership as true leadership (Moxley, 2000). The author connects leadership
with the spirit but removes the supernatural from the spirit. The spirit is defined as the unseen life force that enlivens and energizes us. It connects all existence for the purpose of progress, and those in interpersonal connections—aligned with the purpose—are empowered. The Gaia Principle (Lovelock, 2000) is evident in Moxley’s understanding of the spirit, yet I find it interesting that even secular authors are admitting more and more that the empowerment needed to lead humanity is greater than self, greater than an individual. He also asserts that coercion disempowers, as power is directional and when it flows or is forced into the opposite direction it diminishes. He uses the word “dispiriting,” emphasizing the fact that the spirit is an essential part of who we are; it is an integral part of being human. For my purpose, it encourages understanding that the leadership must be aligned with God’s purpose if it is to be effective and meaningful.

An interesting view of empowerment as inviting people to participate and creating conditions of listening and hearing is presented by a meetings-master (Tropman, 2003). This concept presents empowerment as a reciprocal interaction, not a unidirectional hierarchical order. Reflecting on concepts presented in Tropman’s work, I am impressed to draw analogy of Divine Trinitarian interaction of empowerment by making people partakers of God’s purpose and making people partners in leading the future by prayer.

Empowering leadership is listed as one of many behavioral types of leadership and is suggested to be based on encouraging independent action, opportunity thinking, teamwork, self-development, self-reward, and participative goal setting (Pearse & Sims, 2002).

Another work on empowering leadership explores a precursor for a balanced leadership in relationship to God. It focuses on the tension between the mystery and
revelation of God and the mind and the heart of human agents as producing four excesses of leadership: moralism, rationalism, quietism, and pietism (Miller, 2004). The author reviews contemporary leadership definitions to suggest that leaders must be connected and follow God, be led themselves by God, and be changed by God, be empowered by God, in order to lead and empower others. Sadly, in his work, the leadership is equated with the single office of a pastor. Despite the low perceptions of empowering leadership, the study conducted by Miller revealed that empowering leadership is about shared authority and revolves around Christ, not the pastor. In an empowering context pastors see themselves as members of the team and equip all members through discipleship for the priesthood ministry of all believers.

Reactions to Leadership

On the opposite spectrum in search for empowering leadership stemming from the greater Design, stand anti-organizational critics suggesting that what is needed today is “the leaderless organization,” which truly has an “unstoppable power,” making it the title of their book, filled with examples of how “absence of structure, leadership, and formal organization...has become a major asset” (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006, p. 7). Yet, a deeper look into their proposed paradigm of decentralization still reveals certain inherent leadership; some mystic “strange attractor” (Wheatley, 2006) present even where there is no apparent structure of leadership. Wheatley presents a simple, yet challenging perspective of fractal’s repetitiveness in nature. The image of resemblance at different levels is appealing for me, as it suggests that Trinitarian dynamics in heaven should be repeated on earth, in our human interactions, in organizational structures, and at home.
A similar approach is taken by Easum (2000), suggesting that being led by God is more important than any other aspect of leadership, and presenting divine leadership as the DNA of all effective leadership, showing that fractalling of leadership is about reproducing leaders at every level, replicating the DNA of God-leadership in every part of the congregation. In his graphical illustration of this non-hierarchical paradigm the author comes close to what I see as the Trinitarian Leadership, by implication proposing a Divine omnipresent leadership, which permeates every sphere and, when understood and followed, magnifies effectiveness.

Len Sweet asserts a monumental challenge with words on the cover page “It’s never been about leading!” (Sweet, 2012) He takes anti-leadership stand and boldly declares that “leadership category itself should be shuttered from our churches” for the sake of “followership” (p. 85). He says that “it is impossible to maintain the category of leader and simultaneously engender the fellow-follower dynamic” (p. 85); “what the world defines as leadership is not the way God works through his people” (p. 29). He speaks of leading as a “circle of acceptance and not a chain of command,” and also speaks of the Trinitarian component in every relationship (p. 119). Sweet invites to replace the concept of “leader” concept with “first follower” (p. 23). I am not discarding the leadership as a relational process, only agreeing that true spiritual leadership has to be routed in following God’s Trinitarian Lead.

This concept of “followership” is emerging amidst crisis of lacking theology of leadership. A recent book on leadership from the Seventh-day Adventist denominational press, an edition of 20 articles on essentials every leader should know is entitled “...As I follow Christ” (Esmond, 2013). One of authors suggests that even “servant leaders”
term has been misused with more emphasis on leading than serving, where everyone want to lead and no one serves, hence he proposes “leading servants” with emphasis on service (Kwon, 2013, p. 24). As I expected more emphasis on followership I found variety of summaries on different current popular leadership perspectives.

Empowerment as Motivation

Many leadership models are conditionally limited and reflect only partial solutions to whatever problem they may be addressing. My interest in the Trinitarian model comes from my search of a comprehensive, all-encompassing view of leadership. Such an approach is proposed by the Spiral Dynamics theorists (Beck & Cowan, 1996) who presented memes of needs and motivation in people. This model was further developed and adopted for the church environment through the system-sensitive leadership concept of empowering diversity (Armour & Browning, 2000). Memetics model of motivation and leadership development was contextualized for the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide church by sociologist Caleb Rosado, suggesting that different regions of our church, constituencies on different continents have different motivational platforms and their level of development affects their styles of leadership (Rosado, 2000). This paradigm of motivation goes beyond Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation and considers not only physical and emotional but also spiritual needs.

The memetics paradigm presents a different approach to different categories of people groups based on their needs, present understanding, and organization. It critiques the “one-size-fits-all” approach to leadership and invites a comprehensive view of eight necessary leadership paradigms co-working together. The eight groups or categories of people are always in flux; hence, requiring contextual leadership shift. It is not
coincidental that the eight memes correspond, in my opinion, with the eight vital qualities of organizational health as proposed by Schwarz through the NCD program. The empowering leadership corresponds to the transcendent wisdom and is equated with the “global view...the peak meme...which moves among all previous systems in a fluid manner,” to use wording of spiral dynamic authors (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 289).

![System-sensitive Leadership model](image)

*Figure 28. System-sensitive Leadership model*

My interest in discovering motivation for leadership through a Trinitarian model is best expressed by a statement I read recently, “For us as Christians, our theology shapes how we view motivation. What do we believe about God?” (Bell, 2012, p. 25). When a person understands God’s leadership he or she will be more motivated to lead. Hence, the Trinitarian Leadership is the ideal for a theology of Leadership.
Priority of Empowering Leadership

In a study by the Assemblies of God, they built a strong case for the pre-eminence of empowering leadership as a remedy for the slow death of churches (Battaglia, 2004). The author proposes a three-step process model of Jesus’ empowerment—recruiting, discipling, and releasing. A closer look at the process described by Battaglia’s three stages includes all eight steps of the popular Master Plan of Evangelism process: selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision, and reproduction (Coleman, 2006). Battaglia’s implementation plan of teaching is a valuable tool for my own design of the curriculum for empowering elders in the Seventh-day Adventist context because Battaglia also utilized the NCD survey to determine the minimum factor in his context. His results had the Empowering Leadership “stave” third lowest, similar to my situation in London, and the lack of small groups as the main weakness. Battaglia quoted Schwarz’s assertion that leadership quality has the strongest leverage among other qualities of church life, which is also my premise to be tested. This similarity made me even more interested in seeing if it is possible to turn the church around, bypassing the “minimum factors” and changing the leadership dynamics. Battaglia’s research was based on Jesus’ ministry alone, emphasizing the importance of coaches and mentors as it relates to the empowering leadership development which in essence is a contemporary rephrasing of the biblical discipleship principle. My contribution is in including Jesus’ Servant Leadership model and going beyond to the Trinitarian perspective of considering integral leadership of the Father and the Spirit.

Church growth consultant Rainer differentiates between equipping and empowering and defines empowerment as giving authority to carry out responsibilities.
He also builds the case that the first determining factor of a “breakout” or resurrected churches is leadership, which he calls “Acts 6/7” leadership (Rainer, 2005, pp. 35-51).

The relational interactive aspect of empowerment in leadership is presented in a study of effective clergy leaders (Sandstrom, 1991). An interesting observation is made of how different personality types allow different functional practice power-sharing. MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) data was considered for different types of clergy—youth leader, preacher, spiritual guide, administrator, pastoral counselor—to advocate that clergy does not have to be competent at everything. Hence, personal qualities put different leaders into different modes of leadership, and self-awareness helps leaders to seek cooperation with others who bring complimentary qualities to the team. This work is an open door to explore how relations within the Trinity may model the empowerment model for leadership. The study presents consensus among eight interviewed subjects on areas contributing to empowerment: vision, mission/directions/goals, belief in people/giftedness, communication. Of major importance to empowering leadership are also loyalty/trust/confidence, self-concept/authenticity, humility/teachability, reliance on God, guide/mentor/teacher/trainer, feedback/accountability (Sandstrom, 1991, pp. 62-63). Qualities such as affirmation, energy/enthusiasm, vulnerability/risks/mistakes, concerns for followers/love, role model, delegate freely, time commitment, received minor attention. Qualities covered by Sandstorm are comparable with the new Empowering Leadership profile presented by NCD, six “wings” (Schwarz, 2012b, p. 27) of which are described in the following section.
Trinitarian Pattern in Secular Research

An excellent review of the empowerment as related to leadership is summarized by Bodner (2005) building a case for the necessity of empowerment. She provides the table of definitions of empowerment (p. 6). The closest Bodner comes to the Trinitarian concept is in providing a triangular profile for empowerment factors: authority, ability, and accountability (p. 36). These are further illustrated practically as knowledge, skill, and resources. Yet, it is a very humanistic view of empowering leadership, focusing on human nature, motivations, and beliefs, and totally void of an association with the Trinitarian model.

Figure 29. Threefold Empowerment

Tools for Evaluating Leadership Effectiveness

While the NCD program has developed tools to address Ministry, Loving Relationships, and Spirituality styles, it did not offer tools for evaluating leadership styles and level of empowerment until the spring of 2012. The original 11 survey questions used to determine the constituent qualities of the Empowering Leadership as displayed in the Plus Profile (Appendix C) are based on the 15 variables of the original NCD research
Yet, it is my opinion that none of them address directly the motivational factor.

The new online tool (NCD International, 2012) introduced for determining Empowering Leadership balance is designed to discover the balance or the lack there of among six categories:

1. Vision—casting your own and releasing others’ visions;
2. Experimentation—permitting mistakes and learning from such;
3. Capacity of assessing weaknesses and using strength;
4. Strategy of analysing present situation and setting mission goals;
5. Training by teaching and modeling principles;
6. Progression of punctuated bold moves, and nurturing steady progress.

This tool does not directly measure balance of imitating Divine Trinitarian Leadership.

**Secular Tools Measuring Empowerment**

In the secular sphere a questionnaire was developed (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000) as a self-assessment measure of leadership behaviors, also to be used by team leaders. It was an improvement to the *Self-Management Leadership Questionnaire* proposed a decade earlier. A detailed description of the questionnaire development process came with a disclaimer of its value it in the “emerging era of flat organizational structures” (Hersen & Thomas, 2003, p. 230). The questionnaire considered eight tentative categories basing its hypothesis on the work of other authors:

1. Leading by example
2. Coaching

86
3. Encouraging
4. Participative decision making
5. Informing
6. Showing concern
7. Interacting with the team
8. Group management

This questionnaire was influenced by the work of Conger and Kanungo (1998) that examined the lack of references to charismatic leadership and provided a comprehensive model of a charismatic leadership process based on empirical research and illustrated by corporate examples. Work of Manz and Sims (1989) on super-leadership, where they proposed empowerment as moving away from a heroic model of leadership to teach others how to lead themselves, was also a significant contribution. The work of another group of organizational researchers was also considered as they focused on a new task of defining or making an operationalization of empowerment in the workplace, who conceptualized empowerment as shaped out of four cognitions: a sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). The impact of the teamwork on the creating of an empowering environment was also considered.

When the questionnaire was tested for validation as a tool, the eight areas of observation were reduced to five, merging factors 2 with 3 and factors 6, 7, and 8 into one. Thus, their new proposal, validated statistically, pointed to five areas:

1. Leading by example
2. Participative decision-making
3. Coaching  
4. Informing  
5. Showing concern/interacting with the team

The questions asked individuals to respond using a five-point scale (from “never” to “always”) on how frequently they exhibit the behavior of interest. While this scale was designed for use as a self-assessment, it could also be considered for a group evaluation use.

Similarity With Tools Used by Church Consultants

The secular scale is very similar to the five practical steps recommended by our denominational Implementation guide by Folkenberg (2002) mentioned earlier in the chapter:

1. Develop yourself by continuous upgrading to be willing to change  
2. Shared ownership of vision  
3. Personal coaching  
4. Communicating  
5. Invest in people development by mentoring.

No other unique tools were discovered in my research that could be used by a local church or Christian leaders to evaluate leadership and empowerment.

Having considered the importance of the empowerment to be coupled with leadership, my next task was to examine modes of leadership as presented in the Bible and those that developed in Christian churches throughout centuries, and studied by scholars and theologians.
History of Leadership in Christianity

As indicated in Chapter 2 my interest is in discovering the biblical paradigm of leadership. The fact that leadership is recently a new word, coined in the nineteenth century, and first appearing in the dictionary of the English language in Noah Webster’s American Dictionary of the English Language in 1828. Yet it was not included in subsequent editions. It was not officially recognized until 1889-1911 the Century Dictionary (Rost, 1993, pp. 39-40). This explains the lack of agreement in defining it. Rost in his research shows how every decade the definition changes, and how theories contradict one another. However, it does not take away from the fact that leadership as a concept always existed in human interactions. A thorough look into the biblical paradigm is required.

Theological research can be biased by denominational views of the subject. The current research can be tainted by centuries of traditions developed in different branches of Christianity so care must be taken to cut through historical clutter to discover original practices of early Christian leadership.

Unbiblical Roots of Hierarchy

Initially a bishop/elder was not over other bishop/elders in rank as they were all equal. There is no evidence of biblical hierarchy among elders (Merkle, 2003). The Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15, which took place in 50 AD, has no supremacy of an elder over other elders. It was a collegiality with power and authority vested equally among local Jerusalem and visiting elders. It was not until AD 606 when Pope Boniface III, by the declaration of the emperor Phocas, claimed to be ruler over every local church worldwide (McBrien, 1997, p. 99).
However, the hierarchy development began much earlier. Around AD 200, a singular ruling bishop rose above presbytery, starting a separation of eldership into two offices, that of regular elders and a bishop. Thus episcopate originated from a presbytery in local individual churches (Sheldon, 1988). Latest research indicates that already in AD 185, by the time of Irenaeus, the tri-fold hierarchy was universally accepted. The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus presented the third ordination—that of a bishop in addition to the ordination of a presbyter—giving rise to promotion to a higher hierarchical rank (Easton, 1934). By AD 250, this early catholic system developed diocesan bishops, and by AD 300 it gave supremacy to the bishop of the major city in each province as metropolitan. This is where the Greek church stopped their oligarchy of patriarchs, each patriarch being equal among every city (Fisher, 1976).

The Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in AD 381 provided for five patriarchs: super-metropolitans (Stevenson, 1995). By the fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon in AD 451, the first Pope to be called “Great,” Leo I, claimed Peter’s voice and the papal power. But it was not fully accepted until the second “Great” Pope, Gregory, in AD 590 acted like the Pope, even though denouncing the title of the “universal ecumenical bishop” (McBrien, 1997, pp. 76, 97).

Professor Johnston (2006) speaks of “democratization” of leadership by the Apostle Paul through placing gifts of apostleship, prophecy, among charismata, thus making them available to all as the Spirit wills. He also points out that the elevation of bishop over the presbytery of elders was evident at the beginning of the second century in writings of Ignatius of Antioch, about AD 108, in letters to Smyrnians 8:1, Trallians 3:1 and Magnesians 6:1. Clement of Rome writing at AD 95 still refers to the twofold
leadership structure (1 Clement 42:4). And even the second century Didache (15:1, 2) still has no room for authority above that of elders.

An independent, non-denominational study by the Christian research organization, Barna Group, presents historical research endorsing the primary role of elders as leaders in Christian congregations (Viola & Barna, 2008). It is a monumental work for its bold assertion toward leadership and the ministry of all believers, and for presenting chronological evidence to show how pagan traditions of dominance and power structures infiltrated Christianity and changed roles of leadership within the church. This substitute of secular structures in place of spiritual order leads to the absence of shared power among believers. The appeal of this work is to restore teamwork in serving community.

Incomplete Reformation

The church hierarchy developed toward centralized authority is where one supreme bishop rules over subordinates. The first reformation, or rather a schism of 1054, was partially fueled by the desire of Eastern Orthodoxy to preserve the autonomy of local churches. The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century while claiming restoration of the biblical order did not address every aspect at once. Thus, the Reformation must continue restoring biblical precepts step by step.

Barna research states that the professional pastor is an “obstacle to every-member functioning” (Viola & Barna, 2008, p. 105). Viola takes it to extremes at times, to make a point that hierarchical pastoral role rivals the functional place of Christ in His Church. In essence, his conclusion is that the dichotomy of separating the pastoral role from eldership, and elevating it, is a spirit of an antichrist.
Returning to Biblical Roots

Numerous critiques of “pastor-led” churches had been offered over the last decade. I would use a quotation to succinctly summarize the negative trend of disempowering local elders by the traditional church model.

Shepherding the flock is part of the responsibilities of each and every Elder. Further, teaching and discipling is also implied to be part of the responsibility of each and every Elder. The problem is that the full-time “pastor” tends to take over those responsibilities, thereby leaving the "junior" Elders with only part of a job description. The more sincere the Elder is in following the biblical mandates for Elders, the more that Elder will want to minister to the Body. This will normally result in the sincere Elder feeling limited and unfulfilled in his attempt to perform his job description and minister to the needs of the Local Body to which he sees Scripture calls him. Further, one man cannot get to all the members of the Local Body, and this will result in the members feeling like they are not being ministered to. When some of the Elders feel limited and the Body feels left out, the ministry will be perceived by all involved as failing in its biblical mandate to shepherd the flock. This is the norm for pastor-led churches. (Miner, 2007)

A more comprehensive view of elders as leaders in God’s plan for leadership is presented by Getz (2003) even though he neglects the gender equality and inclusiveness. He stresses the point that qualifications for female deaconesses are presented in 1 Tim 3, yet he suggests them only as assistants to elders and leaves no room for female elders. I was interested in his qualitative definitions even though he admits that his precepts are not derived specifically from the New Testament and are suggestions from his practical experience. Getz outlines the following 14 principles of Empowering Leadership:

1. Appointment to eldership is done by vested authority of the church constituency.

2. Elders must serve together as unified team.

3. List of qualifications must be applied as presented in Pauline epistles.

4. Biblical basic ethics and morality are requisites for spiritual eldership.
5. An Initial leader is needed when church expands to prepare and equip new leaders.

6. Shared leadership still needs a primary leader for point of reference.

7. Titles are interchangeable, functions are important and shared.

8. All elders are fathers of families and shepherds of the flock (plurality of fathers).

9. Shepherding the flock/parish is the top priority (includes teaching the Word, modeling behaviour, doctrinal purity, disciplining unruly, overseeing material needs, praying for sick).

10. Mutual accountability among local elders for ministries and spirituality.

11. Expanded Accountability system must exist extending beyond into network.

12. Team of qualified assistants should work with each elder.

13. Financial support should be accessible to all elders teaching the Word.

14. Adequate forms to be developed to carry out functions of previous principles.

**Local Leaders in Evangelical Circles**

In the past two decades, other Christian denominations began to explore this subject of empowering elders in local congregations. A simple biblical approach to church government is presented as a call for empowering effective elders (Thompson, 2006). Thompson, a former missionary to Euro-Asia and currently the district superintendent of the Evangelical Free Church, presents biblical evidence against the hierarchy and shows how the hierarchical structure disempowers people from service. His call is to consider a biblical order of elders being both pastors and bishops functionally.
His main emphasis is on an elder’s excellence that was modeled by Jesus.

As I interviewed elders of churches in southwestern Ontario, there was one elder leading the North London Seventh-day Adventist Church who turned every conversation of empowerment into the work of the Holy Spirit. I was personally blessed by his emphasis on the preeminent role of the Holy Spirit and not some corporate formula or will power for the true empowerment. Both London teams of elders journeyed through a curriculum of Spiritual Leadership (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001) from 2007 to 2009, where the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering leadership was the central theme. Very similar insights are provided in the doctoral research on the Empowered church leadership based on the ministry of the Apostle Paul as being led in the Spirit (Dodd, 2003). In this work Dodd goes argues that human leadership alone cannot solve problems of humanity. It is human leadership derived from the connection with God through the Holy Spirit guidance that gives hope. I find this concept reinforcing my drive to explore more of the Trinitarian Leadership as the Source from which human leadership is derived and after which our leadership should be modeled.
An interesting twist of ideas in which I see an extension of a derived leadership is casting a leader as a “servant-empowering manager...a boundary keeper...not a taskmaster” (Bandy, 2007, p. 122). If the human leadership is derived from the Divine Trinitarian, then any human leadership is only a stewardship of a much greater purpose of which we are only managers. With this in mind, the leaders’ understanding of the Trinitarian purpose and action is even more indispensable, for it is not our human leaders’ influence but Divine influence that matters.

Cole (2009) contrasts secular and spiritual leadership, objecting to operating the church like a business and appeals not to permit secular models of leadership in the church. Analyzing a generic church performance, he suggests abdicating leadership to other agencies and trusting to hierarchy of power as a current trend. A shallow view of leadership fears a non-hierarchical approach to his “organic” approach suggesting an inherent design for church life, operations, and leadership, called DNA. It is similar to the MRI model proposed and described by Sweet earlier in the chapter. Cole calls it DNA—divine truth, nurturing relationships, apostolic mission. All these different models using different terms are indicating the same anticipation of the Divine Trinitarian order within.

![Cole’s Threefold DNA of Church Order](image)

*Figure 31. Cole’s Threefold DNA of Church Order*
Before NCD emerged as a church health survey tool one branch of church growth literature coming from a seeker-sensitive movement suggests a free-for-all approach, each church deciding for itself how healthy it is, and rejecting any standard definitions or comparisons, elevating the incarnational model of Christ’s leadership within the culture (Anderson, 1992, p. 128).

The concern about where this shift would lead is present in other denominations. Thus, in 2004, the Southern Baptists discussed this question of local church leadership. David Dockery, president of Union University, stated that it is “agreed by all that there are not three distinct church offices but two in the New Testament—that of deacon and that of elder/overseer/pastor” (Myers, 2004).

Barna observes a concern about this current trend of dismissing the importance of leadership for church health (Barna, 1998). In the same chapter, defining what the real leadership for the new church should look like, Barna comes close to what I propose as the Trinitarian concept—three necessary elements in a unique blend. First, there must be a calling from the Father; second, one’s character is to be shaped by Christ’s example; and finally, one’s competencies are given through the Holy Spirit gifting.

Figure 32. Barna’s Trinitarian Leadership
He continues to suggest that for an effective work at least four types of leadership must be practiced: Directing, Team-building, Strategic, and Operational. An absence of any one of these would make the movement unstable. Barna’s intuitive proposal is comparable here with the Trinitarian Compass of Schwarz’s NCD.

![Figure 33. Barna’s Effective Leadership](image)

Barna also edited a compilation of articles from various leaders on leadership. One particular article presented four factors in the transforming leadership of Jesus:

![Figure 34. Ford’s Leadership model of Jesus](image)

1) Seer who sees the Kingdom,

2) Storyteller who communicates the vision of the Kingdom,
3) Servant Savior who positions Himself to win the trust,

4) Shepherd Maker who deploys by empowering others, turning sheep into shepherds (Ford, 1997) The first two are related on a vision factor, and I place them in the category of inspiration.

A brief critique of following worldly paradigms of leadership interested me as Coutts suggested that leadership is a participation in God’s work and is more akin to a followership (Coutts, 2008). I connect with Coutts as he presents the three ingredients for authentic leadership, namely, our participation with Christ as under-shepherds, communion with the Father, and the power of the Spirit.

![Trinitarian Participation Leadership Model](image)

*Figure 35. Trinitarian Participation Leadership Model*

**Renewed Interest on Leadership in Adventism**

Within Seventh-day Adventist denomination theologians speak openly about the need to develop a Theology of Leadership. Administrators speak about the need to “change the DNA of Adventist leadership” (Kellner, 2011).

Presently there is an increased awareness in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of elders being nurturers and overseers, or in biblical terms, being pastors and bishops.
Recently a quarterly magazine for elders provided a challenge to step up to biblical responsibilities and duties (Luna, 2008).

Early precursors of returning to the ministry of all believers are seen already in the 1980s with leaders calling for a priesthood of all believers and shared ministry. Rex Edwards, an assistant Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church, in an article explaining the necessity of all believers being involved in ministry calls the trend of dividing ministry into “shares,” a “mistaken individualism and egalitarianism.” He spoke of the “enabling” role of leaders, a term today that we call “empowerment.” I heard Edwards speak at the Ontario Conference camp meeting in 2011, and after retirement he speaks even more now about the threefold function of every believer as a minister: servant, proclaimer, priest. When addressing the difference between professional pastors and lay leaders he defined such as “occupational of function, not positional of status” (Edwards, 1989, p. 7). He suggests that professional education gives more skill to a vocational pastor, yet all believers must participate in Christ’s ministry by fulfilling threefold functions of serving, proclaiming and interceding.

![Figure 36. Edwards’ Threefold Function of Ministry of all Believers](image)
The former Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference, James Cress, outlined that the work of an elder is to “assist pastoral leadership in managing the work of the church” (2004). He asserts that the local church elders must accomplish more than platform duties. Their role of spiritual leadership, teaching, managing, mentoring, and yes, even proclaiming the message, is essential for the health of the local church. Especially in areas where pastors supervise multiple-church districts and seldom occupy the pulpit every Sabbath, church elders must function as cooperative and capable partners in pastoral ministry. (Cress, 2004)

Yet, this is still far from the biblical paradigm of elders not as “assistants” to the pastor, but as real pastors and overseers, the main leaders and trainers of the local church. Restoring the biblical role of an elder will lead to empowering leadership, but it also will re-examine the role of a full-time denominational pastor.

The Adventist model of leadership is not much different from other Protestant denominations differentiating between pastoral role and eldership. How did we get so far from the biblical paradigm of Empowering Leadership of elders?

Lack of Theology of Leadership

At a January 2009 workers meeting of the Ontario Conference, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, the director of the Biblical Research Institute, stated that the question of Ecclesiology today is the top priority of theological studies. The official website adventistbiblicalresearch.org informs that the subject has been in the works since 1982, developing slowly as other issues were pushed to the front.

One of the four papers presented on the issue, being more than two decades old, addresses the question of initial development of governance in our church (Mustard, 1987). Mustard refers to his earlier dissertation by saying that the initial proposal of church polity, “advocated a three-level hierarchical structure of ministers, elders, and
deacons. Ministers were considered to be equivalent to the New Testament offices of an apostle and an evangelist” (pp. 176-177) and were not local leaders. Local leaders were elders.

A dispute on the role of women in ministry has been ongoing in the North American Seventh-day Adventist context since the mid 1970’s. An admission made at the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta that we lack a theology of ordination, and consequently, appointing the Ordination Study Committee, has fueled the discussion even more. This issue is closely connected with the current lack of a clear theology of leadership. Presentations made on biblical authority and power challenge the secular paradigm of leadership in the church (Jankiewicz, 2012). On another spectrum there are claims that leadership requires submission (Batchelor, 2009, pp. 22-23).

Adventist Heritage of Leadership

An important concept that must be noted is the use of word *generalship* in the work of Adventist pioneer Ellen Gould White. I am not aware of any research done on the subject. She uses the nineteenth century word *generalship* in place of contemporary meaning of leadership. One quotation is suggesting the need to focus on empowerment more than mere equipping: “there was too much machinery in the tract and missionary and in the Sabbath School work. There was form and arrangement, but little of Christ-like simplicity felt or practiced by the workers. We want less machinery and mechanical arrangement, and more heart work, more real piety and true holiness, especially in the missionary work everywhere. There needs to be piety, purity and wise generalship, and then for greater and much better work would be done with less expenditure of means” (White, Spalding, Magan, 1961, p. 133).
She uses *generalship* as a synonym for leadership, giving a unique definition of leadership: “The leaders appointed should be carefully taught how to labor in order to secure the best results. The wisest generalship is in seeing, not how much we can do ourselves, but how much we can lead the people to do” (White, 1915, p. 225). In a magazine Signs of the Times from September 12, 1900 she spoke of the Divine leadership, stating that human affairs and efforts must be submitted “under the control of a higher and more commanding generalship than human ability” (White, 1991, p. 263). It seems that Ellen White understood leadership to have a commanding aspect.

Burrill (1998) in his dissertation on recovering an Adventist approach to the life and mission of the local church also presents the historical picture and issues a challenge for those in vocational full-time ministry to see themselves as itinerant apostles and evangelists, and to let elders to pastor and bishop their parishes. Burrill challenges us to return to the biblical model of leadership, yet, in his zeal to move pastors from a “caring shepherd” role to that of an “evangelist overseer” he misses the biblical principle of elders equality, by suggesting that the conference “must appoint the head elder, who would occupy the position of the former pastor” to “remain loyal to the denomination” (Burrill, 1998, p. 232). Burrill is aligned with the traditional job description of a vocational pastor ranking “above the local elder or elders,” which “serve as his assistants” notion propagated by the Church Manual until 2010 (General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, 1942, p. 146; 1995, p. 120; 2000, p. 136 ; 2005a, p. 146). However, the latest edition omits this hierarchical idea completely! (2010, p. 33) The Seventh-day Adventist church is on the journey of discovering the theology of leadership away from the traditional model.
As the dialogue on ordination theology continues the illegitimacy of elevating pastoral office over eldership is indicated. Thus the Trans-European Division President of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Wiklander stated recently that the elevation of pastor over elders, the three-tiered model of leadership is the “ecclesiastical heritage of James White and many other Adventist pioneers. They brought with them into the Adventist Church from their previous group – Christian Connection – the three orders of ministry: pastor, elder, and deacon. The idea of apostolic succession – that only ordained ministers could ordain ministers – took hold but, it has no biblical root (Pearson, 2013). Complete return to the Biblical leadership would require restoration of the threefold functionality of eldering, pastoring, bishoping in the same office. Even the older versions of the Church Manual recognized that elders share the pastoral work of the church, telling elders to pastor (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995, p. 47).

Earlier cited work of Burrill gives an excellent historical overview of the early Adventist ministry, showing that local elders were doing pastoral and episcopal work. Burrill gives eminence to an early Adventist pioneer administrator, J. N. Loughborough, who was there at the formation of the church in 1863 and who took upon himself to preserve historical documents. The working document for the organization of the General Conference placed elders-bishops-pastors on one tier, and deacons on another, both being the lay positions, not clergy. The full-time vocational role was delineated for apostles-evangelists (Loughborough, 1907).

To understand how our pioneers perceived roles and office of church leaders I took time to research the early Canadian Adventist publications looking for the use of words pastor and elder. While the word pastor was known to the early Adventists it was
rarely used in the early 1900, and when used it was only in reference to ministers of other denominations, i.e. Methodist, (Miller & Isaac, 1904). When quoted from the writings of Ellen G. White, the term pastor was not used of an office, but of a function (Thurston, 1905) “Even though pastors, evangelists, and teachers should neglect the seeking of the lost, let not the children and youth neglect to be doers of the word” (White, 1894).

During the time of Sunday Law Bill considered in Canadian Parliament a most interesting article explaining why Adventist ministers do not attribute to themselves honorary titles and offices appears in the Canadian Union Messenger. The circular letter by pastors of the Sunday keeping churches had been sent to the Senators. In it they explain the reason why Adventist leaders “omit the 'Rev.' from their names ... to give the impression that it is a lay movement.” The non-Adventist authors continue their expose: “The W. H. Thurston, whose name is given as 'Dominion Superintendent' at Ottawa, is Rev. W. H. Thurston, pastor of the little Seventh-day Adventist Church there. Eugene Leland, who signs himself 'Secretary,' is the head of their school at Lome Park, Ont. A. O. Burrill, Gait, Ont.; Wm. Guthrie, Williamsdale, N. S.; and H. E. Rickard, Fitch Bay, Que., are also Reverends in charge of Seventh-day Adventist institutions.” (Leland, 1906). Throughout that era all leading Adventist ministers were called Elders. Only in 1930s the usage of term pastor became more prevalent than that of elder. By 1950s it was common to call ordained ministers a pastor.

A recent article expresses the paradox that exists in our church as there is not (officially) an office with more authority than the local elder, and even the General Conference President is titled “elder,” yet one of the most “layered and complex
hierarchies in all of Christianity” has developed in a movement where claims are made to succeed as a lay-led organization (Akerman, 2012).

New Research and Need for Empowerment

During the last four decades, majority of Adventist denominational leadership projects for empowering elders focused on the servant leadership model of Jesus. The Servant leadership model abounds in books, articles, and classrooms. Out of many Doctor of Ministry dissertations on leadership done at the Andrews University, I would use as an example the project of developing a training program for elders (Swanson, 1986). Projects focus was on re-educating leadership, both lay and clerical, in New Testament values of shared away from hierarchy of dependency. The solution was Jesus as model Leader-Discipler. Christ as the model of Servant leadership. It was the trend to focus exclusively on Jesus as the Leader, both in Adventist circles (Bietz, 1980) and in the wider evangelical sphere (Jones, 1992). No work has been done to expand the vision of leadership to the Trinitarian paradigm of Father as a Leader and the Holy Spirit’s leadership in our church.

Figure 37. Trinitarian Leadership
As the need for empowering believers becomes more urgent, there is a new drive to motivate leadership development. The first attempt to empower was written in the mid-1970s in a dissertation at Andrews University (Shankel, 1974). The author provided excellent background research to show how powerful elders were in Old Testament times and he acknowledged that elders-pastors-bishops are interchangeable roles of the same office in the New Testament. A historical survey of eldership development in the Seventh-day Adventist church suggested two classes of elders; hence, he argued for the necessity of training lay elders as pastors and overseers, to direct their strong influence properly, and to bridge the gap between them and the well-trained traveling elders-evangelists called “pastors.” Shankel’s main argument is for equipping, not empowerment. He considers the power of influence already present among local elders, stating “the strongest influence in any church is the influence of the local elders” (1974, p. 4). No shared responsibility is envisioned in those years. The demarcation between itinerant pastors and local elders is very strong. The pragmatic need of pastoral care demanded pastoral role on part of elders to carry “a portion of pastor’s load.”

Mwansa (1993), while working in Africa, developed a training program for empowering local elders in Lusaka, Zambia, outlined this biblical view of elders as pastors/shepherd and overseers/bishops. The work presented a comprehensive ideal for empowered elders, but like many good projects, was shelved and did not influence the broader community of local church leadership.

The Adventist Elder’s Handbook gives a clear outline of what elders are authorized and expected to do, including pastoral nurture and general oversight (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994). However, it has not been implemented in
practice. My experience through conducting focus groups in southwestern Ontario shows that 60% of currently serving elders have not read the handbook. The handbook also speaks about the office of a “pastor” and downplays the empowerment of elders by introducing their work as “in cooperation with the pastor,” making it secondary in responsibility; a supportive role.

The process and meaning of empowerment in the context of an Adventist congregation is a relatively new concept and outside of Burrill’s work (1998) on Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church, has not been explored recently within the Adventist scholarship.

Early Adventists were more empowered in local church dynamics, where elders provided pastoral care for people, letting vocational ministers to engage in full-time soul wining and evangelism (Burrill, 1993, p. 45). When Burrill served as the NAD Evangelism Institute Director, he warned the denomination of the pattern of departure from the ministry models of Jesus and the Apostle Paul, just as it happened in the Early Church.
To examine the present understanding of the eldership role, I turn to articles published in the *Adventist Review* and the *Ministry* magazine. An article entitled “Women’s Empowerment Key to Church Culture Shift” highlights that the creation of Women’s Ministries in local Adventist churches had granted women the opportunity for leadership and self-development, leading to an emergence of women as local church elders in southern Mexico and making the general church environment more friendly (Oliver, 2008).

Paulson, a former General Conference president, encouraged church leaders to “trust young men and women who show spiritual maturity by electing them to eldership” (as cited in Oliver, 2008). Political reality in our churches and the leading of the Holy Spirit was a topic before the 2005 General Conference session, focusing on the early Christian church where local elders enjoyed more responsibility and independence in decision making, comparing it with a similar structure of the early Adventist movement (McIver, 2005). Yet, in all recent works, of which I am aware, the office of an elder is still considered as that of an “assistant” to the pastor, making it a subordinate position. Souza (1999) illustrated the pastor’s role as that of God’s “cowboy” to “ride” (p. 28) an independent team member; an elder. When Trinitarian Leadership is understood, there will be no need for hierarchical positional rule, and elders will work together in a willing submission while equal in relationships.

The Adventist international journal for pastors, *Ministry* (April 2000), dedicated a whole issue to “empowering the saints” in which a three-dimensional definition of empowerment was given. I see the Trinitarian paradigm emerging in following terms: “granting of authority” as Father-role, “providing resources” as Spirit-role, “giving
education and training” as Son-role (Fenton, 2000, pp. 6-7).

An example of empowering liberation comes from the Inter-America Division of the Seventh-day Adventist church where elders as lay pastors were authorized to baptize new believers during the culmination of nine months lay-led evangelism across the region, in Bahamas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Nicaragua, St. Vincent, and Venezuela (Stevens, 2013). Temporary as it may be, it is a move in the right direction of recognizing elders’ Biblical pastoral authority.

Reading through the “Trinitarian Lens,” I see relevant themes in many articles that may not address the concept directly. In an article for elders, Renfrew (2008) calls for a balance in leadership, pointing out pitfalls of leadership—from the front, from the rear, and from the inside—and presenting a case for teamwork on all three fronts. Any one of the leadership practices is insufficient on its own.

Comprehensive Leadership

A fresh insight on the importance of the Seventh-day Adventist contribution to empowering leadership, specifically through the work of Ellen G. White, was researched
by Tutsch (2008). She examined and compared often conflicting leadership theories with the work of Ellen White. In her work, she states that our identity is linked to the biblical call for all-inclusive empowerment, regardless of age, gender or race; an empowerment which leads all people to Christ (pp. 20-22). Tutsch focuses especially on how Ellen White emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian leader’s life. Even as I see loud hints on the Trinitarian influence necessary for true leadership, a more definite and instantly recognizable explanation for leadership is needed.

Patterson wrote an article for *Ministry*, an issue that was dedicated to inspiring spiritual leadership. The article presented leadership as a process greater than a single individual, where a leader or a pastor is only part of a process and depends on relationships (Patterson, 2005). Patterson showed the role of the Spirit in influencing human spirits and Jesus’ role in a transformational call. Yet, he placed the management aspect, so evident in the Old Testament paradigms of the *oikonomos* or a house steward, outside of and opposing the leadership process. It is precisely in this paradigm that I see the missing dimension of the comprehensive balanced Trinitarian Leadership, including the Father, together with more comfortable roles of the Son and the Spirit. This particular issue of the *Ministry* magazine is a valuable compilation of the expanding paradigm of multifaceted leadership.

On a practical side, I am using insights from the book *A Positive Church in a Negative World* (Arrais, 2007) for developing the empowering leadership curriculum for elders in our district.

In secular research, the comprehensive leadership is termed as a Super Leadership or Shared Leadership (Houghton, Neck, & Manz, 2003), suggesting a model where
transactional, transformational, directive, empowering, and supportive leadership behaviors could be shared within a team of self-leaders; where no single individual wears all caps, but each team member shares responsibilities contributing to a total leadership of a team. This perspective is close to the Trinitarian leadership where different functions are operating simultaneously within the community of the Godhead leading together.

**Conclusion**

Much is yet to be discovered on the Trinitarian paradigm of leadership DNA, as there is lack of literature addressing this specific topic. Most literature reviewed approaches partially the concept, yet none address it comprehensively. An area I need more study is the practical application of Trinitarian Leadership. I believe that discovering the Divine design for leadership will be the greatest motivating factor for empowerment, much needed in a time of what some call, “an uncertain future.” Understanding the Divine revelation through the Bible for proper leadership would provide the confidence needed to set a right direction in the storm of conflicting leadership theories.

After reviewing much existing literature, I suggest that leadership is not a tool to be used, or an icon to worship, or even a necessary means to put up with, but must rather be a window on the revelation of God as Leader. It is only through the Trinitarian Lenses that we will begin to see how all leadership theories work together. Both secular and spiritual studies contain hints toward the Trinitarian dynamics of leadership, often using different metaphors and descriptions, yet best understood through seeing God, Three in One, Father as the Leader, the Spirit also as the Leader, in addition to the Son who is always set as a model for Leadership.
Through the two millennia of Church tradition and history, the original biblical paradigm of eldership patterned on the Trinitarian revelation of God’s work has been obscured and is beginning to re-emerge. The Seventh-day Adventist church sees itself as a pioneer and leads in the continuing reformation; hence, it must also restore the work of elders to its rightful place of a threefold responsibility to influence, to nurture, and to supervise believers. The work of various leaders toward the theology of Leadership within Adventism must accumulate the critical mass for a greater understanding to produce such a change.

*Figure 40. Proposed Comprehensive Trinitarian Leadership*

It is my resolve to communicate a biblical restorative model to our elders and to continue the reformation away from the papal and hierarchical twist for the sake of integrity of our global mission, presenting the Trinitarian Leadership model as the triple responsibility of elders to influence, nurture, and supervise.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

At the beginning of this project I was aware of theoretical ideas proposed for empowering leadership practices (Folkenberg, 2002; Schwarz & Schalk, 1998) listed in detail in the literature review of Chapter 3. I believe that those valuable steps needed a motivational factor. Hence, it was my desire to explore how the Trinitarian Leadership concept would serve as a cognitive motivation for leaders. The results of motivation to descend into cooperative service are described in Chapter 5 on page 174.

Prior to the beginning of this project, the London churches had already completed the NCD survey and the leadership quality was growing toward an average healthy mark by 2007 (Appendix K). In spite of the positive outcome of the surveys I was concerned about sustaining the improvement, knowing that the expectations from people to those in leadership will also increase in a rapidly changing and growing church. Occasional complaints from church members about the lack of directional and decisive leadership also contributed to the desire to understand more about the nature of a leader’s role.

Tools for Evaluating Progress

Having used the NCD evaluation tool in the past and considering this tool to be a valid scientific instrument used by thousands of churches, and being continually developed by the NCD research group, the NCD survey was used here to monitor
progression of the Empowering Leadership factor in churches. Other tools described in Chapter 3 were considered; however, the NCD survey is the most comprehensive one, examining not only leadership quality, but interlinking other church qualities together, showing how other areas of church life affect and are affected by various leadership practices.

First Stage of Implementation—
District Empowerment

My leadership role as a ministerial coordinator began in the fall of 2005 for the Western Ministerial District. Reflecting back on how teamwork development began, it started in the fall of 2005 when the Windsor church held a district-wide personal ministries rally facilitated by the Conference Personal Ministries director Eustace Williams. As the participants shared in groups their concerns, I had a mental image of a large grain field, ready for harvest with companies of workers stationed around the field; but instead of getting in the field they all played games, had programs and invited each other to share meals, while the field was standing untouched. After the facilitator worked on churches analyzing their S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), we began to talk about the necessity to work together on “harvesting” the field and entering new territories. At that time there was a tendency for disgruntled members to hop from one church to another. It took the pastors’ time to figure out how they could adjust their ministry delivery to satisfy discontented parishioners. Getting into evangelistic work and working together with other churches communicated a unity among leaders. The combined efforts encouraged members and prevented church-hopping of the disgruntled who would realize that churches stand together on a mission.
Initial Focus Groups

In order to understand the position of church elders on leadership, a series of focus groups were conducted in Adventist churches of the Southwestern Ontario district. Each focus group began with an invitation to sign a statement of informed consent by each participating individual (Appendix E). Once forms were signed, each group began with a short “ice-breaker,” inviting participants to share the fruit of the spirit (joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) which was most frequently manifested in their lives. The intent was to invite elders to think spiritually, to consider the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Before distributing the questionnaire, a short instructional disclaimer was offered to make certain that participants understood what dynamics were expected in the focus group. First of all, it was to be a group interview where focus was determined by the person conducting the interview, but the group dynamics were expected to resemble their regular elders’ meetings. They were invited to let me know if in the process I could influence or change their regular dynamics. The focus group discussion was used to survey elders, because their open-ended answers and group opinions were of interest to this study. The discussion itself was considered to be data. I was not involved in the discussion, only asked questions and recorded answers. The participants were also informed that the facts and informational data from all focus groups would be compiled and shared with pastors and administrators to facilitate change in leadership relations among various levels of the church work in the district. This focus group exercise was needed to set the context and prepare for more formal evaluation of leadership dynamics using the NCD tools afterwards.
The open-ended questionnaire (Appendix F) was used in the focus groups with the elders of both London churches, Windsor, St. Thomas and Woodstock so that they would have a copy of the questions. All participants were rewarded for their time by receiving the book *Ellen White on Leadership* (Tutsch, 2008).

The results of all focus groups were compiled (Appendix G) for the purpose of discovering how local elders perceive their role of leadership and how empowerment fits into the local paradigm. To summarize findings, I would highlight following points: 1) there was no unity among elders on understanding the empowerment or appropriate leadership styles for governing the local church, 2) no agreement on what it means to empower; 3) hierarchical model of vocational pastor ranking over elders was traditionally accepted; 4) no consistency on how elders and pastors are to share responsibility exist; 5) mentorship and intentional development of leaders is lacking; 6) majority of elders have not read the Elder’s Handbook; 7) for changes to take place an endorsement from the Conference leaders is needed. More analysis is provided in Chapter 5 on page 149. This data was later shared with the ministerial director of the Ontario Conference in the spring of 2009; informing him of the needs to be addressed in training and developing elders, and seeking endorsement toward developing teamwork and a partnership for training among local elders.

Considering how different were the elders’ perspectives on leadership I decided to also include a comprehensive list of different leadership styles, classified and described in the literature. My intent, as described in previous conceptual chapters, is not to compare and contrast styles, but to paint a broader picture of comprehensive and balanced leadership where different styles complement overall leadership.
NCD Surveys for Churches

To compare and validate findings of this research on motivational and liberating factors of leadership other churches in the district were surveyed with the NCD questionnaire to determine, among other qualities, the empowering leadership value. Results of the initial NCD surveys are in the Appendix K. London South showed the highest percentile, score of 50, on the leadership survey compared to North London (45), St. Thomas (38), and Woodstock (32). The number of elders in each of these churches was also fewer. The North London had four elders in 2007, and St. Thomas and Woodstock had three, whereas at London South there were nine elders. I chose London South to test the motivational and liberating value of the Trinitarian Leadership model.

Toward Teamwork in the District

One of the biblical principles that emerged in my research was the plurality of elders cooperating for teamwork. In 2007, a dialogue was facilitated between pastors of the Western Ontario district and local elders on the necessity to work together, to assist each church and leaders in outreach, and to be intentionally directional about growth and outreach. There were six pastors in the district and each had a specific responsibility toward teamwork. Camp meetings were planned for the whole district and the first one took place on May 31, 2008, in the Community Center in Chatham, Ontario, with over 480 people in attendance. Sarnia hosted the next outdoor tent camp meeting on May 30, 2009, with attendance increasing to over 550, drawing together more than 60% of the membership in our district. People commented on how much they appreciated seeing pastors working together.
During 2008 and 2009 the team of district pastors visited all the Adventist churches to conduct training rallies for evangelism, each pastor offering a different track for lay members. In the spring of 2009 London hosted for the first time in 25 years a public evangelistic campaign entitled *Above All Powers* (Golovenko, 2009) with the participation of elders and members from all churches. Windsor followed the pattern in the Fall. Evangelistic campaigns in other cities also received district-wide support as St. Thomas and Woodstock also involved elders and pastors from other district churches for their outreach. London organized another joint effort this time with the new pastor Rudy Alvir and me leading a week-long campaign: *Meet the Real Jesus.* North, Spanish, and London South congregations were also working together for these meetings.

We intentionally changed dynamics for empowering the local churches. Unfortunately, within a year the district was reshuffled, and pastors were moved elsewhere without any discussion with the working team; the newly arriving pastors were not involved in the teamwork dynamics, hence the momentum of cooperation between churches soon stopped.

In 2009, the first of the new pastors, Rudy Alvir, arrived to serve North London and Spanish churches. He caught our passion for teamwork and introduced a “circuit rider” model of teamwork pastoring in a district where pastors contribute to all churches on a rotational basis according to their strength and giftedness. Such a model would provide multiple benefits to the churches. First, it would place greater ownership for church life on the local elders. Second, it would liberate pastors to be itinerant evangelists and equippers. Third, it would increase the resource pool, as all pastors in the district would be available to contribute to all churches. Last, it would also strengthen the unity
among churches. The process would empower the whole district for outreach. Further research would be of benefit to discover practical implications of such a pastoral model.

The two remaining pastors from the original team, I in London and Pastor Marian Kossovan in Windsor, continued to influence pastors and churches toward the necessity of teamwork. Our concern was that while larger churches may get by on their own and do sufficient ministries by themselves, it is the smaller churches that suffer from the lack of resources and help, while the unreached counties remain untouched. Only joint effort, orchestrated endeavor, and churches working together strategically, would make an impact and allow opening of new plants. The new momentum began building with a district-wide youth camp iRevive in Petrolia-Wyoming, Ontario, in the summer of 2011. The keynote speaker was a lay elder from St. Catharines SDA Church, Wanito Bernadin. The youth, young adults, and parents came from London, Windsor, Windsor Spanish, and Woodstock churches, about 80 people in total. The 2012 camp was planned to take place in Goderich with double attendance, attracting youth from Windsor, Windsor Spanish, London, London Spanish, St. Thomas, Woodstock, Guelph, Kitchener, Sarnia, Chatham, and Leamington churches. People anticipated the momentum to build up toward district camp meetings and toward intentional church planting in unreached towns.

Teamwork for the District Outlined

Two years into the project and with the newly elected Conference administrators relocating pastors without discussing it with the district leadership, I had to admit that the initial scope of affecting change in the whole Southwestern District was beyond my influence. After three years of enduring efforts calling elders and leaders to work together, the NCD scores of Empowering Leadership showed no improvement.
Having worked for four years on developing team dynamics in the district, I also experienced dissatisfaction with a lack of clear guidelines from the Ontario Conference ministerial director regarding the role of a ministerial district coordinator. I had submitted a list of ideas and values that described my understanding of the role to the ministerial director in July 2008 (Appendix I), yet there was no development of any kind.

Coordinators of districts never met together, and each district had to invent their own agenda, mostly managing pastoral interactions. District coordinators were not authorized, delegated, and empowered by the Conference for a specific mission. They served as facilitators of meetings for the sake of fellowship. Only in the summer of 2013 Ontario Conference Administration made steps toward appointing “ministerial field secretaries...to assist the ministerial director in addressing the needs of local pastors and elders with time sensitivity” (Edwards, 2013, p. 37).

District pastors had discussed the necessity of bringing the elders together for networking, training, and empowering. Yet, no agreement was reached about the agenda and directions. Only when a district-wide accountability system will be accepted, then it is reasonable to expect elders to respond. A deeper look into our past practices, into the practices of our pioneers is needed. Leadership that is based on total participation of all is a concept that has been tried by the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the time of organizational restructuring in 1901-1903. As Oliver (1989) pointed out, the chairmanship was selected by the board at each session during those years (p. 188).

On April 6, 2010, I met with the Ontario Conference ministerial director to discuss a planned effort to facilitate teamwork among elders in the district. We discussed my proposal of developing the empowering leadership through teamwork among the
churches in western Ontario in light of reality that there is no functional supportive network in existence to empower elders in the district. I shared the outline and ideas for empowerment through teamwork and we discussed the logistics of teamwork development for the district.

Just because pastors come together for group meetings and elders occasionally gather for fellowship, it does not mean that we have teamwork. Wishful thinking is not enough since teamwork is more than an attitude; it does not just happen. I proposed to be intentional about developing the teamwork through strategic planning. To evaluate what kind of teamwork we have I used current business definitions of team based on the performance curve (Katzenbach & Smith, 2006), where not every group is a team and not every team is equal. Following five scenarios were considered:

1. **Workgroup**, where members interact to share information, best practices, and coordinate events, to make decisions that would help individuals perform within their area of responsibility. In such an environment no significant incremental performance need or opportunity exists. It simply continues to manage status quo activities without expectations of growth.

2. **Pseudo-team**, where performance need or opportunity is incremental and significant, but there is no focus and no efforts to achieve a collective performance. No shaping of a common purpose occurs; individuals do not align their personal goals with the common performance goal, even though they may call themselves a team. This type is the weakest of all groups in terms of performance impact, as it does not meet expectations. It becomes only events driven without due process and does not create an environment for legacy and does not sustain consistency.

3. **Potential team**, which is trying to improve its performance impact in view of significant incremental opportunity and need. It lacks clarity about the process and discipline in working together and needs to establish collective accountability.

4. **Real team**, consisting of people with complementary skills equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and working method to which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

5. **High-performance team**, who in addition to being a team, they are also deeply committed to each other’s personal growth and success. (pp. 91-92)
We agreed that currently the environment in the district is somewhere between a workgroup and pseudo-team. Even if potential exists it has not been guided toward development. A decision was made to conduct a special workshop for all elders and pastors in the district on teamwork development. An environment of Virtual teams in combination with social networking would be important for empowering leaders (Duarte & Snyder, 2006). The following solution was proposed to the Ministerial Director and agreed for implementation at that meeting.

1. A biblical understanding of leadership roles in local Adventist churches must be restored with a special emphasis on teamwork as presbytery of elders. Elders together with pastors must see each other as one team. A series of focus groups with local church elders and pastors to be held first to communicate compelling vision for teamwork and mission to the region, culminating in a district wide meeting, where all elders and pastors would come face-to-face to affirm the teamwork.

2. The Ministerial Secretary of the Ontario Conference should be the external team leader, acting from outside of the team, but providing a general direction and coordinating all teams to fit the big picture of a conference-wide vision. His role would be to establish connection with the organizational vision, purpose, goals, and direction. Each district coordinator should serve as the internal team leader, being a part of the team and involved in the day-to-day operations. He is to be accountable to the Ministerial Coordinator, facilitating the teamwork, managing virtual team dynamics and organizing semi-annual gatherings, resourcing and coordinating different team roles in the field.
3. Elders and pastors working together as one team, with pastors meeting monthly as a core team, sharing best practices, and elders being informed monthly through local elders meetings as extended teams.

4. Ambassadorial atmosphere is to be developed where team members see their roles as being ambassadors for the larger movement and are empowered to act.

5. Face-to-face interaction (social presence) is very important in building the teamwork. District meetings must take place twice per year. These are to serve as orientation sessions and progress report and adjustment sessions.

6. Team norms for communication must be developed.

In our discussion a notion of the need to consider the Western Ontario a mission field and have the district coordinator serve as a mission field secretary was considered. Plans were made for the district-wide elders meeting. However, the meeting took place only a year later, on April 10, 2011, in London. Meanwhile, on May 13, 2010, I shared all these ideas with pastors at the monthly district meeting at the North London Church. Only in April 2011, was I able to present the Trinitarian Leadership paradigm to district elders in session. Those present thought it was a “good idea,” but as the rest of the meeting did not promote teamwork and did not address the need of cooperation for church growth, it made little or no impact. Internal conflicts of local churches took precedence, membership issues and urgent management items dominated the meeting with no follow up toward future teamwork development.

Narrowing Focus to Local Implementation

The lack of a common platform for discussing growth and development goals and objectives for churches deferred teamwork development. At the time not all churches and
pastors had bought into utilizing the NCD tool as a point of reference for church balance and health. An absence of the common vision for the district moved me to focus on implementing the Trinitarian Leadership model in the London South church. Since I was no longer the district coordinator (since the fall of 2009), I could only invite pastors as colleagues to try the teamwork, based on the merit of the idea itself. As I shared my plans with other pastors, I was directed by them to develop a working model of motivating elders in my local church first. When the results are evident that the understanding of Trinitarian Leadership has advanced and led to an increase of empowering leadership in my local church, then a follow up with other district churches would be more meaningful.

**Conventional Categories of Leadership**

Research suggested five main categories contributing to Empowering Leadership, as discussed in Chapter 3 on pages 86-87. Hence, these five factors were to be put in place before introducing the Trinitarian model:

1. Leading by example: personal, continuous development of each leader
2. Participative decision-making and shared ownership of vision
3. Coaching
4. Informing and communicating
5. Showing concern, interacting with and investing in the team

An annual NCD survey would allow me to monitor the progress of the church and would make possible to see the difference in result, if any, once the Trinitarian curriculum is introduced in addition to the five conventional categories. Following paragraphs will present implementation of the above stated five factors.
Exemplary Leading to Develop Elders

The personal leadership style and necessity of exemplary conduct was addressed through the Spiritual Leadership Curriculum (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001) and through the denominational *Elders Handbook*. After studying chapters 2 and 3 during the discussion time one influential elder turned to the others and asked, “If you would have known then what you know now would you still agree to serve?” implying that most of them accepted the call to eldership without fully understanding what it entails. A comment was also made that the *Elders Handbook* is missing an important qualification for being an elder—being willing! The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy about the desire and aspiration for the office of eldership (1 Tim 3:1).

Blackaby’s curriculum challenged each elder to consider personal spirituality as an example to the congregation. Each elder was reminded regularly of the necessity for personal development through reading, attending seminars, and practical ministry. Each elder was invited to consider their personal legacy and to work on the process toward it.

Participatory Decision-making

Our monthly elders meeting always included participative decision-making in every aspect of church life. Since 2005, I would not make a move unless first consulting and discussing every decision with the elders, including worship schedules, church life planning, follow up, and ministry need.

In early 2009, I shared the threefold responsibility concept with the elders from the *Elders Handbook*, first at elders meetings in March and then with the board meeting in session. Next I preached a sermon March 14 at the North church and March 21 at the South church, entitled “Ministry Conversion” (Appendix H). During the sermon I
presented elders as pastors and overseers to both congregations. Elders were aware of the plan to come up front as I explained to the congregation their triple responsibility. Friday night before the South church sermon I posted a Facebook comment, “I will resign my exclusive pastoral responsibilities in the morrow.” The comment brought an increased attendance for the day, people curious what it would be about. The sermon preached that day can be read in the Appendix H. In preparation for the message elders also had looked over the list of church members, extended family and friends, each choosing parishes to nurture and minister to. All elders were encouraged to communicate with people selected to be in their parish about their added responsibility, which was done in personal visits, over the phone, and by personal letters sent to all. It led to an increase in the participatory and sharing environment of leadership. And if I was tempted to make an “executive” decision as a single leader, elders would remind me of the shared pastoral responsibility.

After presenting a biblical paradigm on church leadership of elders and their responsibilities, I introduced elders to their congregations as pastors and bishops.

![Figure 41. Trinitarian Leadership Presented to the Church](image)

Not all elders received this assignment well, few objected as it was in opposition to the tradition of the local congregation, to the tradition as they remembered it in the
“old days” or in the “old country” where the pastor was the one and only pastor. As we were completing the Spiritual Leadership Curriculum the elders agreed to examine the *Elders Handbook* as a curriculum to familiarize themselves with job descriptions and policies of eldership within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In my interactions with elders from different churches, I learned that many have never read the *Elders Handbook* after being elected and ordained.

**Developing the Unified Vision**

Within a month after my arrival at the London church, I scheduled a vision casting session with the church and shared my vision of the church where every believer is a minister, providing biblical and scholarly reasoning. I still keep notes of that speech inserted in the book *Visionary Leadership* (Nanus, 1992), which I used as a source for illustrations and guidelines.

**Initial Vision Casting**

I shared with the church my first impressions: The church has arrived. After years of renting and having no visible presence they had built a comfortable facility and just finished paying for it. The metaphor I used was that of the people of Israel entering the Promised Land. While the land as destination itself was a vision compelling enough to get them out of Egypt, it was not the final vision and not the final aim. While still in the wilderness, God already updated Moses on a bigger vision than just the “land of milk and honey.” Israel was to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:6). I challenged the church to become a consecrated congregation where every believer would be on a mission, every believer becomes a minister. I invited people to participate in discovering and realizing a God-given vision to our congregation, for it was not to be a
wild-eyed scheme born in a vacuum, but a realistic concept of what should occur, deeply rooted in reality. No pastor coming from outside will know local reality better than the people.

Soon after, the weekly bulletin began to carry a slogan, “A Place where Every Believer is a Minister. Discover Your Calling!” My hope was that this written weekly reminder would make people “run with it” (Hab 2:2-3). From Nehemiah’s experience we know that vision “leaks” and it must be “topped up” all the time. People are very busy with their lives, and unless the vision is kept constantly before them, they forget. It took 52 days to build the wall but by day 26, people were losing it. I knew that I had to be casting the vision monthly, to the point of being creatively redundant. Besides the slogan on the front of the bulletin, it was in the monthly newsletter. I started a “Pastor’s corner” in the bulletin, writing weekly. We celebrated this vision of every believer getting involved in ministry through each baptism, by inviting the whole congregation for laying on of hands for receiving gifts of the Spirit for ministry.

Over time the vision slogan was surrounded with practical pictures of planting more churches in the city and multiplying ministries by multiplying believers. By the end of 2005 we had developed a long-term plan with annual steps—toward our goal of becoming a church of ministers: Believe—Live—Attract – Convert – Multiply—Grow. Table 3 presents an outline of the plan according to each year.
Table 3

Strategic Long Term Plan for London Churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Year of Affirming Our Faith, affirming the 28 Adventist beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Year of Christian Living, focus on Practical Christianity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Year of the Extended Family, inviting people into relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Year of Evangelism, inviting people we care for to commit to Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Year of Multiplying, multiplying venues by producing new church plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Year of Mission, building support structures for further growth, understanding how to approach different people groups, how to diversify our witness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questioning the Vision

Addressing the Empowering Leadership quality as a minimum factor in need of improvement in 2009, some new elders began to question the “buy-in” factor for the vision not only among members, but also among leaders. I was surprised, since we have not changed the direction, or the vision which I and the elders had communicated from the beginning. With momentum stopping, the district divided, a new pastor appointed at the North London church, some leaders began to question if we were moving in the right direction, if planting churches and teamwork were still a valid strategy.

My first intent was to use persuasion and show how much was accomplished by faith, by vision, by seeing the unseen and putting it into reality, capitalizing on the momentum of the diversity programming, the new church school, the Pathfinder Club restart, the Open House monthly community outreach, and many other initiatives. I wanted to remind the leaders that I had not changed communicating the clear, compelling and Christ-honoring vision for the future, and that I also expected from the preaching
elders to give a “certain sound” (1 Cor 14:8), so the “mist in a pulpit” would not make “fog in the pews.”

Yet, I had to admit that the elders raising concerns about the validity of our vision in 2009 was an indication of the lack of unity and certainty among members about what is the vision of our church. We had to stop and re-evaluate again. Throughout 2010 at monthly meetings, at board meetings, and through the pulpit the vision was communicated from various angles, yet by September 2010 the resistance toward vision from a few elders was becoming more vocal. We entered 2011 with a team of 13 elders that were not unified and did not share a common vision.

Elders were re-invited to vision discovery. Each elder was asked to write their perspective on vision. I eagerly wanted to see how far along the journey they see, how many steps forward they envision their own journey, and how their vision fits into the Big Picture of the Preferred Future. When the NCD tool was first introduced in 2005 it provided a unifying Big Picture. Elders had different visions, some wanted more evangelism, others better worship, yet others sought more relations, some expected better organizational structures. The NCD tool connected all these together recognizing all as valid components of a healthy church. Now the feeling was that “every believer a minister” vision was tilted toward one aspect of Gift-oriented Ministry and was not appealing enough.

The NCD survey in 2010 showed no improvement in Empowering Leadership, and until all five traditional factors were in place, I could not introduce the Trinitarian model as it would interfere with the goal of the project.
Reasons for Lack of “Buying-in” of Vision

I looked over truisms that were quoted during the December 2010 elders meeting, wondering if I should take this vision buy-in, or lack of it, personally. Some reminded the group that people do not follow worthy causes; they follow worthy leaders who promote worthwhile causes. Others hinted that people want to go along with people they get along with. A few suggested that a message received is filtered through the messenger who delivers it, making the leader inseparable from the cause he or she promotes.

As grappling with the question about vision, I dared to ask a bigger question: “Is it the leader or the vision that we are immovably jammed by?” I asked the elders to draw their own conclusions: do we need another leader, or do we need a new vision?

Together with the elders we looked at Maxwell’s original diagram where he places top responsibility for the buy-in on the leader, presenting this “variety of choices” (1998, p. 147) listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Buy-in Process According to Maxwell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>LEADER</th>
<th>VISION</th>
<th>RESULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Don’t Buy In</td>
<td>Don’t Buy In</td>
<td>Get Another Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don’t Buy In</td>
<td>Buy In</td>
<td>Get Another Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Buy In</td>
<td>Don’t Buy In</td>
<td>Get Another Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Buy In</td>
<td>Buy In</td>
<td>Get to go with Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We were certainly not experiencing option number four as we were entering 2011. I am aware of the concept suggested by Blackaby (2001, p. 99) that God-given vision is also confirmed by other people recognizing God as the driving force behind the
agenda, the Holy Spirit thus creating the buy-in. However, such collaboration is conditioned upon the spirituality of people. In November of 2007, we met with elders of both churches and we had the buy in on both counts, both the leader and the vision, as we considered the same paradigm. It was by the request of elders that I stayed for three more years, delivering on our goals for 2008, 2009, 2010, with community building and evangelism. We had not shrunk from talking about the need for many churches in the city. We started the process of church becoming a training school by introducing Adventism 101 in 2008/2009, Spirituality class in 2010, and I was committed to take the church to another level in outreach with Mission training, which was successfully conducted monthly in 2011.

What was lacking and preventing us from moving along was a lack of teamwork—the buy-in, especially since the district was split, we were on a detour. We needed to make an adjustment to how our church would continue pursuing the vision for growth and church planting in London.

Vision buy-in is an ongoing process. It may be a rollercoaster ride as people react to changes throughout the journey. It also creates a ripple effect as the buy-in spreads like waves splashing across barriers of tradition.

With my coach, I started with examining myself, and I can confidently say that I was reaffirmed with the call to leadership-development in my church; I was not “released” from the divine appointment to grow an Adventist presence in London. I gained insight, charisma, talents, competence, ability, and communication. I am working on my character development. My household is committed to this call, as my family members are getting involved in more and more ministries at church, and witnessing to
outsiders. I know that the circle of participation is broadening in the church. The question that waits to be answered is: Do I have key influencers for this vision on board?

Anywhere I minister, my vision remains the same: Healthy Church Growing and Planting New Churches. Barna says: “vision for ministry is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through you to build His kingdom” (1992, p. 29). Words of the Apostle Paul are also my motto: “The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:18). I believe that God has allowed me to see things that eyes cannot see. In certain cases, I believe a vision is given by God’s revelation, by the words of Jesus, and not always produced by reacting to changing whims and felt wants of people.

Recognizing the importance of clear vision and its impact on the Empowering Leadership environment, I had examined with our elders some of the factors that kill, confuse or minimize the vision: tradition, fear, stereotypes, complacency, fatigue, short-term thinking (Barna, 1992, pp. 122-129). I was not aware of any literature talking about the buy-in factor for vision except Maxwell’s 21 Laws of Leadership model. Having studied it together with our leadership team, we used this concept as a reference point. Maxwell uses the story of Gideon to illustrate this concept for the Christian context, as he suggests examining the following four factors: (a) an awareness, the ability to see; (b) an attitude, the faith to believe; (c) an action, the courage to do; and (d) an achievement, the hope to endure (Maxwell, 2000, p. 226).

We felt we did not lack in any of these areas. In order to understand where we lost momentum we looked at the whole journey that Maxwell presents through the 21 laws in sequence toward “buying-in” (Appendix J).
Two elements emerged in our discussions. First, we lacked connections. The community was lacking connection between leaders and members. This was also confirmed by the NCD surveys showing our small groups and loving relationship factors were always low. Secondly, we lacked integrity and unity among elders. Since 2007 there was an influx of new people joining the church family and new elders joining the team. We did not provide sufficient orientation of the past journey by the leadership team, and we failed to intentional assure the integrity of our leadership team. Unity among elders was essential for the vision to be shared and supported by the church family.

Rediscovering the Vision

The visioning session was facilitated by an external coach and the elders’ statements were collected. A few days later, during my meeting with the coach and while reviewing all collected statements, we noticed a pattern emerging that was strongly associated with what the NCD indicated were our “minimum factors”—a lack of loving relationships and a lack of empowering leadership. As we knelt to pray I had a mental picture of being in a pit and looking up, seeing only the opening of the pit. After the prayer I shared that with the coach and soon shared it with elders. When a person is in a pit, their seeing-ability is limited by the light that comes through the “fall-in” opening, and the world they see is also limited by their entry point. Our vision is limited by the problems and limitations we face. It is not until we climb out of the pit and are on the surface that we see the surroundings. But even being at the street-level is not the vision we want. One must climb up high to the summit to have a globular perspective. A God-given vision comes from God’s perspective.
It was interesting that all our visioning sessions took place in basements as we enjoyed hospitality of elders’ families. An idea was born to have a meeting on a top floor in the city, with a view of the whole city, praying for God-given vision for our church in the city. So our final visioning session was set up at the top floor in the city, the Prime Minister suite at Hilton downtown hotel, with view on the whole city, conditioned with weeks of prayer by elders.

On May 1, 2011, the day after we ordained two women elders at the Sabbath church service, elders gathered to pray for vision. As we got to the top floor we discovered an irony in the setting. It was a rainy day, and even though we were supposed to have the clear view of the whole city from the penthouse, our vision was blurred by rain, and we could not see even next building, never mind the whole city. After two hours of prayerful conversation the elders concluded with a clear portrait of a preferable future for our church. The Appendix L provides details of the vision statement and the initial strategy developed. This lengthy statement was summarised by elders affirming the previous vision with a minor paraphrase, “The Body of Christ where every believer is a minister. Discover your Calling!” The Vision was accepted by vote and endorsed by the Board in September 2011.

In the following months, as the vision was communicated, a five practical steps strategy emerged toward revival and vision as destination. The visual environment was enhanced by a large banner (Appendix L). The idea emerged from focus on radical experiment for revival (Platt, 2010, p. 185).

Vision and strategy development is ongoing in our church. In 2012, the elders involved the board for planning strategic steps toward the vision by using the REACH
platform proposed by the North American Division (Jackson, 2012). This strategy was shared with the church at a business meeting for implementation to begin in 2013 (Appendix M). This new approach is yet to produce results.

Coaching Elders for Accountability

Reflecting on responses from the elders and resolving to put into practice all the steps recommended by the NCD Implementation Guide I had to also include the one aspect frequently practiced in a secular leadership which contributed to empowerment (Dennis, 1995, pp. 127-128) and for the most part missing in our church environment—the coaching. The validated questionnaire (Arnold, et al., 2000) is convincing and conclusive that coaching is an indispensable practice for empowering leadership.

In June 2010, I attended a SEEDS Conference at Southern Adventist University for an intensive training on coaching with Lyle Litzenberger. And since July 2010, my personal meetings with each elder began to take the shape of a coaching structure. I introduced coaching principles in September 2010 at a general elders meeting, asking the elders to embrace and try this simple process for improvement sake. We agreed that I would meet once per quarter sharing a meal with each elder individually, reflecting on their accomplishments, challenges, goals, and resources needed, praying together, and sharing common expectations (Bandy, 2000).

Informing, Communicating, and Investing

As I reflect on a recent blog suggesting “10 Ways to Create a Leadership Culture in Your Church” (Mancini, 2011), I can say that I have done everything “by the book”!

1. We practiced “No-Draining” Training, cancelling all other ministry meetings during the week that the leaders gather for training or development. We even have gone
so far as setting one Sabbath per month as a “restful Sabbath” with no meetings of any kind to provide time for the leaders to rest.

2. We worked on a unified vision and have adopted a leadership glossary so everyone speaks the same language.

3. I targeted leaders with various social media content. Every week I write a blog in the bulletin, and post it on our website. A monthly newsletter has been a regular feature since May 2005. I have not gone as far as a podcast, but communicating via e-mail is constant. Even though our elders meetings are not bureaucratic meetings with no minutes taken, I always write a couple of pages of reflections after the meeting and e-mail it to the elders to make sure we are on the same page. Our church services are broadcast live and archive messages are available from a well maintained and regularly updated website (adventistlondon.ca), which also provides resources, training materials, and calendars.

4. We have expanded the “shallow end” by inviting potential leaders in and creating a “no pressure” environment in order to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for the newcomers. The elders in preparation for ordination are not pressured to preach, but are involved at their own pace.

5. A few sermonic series were done on individual responsibilities and leadership.

6. Each elder is encouraged to have an apprentice in their parish.

7. Every year, I give a leadership book as a gift to the elders and other leaders during ministry appreciation day or other annual occasions. A number of elders attended training sessions at Andrews University and other places; all expenses were paid by the church.
8. Through the coaching process, I interview leaders constantly to seek their input.

9. Seasoned leaders are free to “swim deep” and get involved in any ministry project they wish.

10. The only aspect that is still lacking is regular retreats. We did have a short winter retreat, and plans are made for a summer retreat with families for relationship building.

As I travel to different seminars and workshops I always invite elders and leaders to join me. Every elder has attended either “SEEDS”, a worship conference, or other leadership training at Andrews University during the past six years. We also sponsor leaders to attend any training available within the Conference.

Yet, the motivating factor has been elusive until the Trinitarian model was presented and explained.

**Toward Conference-wide Empowerment**

I was invited to serve on the Church Growth Committee for the Ontario Conference in October 2009 and was instrumental in promoting ideas for using the NCD survey as a tool to provide a common system of measuring progress, position, and to provide churches with a common vocabulary and common language so that goals can be articulated and agreed on. Having experienced a lack of common ground between the churches in the district for testing empowering leadership models, I believe that common working expectations would help to develop leadership effectiveness in the whole conference.
I presented the NCD Trinitarian concepts to pastors at the conference workers meeting in January 2010, facilitating interest and buy-in of innovators among pastors. Our committee facilitated an invitation to Tom Evans, then serving as the Texas Conference church growth coordinator, to present workshops on church planting and NCD at the Festival of Laity in Ontario in August 2010. In 2011, our Conference Executive Committee and Board of Directors approved a Conference-wide implementation plan. Pastors were selected—two per each of 11 districts—to lead implementation and to serve as coaches in their respective districts. In November 2011, Tom Evans together with Rodney Mills conducted an orientation for NCD in Oshawa. The goal was set to have 30% of churches complete an initial NCD survey by the end of 2012, and 70% by the end of 2013. We are well on the way to accomplish that goal.

The next initiative I introduced to the Conference Growth Committee was organizing a database of NCD data and teaming up churches by their points of strength and minimum factors, so that churches that are strong in certain qualities would assist those lacking the same qualities. Such an approach would connect churches not only in their districts, but conference-wide, and in such a method of partnership local leaders would be empowered and developed. This item is currently under development, waiting for a logistics approval by the Ontario Conference administrators.

It is my estimation that under our current denominational system in Ontario, church planting would work only if the endorsement comes from the top. Local elders of churches see their responsibility as managing the church where they are, and are not ready to accept the responsibility for mission beyond the local congregation. People wait for the initiative to come from the Conference. When the current Administration and
departmental directors are too busy managing what is, and no intentional resources are invested into expansion, there is no motivation communicated to the field for growth in new territories. The 33\textsuperscript{rd} Ontario Conference Constituency Session occurred on August 23-25, 2013 and created a new office – the Church Planting and Growth director, in addition to the Ministerial director, in order to facilitate intentional growth (Peat, 2013). Lay leaders and vocational pastors will not move into mission unless authorization, endorsement, and empowerment come from the top leadership. Hence, our committee is working to promote church planting initiatives for each district. I presented statistical and demographic research on 60 towns in Ontario, 15 of these located in our Western Ontario district, including such a world renowned artsy town as Stratford with a population of 32,000 and home of the Shakespearean Festival, attracting annually over 600,000 patrons, yet without the presence or awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist work. The logistics are in the process of being further developed by the Conference Church Growth Committee.

What I was not permitted to implement at the local district, I attempt to bring to the attention of the whole Conference, doing what is in my capacity to empower leaders for church growth.

**Second Implementation Stage**—

**Trinitarian Leadership Model Introduced**

By the end of 2011 all recommended factors for empowering leadership were in place at the London South church. The leadership score was stable and showing slight steady improvement. The leadership team was ready for introduction of the Trinitarian paradigm I had been developing. A presentation of theological concepts presented in
Chapter 2 and discoveries from literature reflected on in Chapter 3 were presented to the elders (Appendix Q).

As I shared the Trinitarian Leadership model, I invited the elders to consider vision not as our invention, our dream, but as God-given revelation. I believe it is important for elders to understand that their threefold role of leadership is an extension of and must be modeled after God’s leadership and God’s vision for the Church as His Bride.

A PowerPoint presentation on the Trinitarian Leadership model was prepared (Appendix Q). Elders were invited to dialogue and contribute their understanding of this paradigm of leadership. I used the NCD format of the three colors of leadership representing the three complimentary ways of leading from God’s perspective:

- Green—kingly, decisive, ruling leadership
- Red—priestly, servant, transactional leadership
- Blue—prophetic, shared, transforming leadership.

*Figure 42. Summary of the Trinitarian Leadership*
Elders were invited to share the way in which they understand the Trinitarian Leadership, and what practical impact it may have on their ministry. The sharing continued via e-mails, and in the process elders shared with me new perspectives that I did not consider before, making me revisit and rewrite Chapter 2 of this document. The elders shared the following insights.

1. From the creation story, God’s model of leadership is “Let US,” implying the teamwork, plurality, togetherness, unity of purpose, and need for all-inclusive participation. Such an approach is much needed among elders to be in one accord, united in what we do.

2. Elders should be “omni-involved.” If an elder’s role is limited to the pulpit proclamation, it may preserve the transcendent distance, respect, and reverence, and they may stand as God for people (Exod 7:1). Yet, to be effective, the elders must walk and work among people like Jesus did, mingling to know firsthand the people’s needs. Moreover, elders are to walk along, being parakletos, like the Holy Spirit, alongside our people.

3. Community is different from a team. Community rejects hierarchy of control. The Divine leadership model invites all into interconnected community. The circular motion term for Trinity—perichoresis—suggests that in every moment we are both leading and following. Hence, a distinction between leaders and followers is inapplicable. Latest work on leaders’ reaction to the 2008 crisis substantiates this, as Dee Hock of VISA credit says “in the deepest sense, distinction between leaders and followers is meaningless. In every moment of life, we are simultaneously leading and following” (Sweet, 2012, p. 37).
4. Leadership as the function of the Holy Spirit is not optional, as the gift for leadership is the gift of the Holy Spirit, according to Rom 12:8. When leadership is practiced as the spiritual gift then spiritual fruits (Gal 5:22-23) would be produced, establishing a healthy context as an evidence.

5. The fullness of the Godhead (Col 2:9-10) being present in Christ, invites Christian leaders to be so filled with divine principles that our ministry will be fulfilling the Father’s Will, guided by the Spirit, and serving self-sacrificially in Jesus’ name.

6. As leaders we are not only to direct people, but also to model the way and to support people we lead, strengthening, empowering, and lifting the feeble every step.

7. Each leader must balance their leadership style to include all three trends: those who tend to be more “ruling” must learn to serve and share. Others who are more submissive and subservient need to learn assertiveness and allow others to share burdens. Those who always need a company to hide among must learn to take initiative and lead from the front.

The effect of understanding the Trinitarian model of leadership was evident throughout the year as elders visited ministry meetings, mingled among people served by the Community Open House team, and sat at the choir practice even without being members of the choir. The “among” concept began to take on; mingling among people became a part of the elders’ practice. Coming alongside also became evident as leaders of ministries and elders began to be more involved in personal situations of volunteers, mentoring, and supporting individuals. Some leaders who never took the pulpit, who always excused themselves from being upfront, began to lead first during the mid-week services and then speaking at the worship hour. Leaders began to stretch themselves to be
more balanced in directions of sharing, serving, and leading. During the election process, church members expressed more confidence in leaders fulfilling their biblical mandate. The eldership team for 2013 was increased; elders who resigned in the past, returned to work. The final NCD survey taken in December 2012 showed a leadership quality score of 81, the highest it has ever been in eight years (the complete score in the Appendix O). Empowering Leadership became our maximum strength for the first time!

![Leadership](image)

*Figure 43. Spike in Empowering Leadership in 2012*

The Empowering Leadership score peaked in spite of relationships and small groups continuing to remain as minimum factors. The Appendix O shows that 7 out of the 10 highest improved areas were in leadership practices, and these pulled up the quality of other factors:

1. A 59% increase in people appreciating that more people are given the opportunity to actively participate in worship.
2. A 45% increase for leaders collaborating with others instead of preferring to do the work themselves.

3. A 43% increase in accountability for commitments made.

4. A 41% increase in receiving regular outside assistance, being coached and interacting with other successful leaders in developing the church.

5. A 40% increase in leaders concentrating on tasks for which they are gifted.

6. A 37% increase in leaders believing that God wants our church to grow.

7. A 33% increase in leaders actively removing barriers that may limit people.

The only area that lacked improvement is the perception that the leading vocational pastor has more work to do. While I appreciate people considering me a hard worker, I need to let go and also be more balanced in sharing leadership.

**Conclusion**

The implementation did not go as planned when I was envisioning this project in 2007. The initial success of developing teamwork among district churches in 2008 and 2009 was short-lived as it was engineered and artificially simulated without people understanding and owning the desire for working together. The following chapter will address the reasons for people not desiring positive change. Without external initiative and consistent accountability to produce teamwork, district churches slid right back into independent existence. The two-year experience of teamwork did not produce improvement in the quality of Empowering Leadership.

The work on improving traditionally outlined factors for Empowering Leadership as listed on page 123 did not produce promised results in the local London Seventh-day Adventist Church. The quality remained static and even declined (Appendix N). Other
factors, such as relationships and community closeness did affect leadership development. The Empowering Leadership cannot be developed in a vacuum. We cannot overlook other dynamics that may be holding leadership development hostage, such as lack of loving relationships, lack of trust in small groups, and insufficient community closeness.

Traditional motivational theories were considered and applied locally at the London (south) church to master leadership improvement. Yet, these also proved insufficient to cause significant change.

A final focus on understanding God the Trinity as the model for leadership on earth as it is in heaven, limited this understanding as it may be, provided measurable improvement in leadership environment in the London (south) church. In Chapter 5 I intend to propose that Christian leadership must move beyond secular “push-button” models of leadership and learn the God-given model of leading by serving and sharing.
CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

As I reflect on our leadership journey, I am reminded of a comment by Klutznick:

“There is nothing new under the sun. . . . Each generation has wailed over the absence of adequate leadership since it is only in retrospect and with some historical perspective that a leadership can be properly evaluated” (as cited in Brawarsky & Mark, 1998, p. 352).

Some trends are best seen and understood only in retrospect.

NCD Survey and Focus on Leadership

I first introduced the NCD concept to two churches in London in March of 2005. The following May both churches took the survey (Appendix K). For both churches, the Leadership factor was among the top two strengths. Both churches had a similarly weak community factor of Small Groups. Each church also had different minimum factors to address. The London (South) church had to work on Loving Relationships and the North had to expand their community from being a “one small group” to becoming a church of small groups, after implementing an accelerated group training for leaders a number of Small Groups started and it caused immediate increase in attendance in 2006, as illustrated by the NCD score in the Appendix K. The North London church had up to 120 people in attendance with membership of fewer than 70. The London (South) church
invested three years in resolving cultural differences to improve loving relationships, which also resulted in growth in numbers and quality of community.

While addressing urgent needs, I made investment in leadership development my priority from the beginning, before this project began. My approach to the leaders’ development was based on the basic requirements advised in the *Elders Handbook*: teamwork, spiritual leadership, oversight and nurturing. During 2005-2006 both teams of elders in London journeyed through the *17 Laws of Teamwork* (Maxwell, 2001).

Starting in the fall of 2006 we addressed together the meaning of *Spiritual Leadership* (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001). This new curriculum proved to be more than challenging, taking almost three years to complete. To add another curriculum during this time, a new paradigm of leadership for an intensive learning would have been too challenging. A second curriculum done simultaneously would also have provided a conflict for determining which factor alone influenced a change. I decided to complete the Spiritual Leadership curriculum before introducing the Trinitarian Leadership model.

Consistent efforts of building leadership teams were making a difference and the annual NCD surveys evidenced continual progress as shown in Figure 44. While other quality characteristics were fluctuating as situations changed from year to year, the leadership indicator was increasing steadily from 2005 to 2007, more so at the South as
the number of elders there also increased from four to seven.

While the teamwork and spiritual leadership were more obvious and easier to promote, the oversight and pastoral nurture were still lacking. I began to seek for a motivational factor to encourage local leaders to embrace their responsibilities to the full measure of biblical standards, being not only dignitaries/elders, but also nurturers/pastors and stewards/overseers as described in theological reflections in Chapter 2.

Having experienced positive teamwork interactions among local elders in London, both North and South churches, I wanted to encourage wider supportive teamwork among elders in the Western District.

**Evaluating Focus Groups Data**

A full stop is required here for a question: Do elders in different churches see their responsibilities in a similar manner? Do elders of Seventh-day Adventist churches in Western Ontario acknowledge the pastoral responsibility bestowed upon them?
Before introducing the Trinitarian Leadership model for Empowerment (Appendix Q), I surveyed the initial understanding of elders through focus groups. Having conducted five focus groups with local elders in the Western Ontario district at the beginning of this study in 2008, I learned that none of the eldership teams acknowledged pastoral and empowering responsibility. In fact, even after suggesting it and prompting them to see the biblical model presented in Chapter 2, the elders were reluctant to consider pastoral function as their role.

Even the oversight aspect of leadership was not fully understood by elders in the churches surveyed. Some practiced eldership as a position of authority over the church in general without specific oversight of select ministries or of specific parishes of families.

A trend of elders having no ministry responsibility does exist in many of our churches, contrary to the denominational recommendation in the Elders’ Handbook that “honorary elders are not ideal . . . nonworking elders encourage nonworking members,” and every elder “should also be given specific assignments” for oversight (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994, p. 36). However, no formal mentoring or training of elders functioning as overseers and pastors took place in the past two decades in the Western Ontario district.

Focus groups had shown that elders in local churches expected empowerment to come from the leaders above them, a delegation of authority, ambassadorship from the Conference leaders through pastors to elders. Such experience was lacking, hence local leaders did not feel that they have been empowered.
The survey revealed a current paradox of power flow in the Seventh-day Adventist church. A recent article addressing much disputed governance system of our denomination states:

The Seventh-day Adventist system was designed to support an upward flow of authority from the people to the leaders who serve the church at the various organizational levels. We must be reminded that such leaders exercise authority loaned in trust by the people—our leaders do not own authority. (Patterson, 2012)

Historical research presented in this article shows that authority and power was assigned to those at the base—the members of the church. Leaders function as stewards of authority. Hence, empowerment comes from God to people, not from human hierarchical leaders. Only a small minority of elders emphasized empowerment from the Holy Spirit as the only source needed.

Many noted that empowerment is an environment and a group process. For empowerment to happen closer connections and communication must exist between all branches of church organization and local churches.

The main concern expressed in focus groups was the inconsistency between expectations placed on vocational pastors who are moved frequently, and the personal responsibility of local elders for church growth. Many see church leadership as a hierarchical “chain of command style,” while others see it as equally shared. Cultural traditions often dictate leadership practices in local churches.

Focus groups helped me to see that I must begin training elders returning to the roots of biblical understanding of leadership and to a compliance with basic requirements of our denominational handbook.
Local Church Within the Denomination

During the first two years of the project, I became concerned that it might be impossible to change a local church within a network of Conference affiliated churches. My reasoning came from an observation of group-think, when harmony among members is kept, and illusions are collectively shared “at the cost of impaired judgment” (Tennyson, 1992, pp. 76-77), and from watching people in one church doing a minimum of what people in other churches do, satisfied with being the same in comparison. If any change is hinted, even before it is introduced in practice, there are people who consult with their friends in other churches and raise objections to innovations. Such a “systemic phenomenon” must be anticipated, because self-differentiation in a group for the sake of progress and change always triggers sabotage (Friedman, Treadwell, & Beal, 2007, pp. 246-247).

My initial assumption was that in order to improve the work of a local church there must be two conditions met. First, a committed and unified church team is needed with elders who have a vision of a preferred future and are committed to taking necessary steps toward it. Second, a permissive attitude is needed within the conference network wherein elders are encouraged to try innovative approaches. When both conditions are in place then growth is possible as a goal. Such conditions are necessary when the purpose of the church is not to maintain and manage a status quo, but to enter unreached territories and expand to new people groups. However, after six years of experimenting with elders and after relinquishing responsibilities for other congregations, I see that each church has sufficient autonomy to develop custom-fit practices for effectiveness and improve their model of leadership. Belonging to the conference or a district of churches
does not hinder the local church from establishing practices of leadership that may be
different from others, as long as such are biblically based. It is possible to revive a single
church within the system. If I could change things in time, I should have continued in the
role of the district coordinator to foster the teamwork for the benefit of all churches.

**Surveying Leadership Trends in 2007-2009**

As elders in the district began to work together toward joint camp meetings, joint
evangelism, and joint training, I expected an increase in quality coefficient of leadership
as measured by NCD. Surveys were conducted after all the focus groups took place in
2008 and soon after the first joint camp meeting in Chatham took place. Instead the
indicators of leadership quality declined! (For details see the Appendix N.)

![Figure 45. Decline of Empowering Leadership in 2008, NCD scores](image)

Such a drastic drop from a median average of 50 (Schwarz, 1996, p. 38) just
*above drowning* of 30 in the area of leadership quality was totally unexpected by the
elders, as relationships and the number of elders involved remained stable.
At first glance other factors could have been attributed to cause such a decline. For instance, an unresolved conflict in a young family that affected both churches, disagreements between church families on how the pastor dealt with the conflict, and a growing tension between the pastor and elders disagreeing about the pace of progress.

The tenure of pastoral appointment was also taken into consideration. In view of the pastoral tenure trend of three years, the pastor’s experience of the first three years is predictable. The first year is dubbed as the “honeymoon” of getting acquainted. The second year is focused on planning and dreaming together for a better future. Finally, in the third year, instead of implementing those plans, the leader often tells the congregation that he is moving elsewhere, so it becomes “help me pack” year. The congregation zigzags with new pastoral leaders to a new direction every three years. When a vocational minister stays longer, all excuses for the lack of productivity are removed, and the expectation of performance and results increases on the fourth year.

The focus group discussion with elders also confirmed the warning from the NCD Implementation Guide about increasing expectations corresponding with growth. Elders agreed that the above mentioned secondary factors were not the main reasons for leadership quality score decline. Elders’ first reaction was to recognize that the cause was a greater understanding by people of what is expected of leaders and an admission that leaders were not being consistent in practice. The individual performance of lay leaders was not catching up with the people’s expectations. Both elders and members of the London churches reacted by giving lower score marks to leadership team empowerment performance.
Only later at the NCD training meeting for the Ontario Conference, conducted by Tom Evans and Rodney Mills in November 2011, I learned about the “crisis gap,” the critical imbalance, where if the difference between the minimum factor and the highest quality exceeds 15 points, stability becomes unsustainable.

The 2007 NCD survey showed a 32 point difference between spirituality and relationships, a 24 point difference between leadership, structures, and relationships. The new NCD manuals emphasize this “Min-Max Difference number” as a sustainability factor (Campbell & Bickle, 2009, p. 71).

The lack of loving relationships, even though better than a few years before, was fueled by the lack of reliability and trust and it caused a decline in all the areas of strength. The congregation had to face up that the Love is not pick and choose, either or, but is the single fruit of the Spirit, consisting of all eight qualities: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trust, humility, and self-control as outlined in Gal 5:22-23. When
some elements are missing, loving relationships suffer altogether, because “love is holistic, indivisible,” and to pick one out of others is a “modern schizophrenia” in words of Schwarz (2004, p. 79). In 2007 there were three incidents of spousal and relational abuses at the North church, and actions taken by the leaders spilled to the South church where some elders took sides and disagreed with decisions. I insisted in allowing separation in cases of an abusive environment. This also contributed to the mistrust of leaders.

![Figure 47. “Wave Effect” of the Minimum Factor, NCD Scores](image)

In 2008 many quality indicators plummeted (Appendix N), among them the Empowering Leadership. The culture of the church shifted. What was once our greatest strength was not there, passionate spirituality was at the lowest point. Even though we continued singing “we have this hope that burns within our hearts,” we had to admit that Pharisaic spirituality is not what God requires of us. In this environment I had to address the area of personal spirituality immediately, and simultaneously continue the leadership development—the two areas that declined significantly.
Other Factors During the Discovery Stage

Before introducing the Trinitarian paradigm for leadership, I had to explore a few ideas that were emerging from research and focus groups. The following factors were considered: plurality of elders, frequency of meetings, willingness of leaders to take ownership, interpersonal relationships among leaders, and a systemic environment in the sisterhood of churches.

After comparing the NCD results from seven churches, one trend became obvious—the more elders there are in a congregation numerically, the higher will the empowering leadership quality indicator be. A reduction in the number of elders due to any reason—relocation, sabbatical, or a disqualification from the office—always resulted in lowering the quality indicator. In my opinion empowerment is closely connected with multiplication and replication of leaders. Taking into consideration the biblical indicators for plurality of elders (see Chapter 2) and the evidence presented in the literature for the plurality of elders as a necessity for healthy church (Chapter 3), I shared with district pastors that they must develop elders to have more than one elder per church, even in small churches. This view of plurality of elders is not shared by others. A recent article by the Ministerial director for the Ontario Conference (Lawrence, 2013, p. 16) states his opinion that “churches having multiple elders is a relatively recent occurrence.” The number of elders does depend on the size of the church, but the plurality of elders should not be optional. Having an elder in training, an apprentice leader changes the power dynamics in the church and communicates shared power needed for empowering environment. As the number of elders declined in St. Thomas from three to one and in Woodstock from three to two, the empowering leadership indicator confirmed the
qualitative decline. Since the pastoral change in 2010 for Woodstock/St. Thomas district
the leadership environment changed again but was not measured quantitatively by the
NCD survey.

A process of addition of elders by itself does not necessarily result in an increase
of leadership quality. The London (south) church grew from four to seven in 2007, to
twelve elders in 2009, adding new leaders from the congregation and losing one due to
relocation, one to apostasy, two due to family-life circumstances. As numbers grew the
quality declined! In a discussion with elders in June 2010 clear indicators were given that
the higher number of elders without sufficient relationships causes lack of cooperation
and decrease in productivity.

In January 2009, the elders retreat was well attended by all elders of the London
(south) Church. However, elders were disappointed as the facilitator focused more on
equipping and training than on relationship building. A general consensus of elders was
to organize another retreat with the sole purpose of relationship building.

My surprise “resignation” from sole pastoral responsibilities in the spring of 2009
made an impact, put elders on the spot, and caused some improvement in ownership of
the church vision and responsibilities; but it was short lived and not empowering enough.
Some expressed a disappointment, feeling that being “put on the spot” without being
prepared for it was “disempowering.” Sharing power with people who are not prepared to
handle it is not the way empowerment works.

Failure to call regular monthly elders meetings set on a specific day of the month
and navigating from an opportunity to an occasion also decreased the quality of
empowering leadership in the North London church. As soon as the elders agreed to
commit to a set schedule for meetings, that alone gave more security and stability for leadership. I would strongly recommend regular monthly elders meetings for healthy leadership development.

Having completed teamwork curriculum and spiritual leadership curriculum, we added six new elders in 2010, allowing one to take a sabbatical leave, hoping that veterans would mentor the new team, and together we turned to the *Elders Handbook* as a monthly curriculum. Each elder facilitated a chapter discussion during our monthly meetings. The first part of our gathering was about personal and professional growth while the second part was dedicated to church life and ministry. However, the denominational guidelines alone did not provide sufficient motivation for elders to get engaged in pastoring, overseeing, and influencing, as intended.

After considering the above mentioned leadership practices and their impact on empowerment, we decided that there was no need to have an additional measuring tool. The NCD tools were sufficient for measuring leadership development process, and it was used annually to monitor changes as manifested in the Appendix N.

**Starting With Explanation**

The explanation was much needed in early 2009 if we were to improve our leadership. Yet sometimes explanation is not enough. As I attempted to present elders as pastors and bishops to the congregation, and to explain Biblical paradigm of threefold responsibilities, motivation did not take place. Some elders commented “I did not sign up for this.” Some felt that I pushed this added responsibility against their will. Only a small minority of elders were willing to embrace this new paradigm.
NCD international research presents three ingredients for balanced leadership: explanation, motivation, liberation (Schwarz, 2005, p. 107).

A motivation was needed. For the majority of church members—they accepted and welcomed the new paradigm! After the initial explanation church members’ expectation of elders became even greater than before. During the next few months members often commented positively on the importance of shared responsibilities in the church.

From 2008 to 2009 the district worked even closer together in organizing joint training among churches, another camp meeting, and joint evangelism campaigns. During this time I began to redirect the elders toward their triple responsibility as described in Chapter 2 and outlined in the *Elders Handbook*: elders, nurturers, and overseers. The elders’ team also agreed to revisit together the denominational *Elders Handbook* (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994) to affirm the threefold responsibility of leadership as that of elder/pastor/overseer, as it contains most of the principles toward
elders’ pastoral and overseeing responsibilities.

A few months after introducing the threefold responsibility of elders we took another annual NCD survey which indicated a slight improvement of the Leadership score in 2009 at the London South church. It climbed from 31 to 33, yet still far from desired.

However, with the division of the London parish into two upon the arrival of the new pastor to lead the North & Spanish congregations, the North London church did not take the survey, and with my resignation from the responsibility as the Western District coordinator, I had to narrow my focus to one local congregation: London South.

**Develop Oversight by Elders**

An attempt to organize the oversight was made every year during the Nominating Committee process by structuring offices and ministries into clusters: Administration, Outreach, Church Life, Worship, and then grouping ministries under these “umbrellas” for elders to provide supervision. For example: The administrative elder looked after deacons and deaconesses, clerk and archives, treasury, building maintenance, and other

Figure 49. Three Colors of Local Leadership
aspects of administration. The intent made sense but remained on-paper only. Elders did not call and did not attend ministries and departmental meetings, did not participate in coordinating the cooperation of ministries in their clusters.

The most radical attempt to propel elders to oversight was made at the beginning of 2010, when the London (south) church agreed to try for six months a model of church governance without regular church board meetings, where elders would be empowered to make decisions and then communicate such to various ministries through the board of elders. Initial reasoning favored the time spent in board meetings being released for elders to invest into ministries under their oversight. Only monthly elders meetings continued, during which all church life matters were up for discussion. Yet, after the first few months it became obvious that a bottleneck effect was created and elders were not communicating sufficiently to ministries. Ministries felt not represented at the decision making forum. Some frustrated officers of ministry departments labelled the trial as “dictatorship of elders.” After six months the church returned to the regular format with the church board meeting consisting of all departmental directors coordinating events and activities.

Elders continued to come together as a board of trustees, to maintain the vision and provide accountability guidance for the executive officers. Based on observation and available literature on church management, the oversight of elders is best accomplished through communities where relationships are built, and not through formal delegation of duties, as most of the officers are volunteers.

Second attempt to facilitate oversight was made by assigning pastoral parishes to elders in 2010. Earlier in 2006 the same idea was shared and elders picked a list of names
to be responsible for. A letter was designed to be sent to all families by each elder identifying themselves as their spiritual leaders and pastors. A year later elders admitted that they did not send letters because they did not feel it was their responsibility, and they were concerned about danger of such an action. Some were concerned that they might be liable and legally responsible for activities and developments in communities assigned to them. We brought back this model of oversight again in 2010. Currently, at the monthly elders’ meetings, after a devotional and group study time, we begin the working agenda with a report from elders’ communities. Each elder reports the number of visits made, concerns, prayer requests, events, and significant happenings from their parish. A reporting sheet is provided for each elder to submit to the lead pastor monthly.

While elders accepted the responsibility, initially parish boundaries remained vague among elders.

Leadership Trends in 2010 -2011

Another decline was displayed in 2010 in leadership scores of the NCD survey.

![Figure 50. Further Decline of Leadership in 2010](image)
As the relationships between the two churches in London and leadership teams underwent adjustments in the fall of 2009, the communication and teamwork declined and even the local newsletter represented only the London South church happenings.

In Chapter 4, I described our journey of rediscovering the vision and re-establishing the five essential categories of Empowering Leadership through 2010-2011. The December 2011 survey indicated stabilization of church dynamics with improvement as compared with 2005.

![Graph showing comparison between 2005 and 2011 NCD results for London (South) categories like Leadership, Gifts Ministry, Spirituality, Structures, Worship, Small Groups, Evangelism, and Relationships.

Figure 51. 2005 & 2011 NCD Results Comparison for London (South)

The low scores for Small Groups and Loving Relationships still dominate the “landscape,” and, observing this, one elder remarked, quoting an article he read in the Executive Leadership magazine, that “culture eats strategy for lunch” (Clark, 2008, p. 3). In our journey together we were wrestling with the culture and traditions developed over generations before, in hope of prevailing.

The elders had learned all the necessary practices for improving the leadership quality proposed by implementation guides from NCD specialists (Schwarz & Schalk,
1998) and by Seventh-day Adventist research (Folkenberg, 2002). Yet, even as consensus on vision was reached, actions were delayed. A strong motivation was needed in order to implement changes. Explanation and understanding by itself was insufficient to produce change. An idea and theory, no matter how reasonable and effective they may appear, are not strong enough to motivate their implementation. Hence, educational approaches to persuade elders of the necessity of supervision and pastoral nurture are insufficient to facilitate functioning. Traditional motivational processes, including memetics and vision casting, did not move elders to embrace the complete “job description.”

An empowering environment is not created as long as the lead vocational pastor alone is expected to fill the role of a glorified elder for the congregation. Elders’ reluctance to take on their responsibilities hinders church growth, creating dependence of members on the vocational pastor. The information alone—the equipping—is not sufficient to rouse elders into motion. Deeper motivation is needed.

While dialoguing with an elder recently, he kept repeating “empowered by the Spirit,” implying that a revival is needed. At first I wanted to dismiss it as a superfluous cliché, as I had read a few books with a similar title. But then I agreed with him, having my own proposition in mind: Let’s consider the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the leadership of God in totality of revelation; maybe it is the motivation that is lacking. The Trinitarian model for leadership was tested for its motivational and liberating influence for leadership development. I needed something to make the church leadership ready to experiment with the Trinitarian Model in a more committed way.
Reflections on Dangers of Change

I had taken two new personal tests in September 2011 which involved scores of members and leaders from the local church and the district evaluating me on-line through the NCD network. These tests were about my personal strengths in community, and my personal balance as a leader. The Community test revealed that my greatest personal strength and potential to contribute in the community is the Empowering Leadership!

![Community profile for Alex Golovenko](image)

*Figure 52. Author’s Personal Strength in a Community*

The Empowerment test showed that people perceived me as a balanced leader. Yet I did not feel that I, myself, had been fully empowered. The church is not a closed system but an open one where happenings outside impact the environment inside. Could leaders be empowering without being empowered? Could people be empowered without those above them being empowered?
I learned that Empowering Leadership is an equation with too many variables, and it is very hard to test the effectiveness of one aspect while others are either out of place or changing. My attempt was to study Change, to study how one variable can positively change the system. Change takes time, and it is not about tweaking a system a little to tune it up, but about guiding and watching the system over time.

I wanted to give up on the project altogether when the district stopped the teamwork, but the hope of testing the Trinitarian Leadership model at least in one church kept me going. I also began to wonder about the resistance to change from churches and conference structures. A young adult member of the church, with whom I shared my dream for empowering leadership, commented how it is impossible to reform too much at once, and shared a book with me with such a chapter title. The book presented a totally secular, Machiavellian paradigm of power (Greene, 1998). It advocates the idea that people are creatures of habit and too much innovation is traumatic (p. 392). The author suggests that one should not underestimate the hidden conservatism of people (p. 394).

Figure 53. Author’s Personal Empowerment Balance Profile
Greene suggests that if a change is to be accepted, the revolution has to be cloaked in the “clothing of the past,” because the past has the power of appearing greater and more legitimate (Greene, 1998, pp. 395-396). If this was true, then appealing to our church elders to return to the biblical practices, to the past of the first-century Christian church ideals of leadership which existed before the Constantinian corruption was introduced (as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3) should have been sufficient. Yet, in reality the minimalist approach to leadership responsibilities seems to be more comfortable, even when inefficient.

Greene also quoted Max Planck that new truths are accepted not because opposition accepts such, but because opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up familiar with the new paradigm (Planck, 1949, pp. 33-34). Such an approach could justify investing in the training of the dissatisfied youth who would create the new leadership model. Yet, as I reflected on a proposed solution to wait for the new generation, I recalled an observation that in the war on cancer, amputations do not solve the problem. “Successful for the moment, the excised tumor returns . . . in ‘cells’ that never knew the ‘cells’ that left” (Friedman, Treadwell, & Beal, 2007, p. 5). The authors suggest that the problem is systemic and conditions must change.

Green’s perspective reflects human anxieties, evolution of power and offers an adaptive manipulative approach for success. Another author proposes an adaptive leadership model. It is of interest to me because it moves away from a hierarchical leadership model, and suggests seeing leadership as a constant process of taking into account and building on the numerous individual adaptations of every participant. Adaptive leadership is a group leadership process. However, even though it is not
unidirectional, it still remains directive, where the top leader has to be protected from the voices from “below” and must shape the environment (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001, p. 10). Heifetz’ recent article suggests that instead of letting people “default to what they know how to do in order to reduce frustration” leadership have to be “improvisational and experimental,” compounding all the micro-adaptations that are constantly taking place (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, pp. 64-65). This intellectually aware approach promises a possible solution, but Friedman, Treadwell and Beal go deeper, calling to consider the “triune brain” where reptilian and mammalian base brain is responsible for anxiety and emotions, and cortex for the intellect of decision making. Thus, they conclude that intellectual solutions will not do, emotional anxieties of any relational system must be engaged in change (Friedman et al., 2007, pp. 119-122). Friedman et al. say: “Sabotage comes with the territory of leading” (p. 11), and explain sabotage as shifting balances of emotions in a relationship system. The emotional anxiety oriented toward safety cannot be overcome by intellect alone. The power of systemic leadership must be considered, and mechanical flow charts cannot explain all the processes in the system. Innovations that are focused on methods and techniques and not on an emotional process are doomed. The system-sensitive leadership model based on memetics, presented earlier on page 81, must be considered (Armour & Browning, 2000).

Friedman et al. experience critique my method at the core. They stopped trying to build teamwork or pay attention to the weakness (read NCD “minimum factor”), and focused on developing strengths, expecting the system to affect the change directionally from the top and throughout. This assertion that a well-differentiated leadership is the immune system, and a solution to health of anybody or organization goes along with the
NCD findings that leadership is the core of all qualities. In my implementation process I also overlooked relationships and lack of community as “minimum factor” urgent needs, investing more in leadership development in hope that it would change everything. However, I also see the system as much larger than a church or a conference of churches.

Secular methods are based on evolutionary theories and do not include divine leadership and divine involvement in human affairs. To follow secular manipulative models of change would be to rely on human power and not on divine motivation. I see the church as a body whose head is Christ; hence, my thrust on aligning the human leadership practices with the Trinitarian Leadership.

Prior to implementing the project I seriously considered all the advice given on how to change your church without killing it, just as the title of the book promises (Nelson & Appel, 2000). I understood that perseverance would be needed, and the process would take time to move people from rejection to acceptance, understanding that changes I was proposing would generate conflict with status quo. I considered the “resistance pyramid” of addressing leaders first at the “not knowing” level through communication and explanation, then those “not able” through education and training, and finally praying that the “not willing” would see the vision and would recognize the urgency and necessity of change.

The “delta factor” formula was discussed together with the elders, which considers direct proportion of time available multiplied by the sum of leadership capacity and congregational readiness over the inverse proportion of the change impact. It seems that the change impact was underestimated. For local elders to accept the Trinitarian Leadership model, the impact would affect the role of the vocational pastor, financing
local ministries, and even the relations with sister churches in the district and the conference of churches.

The likelihood of the Trinitarian Leadership model acceptance by the elders to become more than authoritative representatives of the congregation, to become pastoral nurturers and ministry supervisors, needs the endorsement and logistical planning at the conference level. Both, a preparation at the grass roots in local churches, and the new approach to leadership expectations at the conference level must be worked on simultaneously for such a change to occur.

**Discovering Hidden Immunity to Change**

Before I recommend a further test of the Trinitarian Leadership model in the following chapter, I must explore further the reasons for immunity to change that exist in London (South) Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Recent developments in emotional intelligence as it is related to leadership prompted researchers to look deeper into emotional reasons as to why leaders who acknowledge the need for change and have a clear picture of desired goals end up sabotaging themselves by not doing what they ought, and even doing things contrary to the goal. A process of immunity-to-change is described by a metaphor of holding “one foot on the gas, the other on the brake,” as hidden competing commitments produced by our worries derived from wrong assumptions cause people to “self-protect” by preventing desired change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 40).

First we had to collectively agree on the “one big thing” as the ultimate goal. Initially all kinds of big audacious goals surfaced, such as a multipurpose campus to serve a 4,000-member congregation, having every member being involved in a gift-based
ministry, broadcast-quality worship-hour production, and more. As goals were evaluated by priorities, we accepted collectively the goal of being balanced leaders, sharing the Big Vision with people, walking and working together with people we lead to empower them.

Prior to employing this process as a discovery tool for our “immunity to change” I struggled with questions:

1. Why were elders reluctant to accept parish responsibilities?
2. Why did we not shift from system-dependent and hierarchical models to local empowered team process?
3. Why did some elders neglect their opportunity to lead from the pulpit?
4. Why did some leaders, while talking about the need of community involvement, fail to participate in opportunities within the community?

We had considered many similar questions until we journeyed collectively through the suggested process of discovering our hidden “fears,” an “X-ray” of our refusal to change (Appendix P).

We were talking, communicating, coming “out of the box,” and, for the first time were considering the internal changes needed, instead of trying to change things outside. Elders also had read the international bestseller on self-deception, learning that a person on the team with anxiety system will negatively affect others (Arbinger Institute, 2010).

As we discussed these reservations a comparison was made with biblical experiences from the book of Daniel, chapters 3 and 6, those stories of the “lions’ den” and the “fiery furnace.” Whereas leaders may commit to doing certain tasks, yet upon arrival at home a resignation is forced by the unsupportive spouse or the whole family. Are we willing to stand for what is right, for doing what we know we ought against all
odds and antagonism at home and among church friends? The biblical paradigm gives extra impetus for faithfulness beyond the secular model of awareness and release.

It was an emotionally poignant moment when we considered how committed leadership practices would impact not only the church where we serve, but even our families. Some of our leaders have children who are not following Christ. Becoming truly godly leaders, not being partial, practicing comprehensive leadership, I believe would change not only our church but our families and immediate relationships. As a result of looking at the gap between our intentions and our behaviors leaders did take seriously the Trinitarian Leadership model as a possible solution for producing a commitment for change. Theoretical principles discussed before were put into practice.

Considering how much my project needed endorsement and empowering from the Conference of churches, it would be interesting to evaluate where the “immunity-to-change” lies in the larger administrative structure, as nothing is done toward the admired objective of teamwork. The recent North American Division REACH initiative promotes alignment as one of the five values (Jackson, 2012). Our local Ontario Conference facilitated a series of regional workshops in 2012 on implementing these values for developing strategy among local churches, but the teamwork remains to be desired.

This “immune system” model is interesting as it guides one to discover hidden reasons why people reject the needed change. However, researchers by their own admission did not work at all with spiritual organizations or spiritual professionals. In the list of their experiences “pastors, clergy, ministers of religion” are absent as a category. While they try to sync “gut, heart & mind and hand” for intrinsic motivation to release the mind from socializing to self-transforming, the role of Holy Spirit, the Divine impetus is
not in it. The concept is valid to understand human nature, yet is deficient in offering an absolute solution. While I give credit to the process for helping our leadership team to stare at the gap between intentions and practices, the final motivation for changing our practices, I believe, came from embracing the Trinitarian model of leadership.

**Changes After Presenting the Trinitarian Model**

The NCD survey taken in December 2012 revealed significant improvement of Empowering Leadership. Elders’ practices had changed and in spite of small groups and loving relationships still lagging, the leadership is piloting and liberating other areas of church life up. The parish model is beginning to function more, as care of elders are more evident and people are turning to their elders for advice and assistance within each community. NCD leadership score in 2011 was lower than in 2005. Figure 54 shows a 43% added increase in 2012, more than two-fold rise from 37 to 81 percent.

![Figure 54. Growth of Leadership Quality in 2012.](image)
The empowering leadership became the greatest strength and the highest quality of our church. Particular aspects of leadership practices with the highest improvement were accountability, participation, and shared teamwork.

The Trinitarian Leadership model transformed the elders’ understanding of leadership from seeing it as a “necessary evil to endure” to a rewarding and enjoyable venue of encountering God, just as in evangelism, in worship, in community, and other qualities. The Trinitarian Leadership model moved elders more into community, closer to the people being served, and connected all closer with God and His purposes, thus empowering individuals for meaningful advancement. It motivated leaders not to compete for giving orders, but to collaborate as a fellowship of God followers.

The most telling evidence is a recent experience I witnessed when one new elder, who did not journey with the elders team through the process and was just ordained wanted to assert his individual position through the “I will” statement, other elders shared with him the Trinitarian Leadership paradigm of “let us” with emphasis on community dialogue. Whereas throughout the Scriptures the Divine method of leadership is expressed as an invitation to participation with the phrase “let us,” there is an evil counterpart in usurping authority for self. The prophet Isaiah describes the rebellious leader using five “I will” statements in two verses (Isa 14:13-14). Dr. Patterson calls it “ascendant model” of leadership, based on self-promotion, dominance and self-glorification. He states that positional leadership is not assumed but involves calling and affirmation, hence community conversation. The true Divine leadership descends to serve (Patterson, 2013). Our team of elders has embraced the descending and all-
inclusive model of community in conversation as means of transforming, not by command.

**Evaluation of the Project Experience**

My initial mistake, a flaw in design which could not be “fixed” later with any brilliant ideas, was the assumption that a revival for mission, for church planting, for growth could be facilitated in the whole district together, bypassing the inertia of individual local churches. I assumed that district churches wanted teamwork, that the vision of working together would be motivating enough, and that the teamwork would be the solution to the improvement in leadership practices. I learned that unless an endorsement toward teamwork is facilitated at the conference level, local churches are happy to remain on their “turf.” Recent discussion about the possibility of producing a district wide newsletter for information purposes, highlighting what churches are doing, was rejected for a reason that, in the pastors’ opinions, local churches do not want to know what the neighboring churches are doing. Revival must begin within, at an individual level, at a particular church. Only when the results become evident others may join in.

My second erroneous assumption was that eldership practices are the same or, at least, similar among Adventist churches. After conducting focus groups I learned that practices vary from church to church. A lack of regular district-wide training or accountability prevents teamwork development.

Another mistake I made was to disregard NCD counsel that without improving the minimum factors working to develop third or fourth lowest quality characteristics is futile. I learned that a lack of loving relationships and the absence of small groups for
community dynamics does affect leadership environment. While Schwarz proposed that leadership is at the core of everything, at the core of the group life itself, the lack of relationships and sufficient groups’ structures does thwart the empowerment quality of leadership. Testing the Trinitarian Leadership model for the motivational value in leadership had to contend against relational barriers.

Perhaps the most costly mistake was my resignation from my role as a ministerial coordinator of the Western Ontario district of SDA churches, stepping down from responsibilities of facilitating teamwork among churches. This could also be a positive factor of permitting the test of Trinitarian Leadership to proceed naturally without positional enforcements, seeking its acceptance on the core value and not as mandatory top-down initiative.

What we Think we did Right

I think that the right approach was not to quit and start a different project altogether, but to relentlessly pursue leadership development at least in one church. During the process all traditional leadership practices were put in place, preparing a platform to test a new paradigm of Trinitarian Leadership.

Elders of the London (South) Seventh-day Adventist Church now practice increasingly wide-ranging leadership of proclaiming God’s word from the pulpit, providing pastoral guidance, counsel, and nurture to people in their selective parishes, and are involved in ministries providing coaching oversight to other ministry leaders. As these practises grow and mentoring increases we will likely see a long-desired exponential church growth.
Personal Learning

Through this process I grew more committed to the prerequisite of understanding the leadership of God. I had witnessed firsthand the difference that was made among elders when they began to think of leadership not from the perspective of a new book on the market or a new research idea, but reflecting on how the Trinity, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit would lead in each situation. My personal leadership skills grew to see leadership as a broad “omnipresent” practice upfront, among, and alongside of people.

I learned that the NCD warning that “low staves,” or minimum factors do drag down and prevent other qualities from being further developed; they should not be ignored. Also, a critical imbalance between church ministries causes general decline in quality. No area of church life can be ignored without harm to the general church health.

I had learned that no single factor, be it vision, communication, mentoring, or relationships could provide the long lasting growth, but a balanced presence of all ingredients is necessary for stability of church life.

I learned more about leaders I work with through this process of trying and learning together. I learned to appreciate the interdependence of differences we each bring to the team as complimenting strengths. I learned that a network and plurality of elders is never an option, but the proper functional biblical design.

I will continue developing this model of leadership. I am convinced that Trinitarian Leadership is the solution for transforming our churches

Conclusion

Leadership improvement is possible even when other qualities of church life continue being “minimum factors.” The conventional rule was that unless weak qualities
of church life, dubbed “minimum factors,” are improved, there cannot be improvement in other areas. Initial improvement in leadership does not guarantee a constant climb. Improvement of leadership also increases people’s expectations, thus plummeting evaluation scores on performance.

The interview of focus groups revealed that the majority of elders in the Western District did not understand empowerment and had varied leadership practices which prevented teamwork. Top-down pastor-led district-wide teamwork produced camp meetings and events, but caused a significant drop in people’s perception of empowering leadership and was not self-sustaining. The critical imbalance between high areas of church life and delinquent qualities may have caused the total decline of many other areas of church life. However, the Trinitarian Model had to be tested first on a single church successfully before asking other churches to come on board.

Testing of the Trinitarian Leadership model could be valid only when other conventionally agreed upon values of leadership are in place, and serve as a background to the new element introduced as a motivational feature. Initial learning and practical attempts to share pastoral nurture and ministry oversight among all elders was not received well. Elders began to try the Trinitarian approach only after considering the hidden “immunity to change,” going through a process of exposing false assumptions and fears causing the gap between commitment and practice.

When the elders began to lead upfront, amidst, and alongside; when elders began to add to their influence to pastoral nurture and ministry oversight, the general dynamics in the church grew noticeably. The final survey indicates a significant growth in Empowering Leadership and other qualities. London (South) Seventh-day Adventist
Church is becoming an empowering congregation and it has the potential of becoming an ingredient and a catalyst of change in the district. As the Trinitarian model of leadership has produced the motivation for change and local growth is evident, our leadership team has earned permission to invite other district churches to consider the change in leadership practices for empowering growth. Elders of the London (South) Seventh-day Adventist church are frequently invited to preach at other churches in the Western Ontario district and they take their learning experience to share.

Formal conference-driven semi-annual elders meetings were neglected in the past by elders as they did not see any new value in the formal exhortation to follow the *Elders Handbook*, or in reminders of their job descriptions. A success story of a church being transformed and growing gives a new reason to call for a district-wide teamwork, and to set our sights on unreached counties and communities in Western Ontario.
CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Leadership in church is not optional or trivial, and it must be scrupulously theological. In the absence of a developed theology of leadership we must turn to the leadership methods revealed and communicated in the Bible. Just as a purpose for worship, for community, and for ministry is derived from God, so must be the leadership and its practices. General natural revelation contains glimpses of God, hence, our observations and study of secular leadership may reveal glimpses of leadership applicable in church. However, a greater revelation is needed for the spiritual leadership in the Body of Christ to be representative of the Divine leadership.

When considering the Divine leadership we must not be partial and examine only the leadership of Jesus, but also consider the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Father as One, United, and Integral work. My proposal for Trinitarian Leadership endeavors to contribute toward developing the theology of leadership, where leadership is not an icon but a window into God’s working on earth as in heaven.

The Trinitarian Leadership paradigm is about an all-inclusive, comprehensive approach to leadership: not partial, situational, and adaptive, but complete in all situations, seeking to do the will of the Father, serving as Christ, connecting through the Holy Spirit, and revealing God to people.
Biblical leadership is not about hierarchical levels, but about multifunctional distribution and sharing of power. Elders are pastors and overseers, denoting that their authority is not only about seniority, but also about nurturing and supporting. The Trinitarian Leadership model invites local elders to acknowledge their authority and responsibilities as derived from the Divine design and God working in the present. They should stop waiting for instructions from a hierarchical ladder, stop waiting for the vocational lead pastor to initiate church growth and work of Christian service. It invites elders to work as a team, seeking credentials, motivation, and authority from God together.

As a result of this project I lead differently by being a co-elder, and considering lay elders as my equal co-pastors and overseers of the church family. No decision is made by me alone as the top executive, but all decisions are brought to the discussion of leadership team. I ask myself and invite my leaders to consider how our leadership reveals God’s character, will and purpose to the people we serve.

It is my objective to invite elders beyond my local church to return to biblical practices and embrace the triune functionality of their office—elder/pastor/overseer. While working on this project and examining leadership practices, I grew more sensitive to the inconsistencies that exist in our world-wide church, especially as these are exposed during the ongoing ordination debate.

When Trinitarian Leadership is explained, understood, and practiced by leaders, then any church can be liberated to grow and to become effective. An improvement in Empowering Leadership impacts other areas of church life, such as participation in worship, decision making structures, utilization of individuals’ gifts, and more. Increase
in NCD scores does correlate with increase in growth, both in numbers and quality.

Among numerous examples of how the increase in empowering leadership impacted the church are doubled local budget for 2013 as compared with 2007, multigenerational and multicultural praise team every Sabbath, a music orchestra of seven to ten musicians on any given Sabbath, the functional and busy calendar of events on the adventistlondon.ca website which reflects direct input from all ministries, revived Adventurers and Pathfinders clubs, growing Choir ministry, volunteers partnering up with evangelical agencies to serve the needy in the community through the Ark Aid street mission and the Sanctuary London, planning for the second service and a church plant.

While it may be impossible to turn around the whole district, a revival and a consistent steady growth and success of one church may become a catalyst for other churches to accept innovative practice, leading to teamwork among churches. The Trinitarian Leadership model has been tested in London (South) Seventh-day Adventist Church and positively impacted leadership improvement. More time is needed and an opportunity to implement its principles in other churches.

It is my hope that, as our church becomes more empowered, the process of church planting will become regular practice for growth. I expect that the commitment of elders to serve as pastors of people and overseers of ministries will be sustained over years, regardless of vocational ministers’ appointments. Our desired outcome is mentoring and multiplying leaders.
**Recommendations**

The project allows for a limited time period to test foundational changes. More time is needed. A longitudinal study is needed over at least the next 10 years to examine how consistent Trinitarian Leadership would empower a new generation of leaders.

I would also recommend a parallel study where the Trinitarian Leadership principles would be implemented in select churches, where leadership is developed and functional, and also where leadership is limited and lacking essential prerequisites. Such a study would gather comparative data to see if this concept alone is powerful enough to move partial leadership toward becoming complete, and to make good leadership better.

All churches must return to the biblical model of plurality of elders, a presbytery. Even small churches must have apprentice and mentorship of elders.

The task of proclaiming the final message and calling the remnant requires teamwork and cooperation. We need to develop a theology of leadership for the sake of unity among our churches. Current discussion of unity signifying non-uniformity should not take us into exaggerated opposite poles where cultural practices obscure God-given models of leadership, fractal on earth as it is Divinely designed.

A presentation of Trinitarian Leadership to different pastoral groups would be beneficial to seek further input and to develop more practical principles. Also a further study into biblical narratives of leadership and empowerment is needed to realize the biblical Theology of Leadership.

The concept of leadership and discipline was not considered in this project at all. It would be good to explore the Trinitarian paradigm of judging the role of leadership where God is the Judge and allows Himself to be judged, examined, and investigated, so
all could discover that His ways are true and righteous. This area of leadership would lead to further development of transparency and responsibility of a leader before the law.

Western Ontario needs at least 10 new church plants, both in previously unreached municipalities of Stratford, Tilsonburg, Goderich, Kincardine, Saugeen Shores, Listowel, Tobermory, Ingersol, and restarts in Exeter and Strathroy. Empowered London (South) church is located strategically to send leaders into all of these areas. Church planting and the sending of leaders with supportive teams is our top priority goal for 2013 and into the future years.
APPENDIX A

PASTORAL TURNOVER IN WESTERN ONTARIO FROM 1980 TO 2005
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Average tenure of a pastor at the beginning of 2005 in each church is calculated below:

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Average tenure of pastors among all churches in the Western Ontario district is 3.3 years.
APPENDIX B

AUTHOR’S PERSONAL SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
Author’s Personal Family Background

The author of this project comes from a different cultural background, a different religious experience, and different methodology of “doing church.” Born to an Adventist family in an industrial city Біла Церква (Bila Tzerkva), 80 kilometres south of the Ukrainian capital Kiev, the author was immersed in the church life as a top priority and a purpose for being from childhood. From here on the author would share the personal background from the first person’s narrative perspective.

My parents were both orphaned due to the World War II. Both my parents grew up in small villages. As population moved from villages to the cities for jobs, city churches grew and became centers for youth development and evangelism. Later on in life, as a teenager, I resented, in retrospect, my father taking my mom from Kiev, the capital city where they met, and choosing the small city with a population of 250,000 to raise our family. Moreover, they bought a house on the outskirts, near fisheries and farming area. On occasions when we would visit our relatives in Kiev, I was envious of my cousins having more conveniences, more luxury, and being exposed to more innovative lifestyles of the capital city. Yet, looking back I recognize that my father’s priority was to follow the Spirit of Prophecy counsel about raising children away from the big cities (White, 1946, p. 12). He raised the family with commitment to follow the Bible and devotion to the Spirit of Prophecy guidance given through pioneers of the Adventist Movement.

Church first!

When my parents started a family they were renting a small bedroom from a local church elder, who was my father’s co-worker at a construction job. Visiting ministers stayed at homes of elders. The environment of Adventist work was based on trust, networking, cooperation, support and involvement of every member.

My father’s family had accepted the Seventh-day Adventist faith when my father was a boy, and he lived faithfully according to the teachings he received. Graduating from the elementary school with Grade 7 diploma he had no opportunity to continue education and started working as a manual labourer. He developed strong relationships with the Seventh-day Adventist believers in the city, and became a contributing member of the congregation, soon after receiving baptism and serving as a deacon. After serving three years of a mandatory military duty in a neighbouring republic Moldova, he returned to Bila Tzerkva and continued as an active worker in soul-winning and youth ministry. Under Soviet Communist regime he made a choice to be faithful to God rather than compromise in pursuing worldly advancement, career and education.

My mother Nadia was the fifth child in a family of six. She was baptized in the Seventh-day Adventist Church soon after graduating from high school. Western Ukraine did not come under Communist rule practically until after the war in 1945, and did not
experience the totalitarian repression of religious faith, as did the Central and Eastern Ukraine. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Western Ukrainian region was stronger and well developed. My mother had the benefit of being second generation Adventist, raised in a sincere and devout family. After graduation she moved to the capital city Kiev to study nursing. She became a youth activist, choir member, active in mission work and evangelism, often defying police persecution in sharing the Gospel.

My parents made it priority in their lives to seek the Kingdom of God through Church community. Their spare time was dedicated to witnessing, and serving one another in the community of faith. A year after my birth my parents bought a house with the money they borrowed from church members and my mother’s family. Working double shifts, my father in construction and unloading railroad cars, mother doing full time paediatric nursing and part time surgical nursing, they were able to repay their debts and even buy a motorcycle in 4 years. Mom and dad did not have much growing up and they lived frugally, purchasing only necessities and dedicating surplus to ministry. Church was not an “add-on” in their lives, but their first priority, their life.

We lived in a cul-de-sac and were the only Adventist family in the neighbourhood. Parents had many friends among church members, and kept good relationships with neighbours. But our belonging to the church was labelled as “sectarianism” on the street, and we were often accused of belonging to a cult. Even under Communist regime people’s attachment to the Eastern Orthodox tradition was strong, more like a superstition, not faith. In turn, we called those who did not belong to our Seventh-day Adventist congregation “unbelievers” (невіруючі). Hence, our friendship with kids in the neighborhood was not committed and unattached. Our meaningful friendships were formed with kids and families from our church. The prime objective of each Adventist family was seen as converting “unbelievers” to the saving faith in Jesus and planting Adventist presence in every community. The church of my childhood was very different from the isolated individualistic Adventist experience I encountered moving to Eastern Canada, where church members see church as a mere formality to do in addition to their busy lives.

**Non-compromising Peculiar Beliefs**

My early worldview and faith were formed through being involved in the church activities four to five times a week from childhood and my mother’s Bible readings at home. I was reading freely at an early age of four, and read the whole Bible first time at five years of age, cover to cover. My first test of faith came at the age of seven, as I attended elementary school. Schools were operation on a six days a week schedule, and school attendance was mandatory on Sabbath. My parents did not take me to church the first Sabbath in September. They sent me to school, knowing that if the State could prove that they took me to church, the State could take us, me and my sister, away and raise us...
in an orphanage to re-indoctrinate us away from the Christian faith. I choose not go to school, and spent my Sabbath in the park. Next Monday I had to give an explanation, and no matter how the school principal and the political ideologist tried to make me implicate my parents in conspiring to take me to church, I firmly took blame on myself, and testified of my faith of keeping the Sabbath day holy. The school administration stopped bothering me with attempts to challenge my faith or to convert me away from Christianity. As a retaliation for their powerlessness, Communist Party leaders in our city forced Hospital Administration, where my mom worked, to fire her for bringing up children in the Christian faith. Adventists in Ukraine did not compromise their faith and never engaged in gainful employment on Sabbath, even in the health-care industry. The cultural “shock” and difference was palatable when I encountered a Canadian Adventist church where almost fifty percent of members were working on Sabbath, some occasionally some regularly, and not only in the health related fields.

I enjoyed being “different.” My sister and I were the only Adventists in our school. Other kids from protestant groups such as Baptists and Pentecostals, all blended in because they did not keep the Sabbath, and did not differ in their diet. In most cases they did not differ in their speech, demeanour, or customs. We, on the other hand, stood out with our Biblical Christian standards. I did not hang out with the wrong crowd, and went home after school promptly. Most of my free time was spent reading books. My father was ordained as a deacon in 1978 and as an elder in 1982. Sincerity and dedication of my parents were the strongest influence on my spirituality as a youth. I knew that God was for real, because He was real for my mom and dad. My parents’ daily example of depending on God and looking to Him for guidance taught me that we cannot live without God (White, 1954). I began to test God’s promises in school and on the street, praying for good grades, for protection from gangs, even for such little trivial things as making sure no one steals my bike. Almost all my prayers worked!!

The best memories and experiences from my childhood years were church outings, church weddings, when we got to travel by bus to other towns and villages conducting evangelistic programs at every celebratory occasion. Even funerals were great, because every occasion was used for gathering believers and preaching the Gospel. Mom and dad made sure my sister and I got music lessons. Besides playing accordion and the piano, I learned baritone and trombone, and had advanced my skills in the brass orchestra at our church. It was customary for Adventist parents to enrol their children in arts that would “bring glory” to God and contribute to worship experience, rather than pursuing popular activities of sports and secular entertainment. This would also show to be a “cultural” difference entering ministry in Canadian context, where parents often send children to play competitive sports on Sabbath, and then blame the church for lack of ministries for youth, where youth rarely if ever attend prayer meetings, where weddings
are just occasions for food and getting some fun, funerals are often “face saving” rituals for people who were not committed believers, and churches going to surrounding communities with branch Sabbath Schools for witnessing are unheard of. Meanwhile churches losing one generation after another don’t want to admit going amiss.

**World-wide functional network**

The greatest formative impressions in my teen years were left by the Church officials from the General Conference coming to Kiev with official visits to strengthen the church in Soviet Union. When elder Robert Pierson and elder Neil Wilson arrived in Kiev in 1979, I was glued to the stage, dreaming to be one day like Michael Kulakov Jr. translating their presentations. I knew that we had relatives on my father’s side in the United States and Canada. They were also Seventh-day Adventists and were coming occasionally to Ukraine, smuggling Bibles, coming with missionary visits. Somehow the dream of reconnecting with a distant family in America, and the stories about our Church there, merged together in my young mind into one grandiose expectation of happiness. Those early visits also left a strong impression of the world-wide network of unified church, where decisions and actions in one place affect the work elsewhere. It was not a hierarchical structure as experienced in the Soviet system, but a functional and connected world-wide Body of Christ doing mission together.

**Discovering Church for Myself**

At the completion of secondary school I passed entrance exams and enrolled in the vocational school in the capital city, apprenticing for an architectural engineer. At 15 years of age I had my dreams come true – I moved to live with my uncle, mom’s younger brother, right in the centre of Kiev! Upon my move to Kiev I was invited to play for the largest church orchestra, and was mentored by one of the best trombone players – Vladimir Chipchar, who is still the orchestra director at that church. Back in 1985 there was only one church in Kiev. It was the center of all Adventist life in the country. I got to participate in the experience of the best youth group, the best worship services, and the best speakers.

I also got to see the “behind the stage” interactions, and I learned that it was not all that pretty and great as it appeared. People were still same people with problems, often covering things up hypocritically for the sake of expected performance, after all – they were the First Church in the country. I learned about competitive politicking among leaders of our Kiev’s church and much larger church from Western Ukraine, Lviv, where their choir and orchestra was a match, if not better.
Experiencing secular in the formative teen years.

Growing up we did not have a television set at home. Books, newspapers and radio were sources of information and influence. Rarely had I watched a movie. Movie theatre going was taboo in our church, and the only cinema in town was across the street from the central bus hub, making it impossible to go in without being noticed by another church member who was possibly passing by or waiting for a bus. When I moved to Kiev, movie going became a major source of temptation and influence. My vocational school had only five-day curriculum, making it easier to keep the Sabbath. There was no more pressure of being “different,” and I wanted to fit in, to be accepted, and to gain popularity among classmates. I started to live a compartmentalized life – secular with school friends and religious with family and church members. My uncle and his wife were committed Adventist, but they were busy raising their own two children with another one on the way, with no extra time to parent me. Even though I did not compromise behaviourally, I did not smoke, did not drink, did not break the Ten Commandments, my desire was to explore forbidden world of worldliness. I wanted to hang out just on the borderline of sin. My parents noticed the difference in my attitude during short visits that I made home monthly, and they were praying, even though not fully aware of what was going on.

Another challenge came at the end of the school year. Our class was to attend a practicum session where we would have to work six days a week and I asked to be given Sabbath off. The school would not budge, and gave me an ultimatum – to withdraw from school or to work on Sabbath. That month a major event took place, changing the future and the status of the whole country, and the world for that matter. On April 26th 1986 the Chernobyl nuclear power station exploded a reactor, causing a major meltdown and harmful pollution to the region, eventually becoming a reason for opening the Iron Curtain of Soviet era to foreign inspectors and specialists in dealing with the problem (Mulvey, 2006). My father came to the school and withdrew my documents.

To save us from radioactive harm, my sister and I were sent to Belgorod, Russia, to live with an uncle. Three of mom’s older brothers lived there and established a successful construction business. I spent that summer learning many trades, working twelve hours per day under caring and strict supervision of the family. My uncles were elders of the local church, and the church itself met at my oldest uncle’s house. He built a large room just for the purpose of accommodating the church. That summer became a growing experience physically, emotionally and spiritually. There I learned that people live in the world but not of the world. My uncles did not hide their faith in the workplace, and they earned respect for that. Their customers have actually trusted them more knowing that they were believers, and honoured their word. My uncles also discussed Bible and spiritual matters at work. I started to enjoy that environment of
constant challenge for spiritual growth. I began to read the Bible again and study spiritual matters more. I did not want to be a hypocrite.

**Budding leadership.**

In the fall of 1986 I returned to my home town to attend high school. Since I took a year off to attend vocational school, I was a year behind by age from my former classmates, but I had the extra knowledge from science classes I took at the vocational school, money I earned during the summer and the self-confidence that I have never had before. A year older, physically fit from working in construction, I became popular and more confident in our class, quickly rising to be recognized as a leader among peers. I was again witnessing to my faith. Involved in many aspects of church life I lead the youth group, participated in the orchestra, played the piano for the church choir, travelled with or church on many missionary efforts, and weekly travelled to Kiev to play in the newly formed Republican Symphony Orchestra at our Union of Adventist Churches. For the next two years I poured all my energy in the school, Church and work. I was also gaining recognition as a leader among my peers at the church, and a “trouble-maker” reputation from church elders for asking tough questions and challenging traditions. My father was also appointed as a lay-pastor to a church in a neighbouring town. He was becoming more involved in church planting and evangelism, as the religious freedom was becoming more available. Our whole family often travelled with my father to assist him in ministry.

In 1988, right after high school graduation I was drafted to the mandatory military service and shipped to Moscow. The Army years were the toughest pressure test of my faith and commitment, and also the years when I got to experience God the closest in my life. My natural leadership skills became evident and I was quickly promoted in rank, serving as the squad (отряд) leader (сержант) at the end of the first year, and ending the service in 1990 as a sergeant-major (старшина) commanding a platoon (взвод). During the two years of service my dependence on God and my relationship with Christ as my personal friend grew and strengthened. I enjoyed every opportunity to testify of God’s Plan of Salvation to soldiers and officers. The life of the prophet Daniel was my guiding model. The two years of military service were my years in “fiery furnace” and “lions’ den.” Psychological and emotional scars and traumas were no match for the Grace of God in my life. Entering the ministry in Canadian context I had hard time relating to youth with protracted adolescence syndrome, of delaying taking responsibilities, and many parents acting as if it was alright for youth to compromise for “fun” sake of being young.
Conversion and Baptism

Returning home from service in December 1990 I got a job again with my uncle’s construction crew. On weekends I continued to play in the orchestra, and was actively involved in the church. On July 16, 1991 I was baptized by Petr Shulga, our church elder, in the river as a sign of my commitment to follow Christ, and to receive the sacrament of being raised for the new life in the Spirit. Ordained ministers in the rank of preacher (проповедник), equivalent to a “pastor” in the North American context, were few and rare in the church of my youth. Elders did most of the work of growth and church planting. Imagine my surprise coming to pastor a district in Ontario, where elders did not know their job descriptions and felt that their duty was to do the Scripture reading and advise the pastor on how to do the work, not to even mention church not expecting elders to give Bible Studies and not permitting them to baptize new members.

Passionate about growth I wanted to see the church and youth committed to an authentic spiritual life. Those were the years of liberation from the Soviet’s control. The Communist party was outlawed, and doors were opening for Christian churches to go places, yet the church was reluctant, hesitant and immersed in internal squabbles. I wanted to become a vocational pastor. I applied to the newly opened Zaokski Adventist Seminary in Russia. Passing the entrance exams I was denied a spot because of enrolment limitation. They were accepting only 30 students, with only four seats available for students from Ukraine, and there was a waiting list. I was advised to wait a couple of years to reapply.

Early Experience in Ministry

Active in witnessing I was also making new friends from other Christian churches. Reading a lot I was taking in all I could get on matters of spirituality. A book entitled in Russian “Revival begins with me” («Пробуждение начнется с меня») (Bonke, 1989) had the greatest influence on me regarding my personal responsibility for soul-winning. I began to speak about the role of the Holy Spirit in personal and corporate life of believers. When the opportunity presented itself to participate in Evangelistic campaign in the summer of 1992 I got involved in every detail with Pastor Steven Orien from Little Rock, Arkansas. The work of follow up, visitation, Bible Studies and planting a new church in my home town was the best adventure of my life.

That summer my uncle on my father’s side came with a medical missionary visit, developing the network of dental and health centres in Ukraine. He invited me to come to Canada to study. I gladly accepted the opportunity and in September of 1992 I was already at the Canadian Union College, enrolled in the Religious Studies program.
Moving to Canada: College Experience

My first impression of the Adventist College was that of an admiration and shock. I was impressed with the quality and strength of the Adventist educational system. In the former Soviet Union church educational efforts were amateurish in quality compared to what I saw in Canada. I was also shocked to see lack of commitment and obvious compromise among students on campus. Attitudes of students were no different than what I experienced in the secular school setting in Ukraine. The first year went by fast as I was busying myself in the library, learning English, and playing in the orchestra.

The biggest impact on my spirituality was the comfortable life and economic security in Canada. While experiencing drastic economic and political collapse in Ukraine we were becoming more expectant of the eschatological resolution, here in Canada I saw people planning to live long term on this earth. I was baptised by a man who strongly believed in the 6,000 years-old earth and often preached that the seventh Millennium is to begin in 1996. According to him we were beginning to experience the last plagues of Revelation. On the contrary, nobody in my Canadian surrounding talked about eschatology. Church was fitting quite comfortable in the scheme of things. I chose to write a term paper on why the earth cannot be older than 6,000 years and another essay on the importance of knowing the date of Christ’s birth. My professor, Dr. Ron Bissell, tactfully invited me to open my eyes and read wider, to expand my tunnel vision on things pertaining to the end. Another paper I did for one class was compiling Biblical and logical arguments that women should have no place in ministry, for which I was even invited by one East European group to their fellowship, to present my views and encouraged in my “faithfulness.” I did not like individuals that I met at that gathering. They appeared spiritually constipated formalists that I would not want to be caught dead among. Needless to say, I “reviewed” my arguments and written a paper pro-women ordination, getting a higher grade in my English Literature and Composition class.

I was also surprised with the tolerance level of Adventist College Administrators on jewellery, make-up, flirting, dress code, promiscuous relationships on campus, drinking off campus, competitive sports, and many other aspects of daily life, that were sure sign of sinful world to me. At the same time I had to admit that I was not so safe and saintly myself. While staying away from girls and serious dating in Ukraine, I felt very tempted to engage in a relationship, infatuated with beauty in a culturally diverse setting.

Spending summer with my relatives working in Saskatchewan and British Columbia I also encountered another aspect of Adventist life in North America – extremely liberal stands on alcohol consumption in moderation, sexually flirtatious and pernicious behaviours. The level of sin and hypocrisy in churches I visited was out of
control. Pastoral influence was insignificant. I perceived that people with money and professional status had more “say” than those with theological training. My uncle, a successful dentist, owner of a clinic, whose children were three dentists and a medical doctor, and who donated a real estate, worth three million dollars, to sell and build a new Church with proceeds, had considered pastors as “clowns” for public entertainment. It appeared that economic power and positional influence had upper hand in changing the church. That summer of 1993 I decided to switch my major in College to pre-med.

Starting a Family

That same summer I also met my future wife. Making my decision to pursue a medical career I decided to get married. Sandra was from a Catholic family; familiar with Adventism through working at a church owned and operated Sunnyside Nursing Home in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She was also from a culturally different background, Latin American, Spanish speaking from Nicaragua. Her aunt married an Adventist, and she began attending the church on occasions. Coming back to College I “forgot” about my dream of being a pastor, and married a girl who would not ever fit “pastor’s wife” profile. Next, I enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program.

Three years went by in pursuit of education, and economic survival. I disengaged the ties with my Canadian relatives, as their influence was negatively impacting my spiritual life, and my marriage. All the spare time left after school was given to work, earning just enough to pay school bills and to support a family with one child. I continued to be faithful in contributing my tithe to the church loyally, but my personal devotional life, Bible studies, and witnessing ceased. Occasionally visiting with new Russian students who were taking religious studies, or new immigrant families who were trying to preserve their own brand of cultural Adventism, I would pick on their ignorance and mock their blind devotion to nonsensical traditions. The common gag among science students was that “theo-boys” just could not get grades above “C” so they settled for a meal-ticket. Graduating in 1996 with BSc degree in Biology I passed the MCAT test and applied to a few Medical Schools.

Redirecting Experience and Beginning of Ministry

I also took a year off to improve my financial situation, as we were expecting our second child. That year, CUC got a new professor in the Religion Department, Dr. Ranko Stefanovic. His enthusiasm was contagious and reminded me of the fervency of preachers and leaders from my old country. I started to attend small group meetings of theology students, sporadically at first, and then engaging in conversations more and more. All my time was dedicated to work in construction, earning to pay debts, and to get some extra to continue schooling. Parenting a two-year-old boy we became regulars
in the Sabbath School, wanting to instil in our son the biblical values and relevance of faith from an early age. I was also invited to assist with the Early-teens Sabbath School Class, as a dare by a co-worker in construction. It was easy to go unnoticed in the large College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lacombe, Alberta. But I did not want to sit on a fringe criticising the church. I would rather get involved to make a difference. By early 1997 I became the main teacher for the class of about 50 teens. I had to get back in the Bible and make it interesting and relevant to the kids. For the second quarter of 1997 I was invited to join the Sabbath School Superintendents team.

Major development in my life took place when my mom and dad arrived from Ukraine to stay with us in March of 1997. Our second son was born and my parents came for a visit. As ten-year veterans of Chernobyl relief zone they were entitled to an early retirement in Ukraine. Soon after arriving to Canada my mother discovered she had a breast cancer and required treatment. Their visit turned into permanent stay. Prior to their arrival my father worked as a pastor of a church in Kiev. Churches in Ukraine experienced exponential growth, adding more than 20 churches in a decade just in one city of Kiev alone. With their arrival to Canada I had to face my spiritual condition, my commitment, and integrity of my daily life.

While waiting for the Medical School acceptance I decided to take a couple of summer classes just for fun, to brush up on my theology. That summer of 1997 turned to be a life changing summer, and a beginning of a new direction in my life. I was asked to assist with a team of teens doing colporteuring for a couple of weeks. As their driver and a team leader I had to encourage and mentor them daily. I began to enjoy being a “spiritual father,” witnessing for Jesus. My spiritual growth reflected on my family life, our relationship with my wife improved. She began to show interest in Bible studies and expressed a desire to be baptized. After a few months of studies, and attending Dwight Nelson’s Net98 program, she was baptized in February of 1999.

That summer I was ordained as an elder at the College Heights Church. I also earned a reputation of a scholar, becoming “top of the class” in Biblical Languages, and many other disciplines. My dream of being a minister, and leading the church to quality and Christian commitment was revived!

Graduating in 1999 I had no call and no indication of interest in me as a worker from the “field.” I simply resolved to prayer, asking God to show His Will in my life. When I went to the farm in Saskatchewan for regular seasonal work I received a call from the Ontario Conference with an invitation to do the Bible Work for the summer. With no salary offered, and no guarantees of employment, and a stipend sufficient to cover only rent I said “yes,” packed my family and moved across country into unknown.
Beginning of Vocational Ministry

The success of witnessing and relationships that I built during that summer were worth the risk that I took. In September 1999 I was hired as a full time pastor for the Niagara Region, Ontario. Pastoring until July 2002 I had to learn on my own, and quickly, all that college did not offer – leadership, interpersonal relations, counselling, church planting, motivating and vision casting.

The most significant experience during those years was the General Conference session in Toronto, especially the pre-session offering workshops and training for pastors. Seminars by George Knight on church history (Knight, 2000), Caleb Rosado on memetics, spiral dynamics and human needs development as factors of church growth (Rosado, 2000), Ron Gladden on church planting and growth (Gladden, 2000), inspired me to pursue more knowledge, to grow intellectually for the glory of God. I began to employ Rosado and Gladden’s materials to train churches for growth. My strongest emphasis in Niagara was youth ministry, connecting and developing the next generation.

Ministering in a multicultural setting with families from Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Anglo-Saxon Canadian backgrounds, attending together the same church, I had to learn to be sensitive to cultural differences. Work of Leslie Pollard introduced me to understanding and appreciating cultural diversity (Pollard, 2000).

Being just a young pastor, under thirty, my first exposure to the generational conflict happened when one church member would walk out every time I got to the pulpit. He explained to me later over the game of golf that he believed no person under 30 years of age should be allowed at the pulpit, because Jesus waited until he turned 30, and the priests were to be selected only between ages 30 to 50, quoting Numbers 4:3. I had to learn how to influence people regardless of their age, socio-economic status, gender, or position. I had to discover how to be a real leader. Another young pastor assigned to mentor me, pastor Daniel Linrud from the Hamilton Mountain Seventh-day Adventist Church, just 50 kilometres away, introduced me to the teachings of John C. Maxwell (Maxwell, 1998). Within a year I read five of his books, firmly resolving to become a person of influence.

In 2001 I attended my first SEEDS event at Andrews University. The impact of presentations was so significant that I began to dream of going to the Seminary. I learned much about techniques of church planting, heard testimonies of planters. The energy of that event and teaching contributed to my confidence as a minister. I also learned another paradigm shifting study about generational cycle (Strauss & Howe, 1991, 1998). Understanding generational qualities gave me an edge in approaching people. Everything that I’ve learned I offered as teaching to the church through seminars and workshops. Next summer I brought a bus-load of people from our district to SEEDS. That summer I
got to visit with Dr. Jon Paulien in his home, sharing some burdens of ministry, I listened to his advice to come and experience the Seminary

**Seminary Years**

In August of 2002, now with four boys, youngest being only 9 months, our family moved to Andrews University to enrol in the MDiv program. Mom and dad stayed behind in Canada, supporting us financially through the years of study. After the 9/11 event the enrolment spiked by 40% at the Seminary, creating a boost in the environment of anticipation for excellence, and significance. I was blessed to be in that cohort, making many significant friendships. Interning at the Pioneer Memorial Church under mentorship of pastor Esther Knott I had to re-examine my attitude toward women in ministry, reading both sides of the issue (Vyhmeister, 1998; Dyer, 2000).

Participating on the task force with Dr. Skip Bell who was introducing the small group’s life at PMC at the time, I learned dynamics of the large church and importance of relationships for spiritual health. Jon Paulien’s Revelation classes were best eschatological preparation for further ministry. I would have to write many long paragraphs to mention all the blessings of the seminary. To mention only a few: Baldwin’s teaching on the Holy Spirit, Damsteegt classes on development of Adventist lifestyle, Knights classes on Ellen White, Ed Schmidt’s Evangelism. I have to mention two classes that impacted my personal ministry the most: Jane Thayer’s Spiritual Formation class exploring spiritual disciplines (Foster, 2001) became a foundation to my approach of moving church to spiritual growth, and Russell Burrill’s introduction of the Natural Church Development tool for examining church health (Schwarz, 2000). The most significant impact of the seminary on my life and ministry was gaining confidence of God’s calling in my life, becoming secure in my place with God, as the servant of the Gospel.

In the fall of 2004, at the end of my seminary training, I had a privilege to participate in the Evangelistic harvest campaign with Russell Burrill in Loveland, Colorado, baptizing 120 people with a team of 30 students working together. The “hands-on” experience of practical evangelism was the best way to introduce seminarians into the field work. Right after the return from Colorado we moved to London, Ontario, Canada to serve two churches in the city.
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP
NCD PROFILE PLUS INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES
FOR THE EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

1. Our leaders seem to enjoy their ministry in our church

2. I know that someone in our church will hold me accountable for meeting the commitments I make.

3. Our leaders actively seek to remove barriers that limit my ministry.

4. Our leaders are clearly concerned for people who do not know Jesus Christ.

5. Our pastor(s) has too much work to do (negative measure).

6. Our leaders are good at explaining things.

7. Many people are given the opportunity to actively participate in our worship services.

8. Our leaders clearly believe that God wants our church to grow.

9. The leaders of our church prefer to do the work themselves rather than collaborate with others (negative measure).

10. The leaders of our church concentrate on the tasks for which they are gifted.

11. Our leaders regularly receive assistance from an outside person (e.g. coach, church consultant, other pastor, etc.) on how to develop our church.
APPENDIX D

NCD VARIABLES FOR THE EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP
1. I enjoy church work.

2. I am sure that God wants our church to grow.

3. My work is regularly discussed and assessed by an "outside assistant" (e. g. church counselor, pastor colleague, etc.).

4. I am disturbed that in my area of responsibility people without Jesus Christ are lost for eternity.

5. I am the type of person who likes to do it all by themselves.

6. I feel that church work is a burden.

7. The maintenance of relationships with the individual church members is more important for me than planning or organizing activities.

8. Our pastor has an inspiring optimism.

9. Our pastor prefers to do the work himself rather than to delegate it to others.

10. Our pastor concentrates on the tasks in the church for which he is gifted.

11. Our pastor looks for help from lay workers to complement those points for which he himself is not specially gifted.

12. Our pastor prefers to evade conflicts.

13. Our pastor has too much work.

14. Our pastor gives a lot of church members the opportunity to help in organizing the church service.

15. Our pastor seems to feel at home in our church.
APPENDIX E

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS
Statement of Informed Consent

I, ________________________________, agree to participate in this research project on “Empowering Leadership in local Adventist churches of South-Western Ontario” that is being conducted by pastor Alex Golovenko.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to hold a group interview to find out about leadership trends and practices and we will discuss our general ideas about our practices.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and if I wish to withdraw from the study or to leave, I may do so at any time, and I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from the study I understand that this will have no effect on my relationship with pastor conducting the interview or the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a sponsor.

I understand that because of this study there could be a violation of my privacy. To prevent violations of my own or others’ privacy, I have been asked not to talk about any of my own or others’ private experiences that I would consider too personal or revealing.

I also understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.

I understand that all the information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and that the names of all the people in the study will be kept confidential.

I understand that I may not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, but that my participation may help others in the future.

The interviewer has offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what I am expected to do.

I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

______________________________  ______________________________
Today’s Date                      Your Signature
APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS
Focus Groups questions for Empowering Leadership in the Western Ontario.

1. Describe what leadership practices you practice & prefer:
   Pragmatic ☐  Servant ☐  Situational ☐  Spiritual ☐  other ______
   Psychological ☐  Social ☐  Political ☐  Moral ☐  ☐
   Intellectual ☐  Reform ☐  Revolutionary ☐  Heroic ☐  ☐
   Opinionated ☐  Party ☐  Group shared ☐  Executive ☐  ☐

2. Can the leadership be delegated, if yes, how?

3. What does Empowerment means to you?

4. How can leadership be empowering?

5. When you think of God as a Leader, what styles of Divine leadership do you envision?

6. How can our Conference leadership and directors can become more empowering?

7. How can pastors empower in Adventist context?

8. What are unique expectations from leaders in the Adventist context?

9. Comparing pastors vs. elders influence over the local church, who should take more responsibility for success or malfunction of the congregation?

10. Do you consider yourself empowered?

11. Have you empowered someone else, and how?

12. What questions would you suggest adding to Empowering Leadership focus group?
APPENDIX G

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH FOCUS GROUPS
First Question invited participants to consider different leadership practices and chose their preferences, practices that are common to them and what they had observed in the past. In addition participants were invited to contribute other adjectives, descriptive of leadership.

1) I would say “situational,” we react differently in different situations, our input changes depending on the situation.
2) Intellectual – we rationalize, we try to figure out why we do things, and we try to reason where we should go.
3) Never thought of it before. Don’t know…. But I’ve seen much dictatorial leadership in the church in the past. So I would add to this list “dictatorial”….and “political” should be recognized. Political leadership has been a practice in our churches, and it turned me away from participating in the church in the past. I prefer to stay away from politics.
4) I would like to add this, the Conference personnel have certain areas of expertise and they are not willing to step out of the box. They offer only seminars they know, and if we ask them to deal with issues that are essential to us but they do not have expertise they just ignore our requests, or refer the request to someone else, who refers to someone else, and so on…It’s the “usual suspects” game, no personal responsibility is taken, same seminars are offered and are beaten over and over….
5) Pragmatic & Social
6) Social → Servant → Spiritual leadership, this is my priority
7) Definitely Servant & Spiritual leadership
8) My sequence would be Servant → Moral → Spiritual
9) I practice Pragmatic Leadership
10) What do you mean? Pragmatic?
11) Situation determines the style of leadership, and desired outcome mandates what means and modes of leadership are to be used. Most of the time I am A Reformer, Moral and Spiritual leader.
12) Servant, Spiritual leadership is the key, and also it must be a “group-shared” leading.
13) My leadership is social, meaning fit for the needs of people and society I serve; Servant leadership is my model.
14) I prefer executive leadership – getting things done.

Question No.2: Can the leadership be delegated, if yes, how?

1) Sure, they (leaders) have to delegate if they are to be successful. I would compare my workplace and the church. I am in charge of a ….department and I let my staff to chair meetings, to take turns in chairing, so they’d learn how to time issues, and deal with demanding situations instead of accusing the leader of dictating rules. So, when every team member steps in leader’s shoes leadership becomes easier. People begin to appreciate what leader goes through; they would know how difficult it is to lead. During the Church Board meeting each person should be able to present their view, their idea, and take a turn in leading the meeting.
2) Yes. It is by mentoring and training.
3) Not completely. Once you pass on the leadership responsibility to another you are not in position to lead, you may be leading elsewhere, but the authority is given away. Delegating leadership is abdicating it, or investing into another.
4) At the end of the year we delegate authority through the work of the Nominating Committee. But acceptance is theirs and they have to decide how they do it. Willingness cannot be delegated. Volunteering prevents delegation unless one is willing to submit. In working environment where there is a reward system delegation is easier.

5) Leadership is not a task. Accountability can be delegated, and the responsibility that comes along.

6) Yes. Leader is deputized by people, hence leadership is delegated. On-the-job training can be offered, and tasks can be delegated. So, from this perspective most of leadership is delegated, in fact if people do not deputize a leader, he’s not a leader but usurper. But an ultimate responsibility cannot be delegated. It has to be an inner commitment.

7) Yes, Leader must be delegated for training.

8) Responsibilities can be delegated, but true leadership is about inspiring and motivating, and this aspect cannot be delegated. Personality cannot be delegated.

9) Leadership is the Calling. It is delegated from above, not a human delegation.

**Question No.3 What does Empowerment means to you?**

1) I don’t know the dictionary definition of empowerment. I think it means to be given tools, knowledge necessary to act.

2) Authority, because empowering is about power. When ideas are sent to the higher level and the lack of interest is shown it disempowers people. When leaders have their “boxes” and boundaries and are afraid to step beyond in considering new ideas, it is opposite of empowerment.

3) Right to make a decision

4) Accountability for success and failure.

5) Resources means power, having an access to needed resources is empowering.

6) One must accept a personal responsibility for self-empowerment. One must seek resources and apply what is available to succeed without waiting for help. “Self” is the best empowerment.

7) It means giving tools and resources to achieve tasks. We ask people to do things and often assume that they can find their own resource. To empower is to give sufficient resources for someone to succeed.

8) To me it means to be able to say “No” or “Yes” when I have to. Having the confidence in my ability.

9) This question is too broad. Spiritually it means to be anointed by Holy Spirit through relationship. It is not personality or influence.

10) Also – having information, knowing where to find and how to use information.

11) Empowerment means hearing and acknowledging the call, and knowing you are equipped. Response is the choice of everyone. It also means receiving or being given an authority. A child can call someone and be ignored, but when the same person says “My father” asked you to…” it gives credibility, authority. Empowered means invested with authority. Having no doubts, no reserves, knowing to what God calls you even in times of struggle and adversity.

12) I make my case for Empowerment to be the Calling from God.
13) O.K. who is empowered, You when you call your brother on behalf of the father, or the brother who is being called? One is authorized, another is being called on? These two cannot be both empowerment.

14) Consider when we call on behalf of the Nominating Committee. When I call I say “God asked me to ask you to be…..” The response is different, than when I simply say “we thought and decided to ask you.”

15) You are making a good point here. Consider electricity – it is a connection to the power, the carrier is “powered” and the recipient is also empowered. It CAN be both: the one authorized to carry the call and the one receiving the call and the power to accomplish. That’s why I use the word “anointing” together with empowerment. Disciples on the Day of Pentecost illustrate what Empowerment means - illiterate Peter became empowered Peter. There is before and after. It’s all about the Authority Source.

16) Jesus sent the 70 but they came back complaining that they had no power. Were they lacking Faith? No they were not fully empowered. They have not received the Holy Spirit yet (John 7)

17) Look, Simon the Sorcerer also believed, but was not empowered. He wanted to buy empowerment. There is also an aspect of true faith and connection in Empowerment.

**Question No.4 How can leadership be empowering?**

1) Authority and access must be given.
2) One must have valid input in decision making.
3) Is decision making means authority?
4) when we pass a resolution and vote on it, and agree, we have authority to implement.
5) Yes, but the Church Body has to authorize. The Church Body approves or discards what we decide. Empowered means ability to make big decisions, having freedom and power to do things.
6) we don’t want to make decision without the Body, without people validating our decisions?
   Facilitator: Are you saying you do not want the power of executive decision making?
7) In 1995, in Utrecht at the General Conference there was a definite vote not to ordain women as preachers, as pastors. Two days of discussion and it was all rhetorical talk, because North American Church had already decided, and no leadership could have any power to change the practice. I have not seen empowered leadership in action, maybe only in the communist scenario.

8) By sharing responsibility, positional authority and resource.
9) We are trying to influence people, and they are watching to see if you are empowered yourself. Leader must be empowered for others to desire his assistance.
10) I see leadership as a group process. Unity is needed. Walking same journey, watching that no power works against another. There is empowerment in being united. Shared power is power multiplied.
11) People must see respect, grace and patience, as evidence of power.
12) Yes, power has to add up, and converge. We must be recognizing each contribution.
13) There is a contrast between leader and a non-leader. That difference is between one who is empowered to make a decision and another who doesn’t know how, and cannot. But as Christians we all must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.
14) Not necessary, even Christian can withhold participation and the power available goes unused.

15) Also the empowerment can be negative. There is negative, evil force that also empowers. If the congregation is not involved in a decision making process it will become disempowered, or negatively powered. By the way, consider this: the congregation has more power than the Board. So, we better rethink who empowers whom.

16) You can say that the church body empowers the Board by authorizing, deputizing, delegating the responsibility.

17) I agree, if a Board makes a decision and the Church calls it off, it would not stand. It is guided empowerment.

18) Empowerment is about freedom to do without fear of failure. Choice to walk out is also empowerment.

19) Leaders must be accountable for power invested. And the accountability must be results oriented. Achievements offer more power, or at least, permission for more power.

20) Success empowers, inspires, encourages, motivates. Failure opens room for second guessing. We need to know and see what success is. It’s not numbers, but it is obvious.

21) Success needs to be confirmed. If God is with you – success is evident. However too much success can be dangerous, people get full of self. Sometimes failure comes from God too – makes you dependent. It’s a mixture of success and failure that is needed for the balance.

22) When I come to the Church and see how God blesses people, success, I want to do things; I want to walk in the powerful way of God too.

23) All great leaders had their dose of failure. Empowerment and faith are together. And faith is best demonstrated in time of adversity.

**Question No.5 When you think of God as a Leader, what styles of Divine leadership do you envision?**

1) God is purposeful. He helps all.

2) It’s a difficult question, because it calls for being honest in how I relate to God. God is Compassionate leader. He shows example, joins us in work, he is sharing his plan and is intimately involved. Look at Jesus – the teacher who walks the talk, who is mentoring, not only telling, but serving.

3) God is also Revolutionary and Situational as he accommodates for every circumstance, to every individual.

4) We must consider God, the Trinity. Who are we focusing? Jesus was Revolutionary, but the Father is Fundamentalist, Conservative, preserving the Order.

5) My father exemplified God to me. When I think of God I think of my Father. Example of mercy. He would be there with people in need, loving, but also firm, rewarding, fun, never chintzy, giving all he had and more.

6) Well, God is neither democratic, nor autocratic. He is situationally responds to circumstances. It’s a dance of Three for every possibility. God is the Perfect Leader.
There are two styles of pastors. Those who take correspondence from the Conference as the bible truth, and treat it as the law and those who take it and put it in the garbage. I saw a pastor take the letter from the conference, put it in the waste basket and said “trash.” I mean there are pastors who respect dictatorial power, and those who are interested in the dialogue. Although persons change. Older pastors, ready to retire don’t care about career climb and they do what is right for them and the local church. Younger pastors try to advance their career and so they serve power from above, the Conference.

It is a difficult question. I see God as dictatorial – my way or you’re out. But god is also Love, and He is communal. Look at God’s dealings with Israel. It was pretty tyrannical: “this way or else.” How can it be brought together?

Conference leaders should also be dictatorial as God on Godly standards, such as ten commandments. But they are relaxed on Biblical principles, letting standards slide, approving divorces. God says “You shall!” and it is dictatorial, there is no room for discussion. But then there are life matters that are gray area, many have valid opinions; many are right, and this where conference leaders should respect differences.

God is also opinionated as leader. Yet He’s Loving and compassionate. The challenge is to combine these styles – and that is, I believe, situational leadership. God has to be a different Leader in different situations.

Every possible description will be fitting! He’s All for All. God’s leadership differs in every situation, fitting for every need.

When one practices going continually to God about what to do, one will realize that He’s the Ultimate Leader who causes success. His Word never returns void.

I see God as a humble servant.

Yes, gentle, compassionate, who patiently waits and pleads with people to buy in.

What about Dictatorial, God who wacked you when you do wrong?

I don’t see God that way.

There is a definitely an aspect of control there.

Dictator gives no choice. God gives choice and opportunity. God puts up with Hezekiah showing off his wealth, and many other examples of God not being dictatorial.

there are other times when God was dictatorial. For instance Uzzah touching the Ark, man picking sticks on Sabbath, and other moments. Jesus was different.

Are you saying Jesus was weak?

Jesus was also fearsome leader; priests were running away from the whip.

Not. Just different style leader.

Israel after Egypt was capable of understanding God of Order, not a wishy-washy repentant softy. There is more context, we need to be careful. So, I would say that God’s leadership is situational.

Question No.6 How could your church leaders and directors become more empowering?

1) To be empowering leaders must be secure

2) They must delegate more to the local churches and to the laity.
3) I do not know the official title of the office, but it deals with ministerial selection, choosing pastors. It should include us, the church, in decision making. But all they do they decide who the pastor will be and then tell us “you don’t like it – tough, you’ll have your chance to change it in the next four years.”

4) It’s like in a communist country. Church must have a committee for selecting their pastor to have a right fit.

5) In any organization people want to be a part of it, involved.

6) Scratch “more” – you assume they are already at least partially

7) When you feel you are used – your focus shifts from participation to resentment. There is a disconnect. If something is not done to restore participation then the trust and confidence is lost. Empowerment is basic requirement for Church leaders.

8) I want you to think back in history. Moses is dead. Joshua is leading. Yet victory is assured. Our Church leaders, from the General Conference to the Local Conference are taking us to the Promised Land. They are leaders that must be connected to the Source. If they are Empowered they will Empower. Look at king Saul – he prophesied when God touched him. Every leader must be connected to the Source, to God. People who are led have a right to look for confirmation that those leading are connected.

9) I don’t know who our leaders are. We don’t see them enough. We have to go far to get anything. Here there is no easy access; we are not privy of directions. Leaders should get in the field and visit workers more often, be where people are.

10) I should be aware you [the leader] are there. What you do should affect me. Conference leadership must be more involved with the local churches. Once a year leaders must at least visit and introduce themselves. I miss the town/hall meetings.

11) Clear boundaries of responsibilities must be charted, and more room for creativity and decision making must be afforded to local churches

12) I found in the past a lot of red tape, when serving as a Chair of the School Board a decade ago, local church body had no power to deal or solve anything. And the Conference would take over providing no real solution. More power must be released to the local church.

13) leaders should take more advantage of technologies available by providing more updated resources. I find our Church web services are outdated, or not very useful.

14) It would be easier also for the pastor. Because he would know that he is welcomed. That he is not trying to win people as he is already chosen by the people. Quite often there is a mismatch, like placing an intellectual pastor who likes to talk philosophy where a practical pragmatic pastor is needed.

15) Also it would be empowering if Conference would give more financial support, especially for special events. Even if it could be as simple as letting local church keep the offering during special celebrations when more guests are present and the offering is higher than usual. I know churches that scheduled their guest speakers, and guests coming on Sabbaths when the offering goes to the Church Budget.

**Question No.7 How can pastors empower in an Adventist context?**

1) Take more responsibility. If you initiate – be there. Ministry of the presence. Pastor should have his nose in everything. He should have his hand on every pie. Although
pastor being in everything is both good and bad. But even if the pastor gives power over the program to somebody else, he should still be there to support, to endorse.

2) The church today is Laodicea, it’s asleep. Pastors sermonize. They take one text and talk and talk, until they kill it. By the time people are leaving they don’t know what was talked about. Years back sermons were more like Bible studies. They had more texts, more like Prophecy seminars, but on life relevant topics. I would have notes and then assemble them in the afternoon. People are empowered by tools given to them. Now pastors are more administrators, not much teachers… There is this Bible text Romans 10:14 “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” There is not enough stimulation today to awaken people’s interest.

3) I support the idea of Elder 1. There must be an expectation from pastors who’ve chosen ministry as vocation to be leaders in everything. We are volunteers. Sabbath is the only time we have for our families. And we are not always asked what we want. Administrators must consider people’s wants and time. We must have freedom of accepting or declining appointments. Just because someone is coming here for worship and wants to teach a seminar, it does not mean we want to listen. Empowering is letting people choose, accept or decline. Church leaders always assume “Yes” answers from volunteers.

4) Provide more educational programs. Knowledge to be passed on. Seminars on relevant and urgent subjects.

5) When pastor is offering seminars, people are not coming. Maybe they do not feel that pastor is empowered to make any real changes, and in frustration they give up their interest, and stop supporting any moving forward.

6) Core leaders are to be encouraged to take risk and stop fearing failure.

7) For pastor to empower, he must walk the talk, be an example.

8) Communication must be abundant, to make sure there are no misunderstandings.

9) Pastors must help people to discover their motivation and learn how to influence. People change when the right way is presented. When peoples’ eyes are opened to see the Bigger picture, they will be willing to move.

10) Transparency without hanging out the laundry of gory details.

11) Pastors got away from preaching end-times messages. Urgency is lost. Many don’t believe it anymore. Urgency of the Second Coming and the end-time events is the best motivator. Eschatology is empowering.

12) Sermons must be relevant. Pastors must give us tools for daily use.

13) Personal example of a pastor is the greatest impact on me. By your life make me want to measure up. Say like Paul “imitate me as I imitate Christ.” As parents set example for kids, so pastors are to set examples for church members. Example is the greatest influence.

14) As iron sharpens iron. Be exciting about what you are doing. Take interest in every individual. Work with compassion and patience – being plugged into the Source. Spark cause explosion. Success takes time, but it’s worth working for.

15) Two qualities must be present: Teaching and Supervising. Teaching must be relevant, aware of what’s happening within and without, so people would not seek
answers elsewhere. People are disempowered in confusion. Supervising in the sense of paying attention to the feedback.

Question No.8. What are unique expectations from leaders in the Adventist context?
1) People have 50-years-old model of how leader should be, in evangelism, dress, conduct, family.
2) Adventist pastors more fit to Biblical expectations of leaders. New Testament requirements are more fulfilled among Adventist pastors. Other churches are not as strict with standards.
3) We (Adventists) see a pastor as a living prophet, there is higher level of Spirituality expected.
4) Holistic care – health message. Benefits are huge.
5) Understanding who we are. I left my former church as I learned about Adventist leaders as being best they can be for the Glory of God. Living in the Presence. Giving your best to represent God.
6) There is an organizational uniqueness. Adventist leaders are expected to be “all for all.” There is not narrow specialization, but broad job description.
7) I have a difficulty with this question. I expect Adventist leaders to be peculiar, stand out, and be different. I see negative, but my expectations are not met. Leaders are not being servants.

Question No.9 Comparing pastors’ vs. elders’ influence over the local church, who should take more responsibility for success or malfunction of the congregation?
1) It goes down the line. No escape. Pastor is responsible. Chain of command.
2) Pastor.
3) Equal, but pastor takes the blame.
4) No, both groups, teamwork of pastors and elders. We should share the responsibility. No finger-pointing. Moreover, pastors are only for a short term, but elders are for life. Elders should take more responsibility.
5) When accomplishments are made – list and praise goes to the pastor’s record. They are seen as the main leaders for a reason.
6) Pastor. He’s the head of the flock.
7) Elder 9: pastor, because he sets the tone. If there is a disconnect between pastors and elders, it is because pastors are not being effective.
8) aren’t we minimizing elders’ role?
9) No. The Question is “more,” who is “more” responsible.
10) but who’s got the influence?
11) Influence is relative. Pastor’s responsibility is to harness all positive and negative influence of elders and to direct the church. Pastor is to use the sail against and for all winds.
12) When we talk to people in church they mistrust us. In Caribbean people talked to elders, but not to pastors. Here pastor and elders work together, and people stop talking to elders, they do not want leaders to know what’s really going on in the church. Elders cooperating with pastors create two camps in the church – saints and sinners.
13) Hypocrites seek hypocritical faults and mistrust
14) I question my qualifications as an elder, when I read the Bible about leaders.
15) Throwing hat in the ring is giving up. It’s all about growth. Elders should work with directional support from the pastor.
16) People would rather keep long lasting relationships with us elders, and so they keep us often away from the fight, and hit pastor more, because pastors come and go, but with local elders long term relationships are more important. We need to stake out positions more clearly, that we work together with pastors.

1) **Question No.10. Do you consider yourself empowered?**
2) Yes. Absolutely. How? Mentoring, letting juniors make decisions; sit in meetings in my place, coaching without crushing.
3) Volunteers are empowered by our ministry and opportunity to do purposeful things in life
4) Yes.
5) Definitely.
6) In what area? Where we are commissioned by the Conference – yes, but where we want to take initiative – No!
7) At times. The more I read the Bible the more I question myself. I want to see God’s visible confirmation and I want the confidence that God is with me.
8) I agree. I am surprised on agreeing with ……, but at times we are and at times we aren’t empowered. When you see how god is organizing and intervenes in life – it’s empowering. In periods of doubt – we question our faith, and empowerment is gone.
9) It is good to be reminded by people who had been blessed of what God did.
10) Are you saying that when in doubt you are not empowered? Or are you simply not using the power available?
11) It is a rollercoaster ride. I think of Abraham’s experience. Knowing that god is using you, and yet questioning.
13) I am in some and not in other areas. In my profession – yes, I have power. But in assignments at the church – not really. There are different situations. When pastor calls on me to conduct a Board meeting id depends what the agenda would be, there are some issues that I am not empowered to deal with, like solving a marital conflict, or dealing with sinful living or cohabitation of individuals, church discipline.
14) I worked in management and I had a lot of power, yet I did not consider myself empowered. I’ve been head elder, but prefer to work in the background. I never desired empowerment. I felt necessary to bring changes to the church, and I brought before elders and pastors items and then backed off, letting them decide. Is empowerment an emotion? Maybe we don’t fully recognize the source of empowerment. Is it the Church that empowers us by giving us permission or authority of office? Or is it God that empowers us?
15) We did not like what was happening at the Prayer Ministry and we changed it, right?
16) Look at Sabbath School, is it empowering, when one class is studying Romans, and another – quarterlies?
17) Empowerment is by God. You may give us a file but now it’s our choice to accept. All have to be empowered, not by obligations. I was the first elder in Toronto Church when the Conference built the new office. No one communicated the cost to the churches. There must be an administrative accountability.

**Question No.11. Have you empowered someone else, and how?**

1) Mentoring, letting juniors make decisions; sit in meetings in my place, coaching without crushing.
2) By encouraging, giving and helping others
3) I encouraged someone to become involved against their cultural traditions. I cannot take the credit, it’s God’s work. But I see results of investing time in encouraging people.
4) Spiritually Yes. 20 years ago I invested in a young man who is an elder today, in spite of the rough circumstances we were going through at the time. We worked together, then he left, and now he’s back at the same work place, just when I needed another voice for witnessing. I keep saying when we are connected the Power does not stay stagnant it moves through us into others.
5) people tell me I do empower. It’s how I treat them. Every time I think of saying NO I am reminded why I should say YES. Doing charitable deeds empowers people with hope.
6) My children and people I teach to be self-sufficient, giving Bible studies. I empower people, but not Spiritually. It is the Holy Spirit that does Spiritual empowerment alone.
7) lot of people. As a Sabbath School teacher I am befriending people, and friendship leads them to the Source, to Christ.

**Question No.12. What questions would you recommend to add in order to improve this focus group discussion?**

1) light snacks, some food for the dialogue setting. We like to talk at the table.
2) Question: “What would empowered leader look like? Describe.”
3) What blocks you from being empowered?
4) What do you like about your role as a leader?
5) On Question 1 ask “Why?”
6) Add a definition of Empowerment, like in Question 1, for providing a description of what is Empowerment.
7) What is the most significant thing a leader can do that would impact your life?
8) I would recommend reminding all elders, that what is lacking today is constancy, consistency. Be constant empowering others.
APPENDIX H

“MINISTRY CONVERSION” SERMON, MARCH 2009
The sermon is preached in a conversational style, with time for group discussion breaks built in the delivery time.

A church opened up 23 years ago, as a group of people who were willing to start afresh, reaching out to the community. Today they are over 5000 in attendance, with 5 weekly services, with 55 staff people employed from their local budget. (show power point pictures of the Granger Community church).

In this church they practice to give a job description to volunteers with an added line: “perform other duties as requested.”

Imagine scenario: the first deacon tells the new deacon “Go wash my car.”

- “Why?”
- “it’s in your job description”
- “It is?!!!”
- Yep! Last line…
- When you’ve finished, run around the building three times and then come inside and let me know how warm it is outside…”
- OK…it’s in my job description….

“perform other duties as requested.”

Members sign covenant, agreeing that to belong to the family they will not only agree to agree, but to perform other duties as requested!

Those who lead teams have another interesting line in their job description:

“Work yourself out of a position within a year!”

With 5000 in attendance they coordinate 2000 volunteers.

Still far from the vision which shook the world 500 years ago → the Reformation cry → Priesthood of All believers!

We’ve dialogued about Conversion to Christ, not to church or doctrine, but Jesus,

We are clear that Conversion happens by the Holy Spirit, pulling us together.

We looked at Converted church, patterned by the original - Sanctuary in heaven

We admitted that conversion is personal and continuous, we are to convert daily, we are to grow from Glory to glory as we experience God in our daily lives.

Today I am getting into a discussion with you with this question:

Who should be growing and entering into God’s presence?

Everybody?

Then why do you need a pastor?

It’s your 3 minutes group time – your pulpit. We are going to be talking today about what we want to change in ministry, in pastor’s job description, in our expectations from a pastor……

Answer this “Why do you need a pastor??????”

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1 Tony Morgan & Tim Stevens “Simply Strategic Volunteers”
One anonymous pastor penned these words: “I majored in Bible in college. I went to the seminary and majored in the only thing they teach there: professional ministry. Graduating I know Greek, Hebrew and the only thing I am qualified for was to be POPE. But someone else had the job…”

Russian or Greek Orthodox helps → each church has its pope, father, батюшка….

There is more evidence in the Bible about Christians handling snakes, than about having a pastor!!! (Mark 16:18 & Acts 28:3-6 → Ephesians 4:11)

There is only 1(one) time word pastor is mentioned in the whole New Testament! And even then it-s a hyphenated word “pastor-teacher” !!! And it’s used in plural → meaning they are pastors in the church….

Ephesians 4:11 does not describe an office, but a nurturing function for believers, from Greek word – “poimenas” meaning “Shepherd”, Latinized as ‘pastor”

Let’s take a look at who this function is described in the New Testament.

The Apostle Paul is sending from Miletus an invitation to gather all Ephesian elders-presbyters of the church (Acts 20:17). When he speaks to them at the meeting he charges them to be episcopes-overseers and to pastor-shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28). The eldership duty was to provide a supervision and nurture to their congregations. An elder was considered to be a pastor and a bishop.

The Apostle Peter identifies himself as a “fellow-elder” (1 Peter 5:1) using a hapax legomena with an added prefix to the word presbyter συμπρεσβύτερος. Meaning “co-elder.” And then he charges elders with two duties: to pastor/shepherd the flock and to provide oversight/episcopacy (verse 2).

Bottom line → in the days of apostles Elder, Pastor, Bishop → These were not hierarchical offices, but different descriptions of the same office.

At the same time there was always an ugly practice of supremacy, and lording of one over others. As you open the book of Revelation and read about Nicolaitans and doctrine of Balaam that Jesus condemned, you see that already in the 2nd century of the Christian church there were those who wanted to Lord over people, Niko & Laos in Greek; Baal & Am in Hebrew are the same meaning: Lording over people → Rise of clergy.
The Apostle John was writing to one of his churches warning about one brother Diotrephes (3\textsuperscript{rd} John 9-10) *who loves to have the preeminence ....himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting out of the church.*

It is against such attitude that Peter wrote to his coelders (1\textsuperscript{st} Peter 5:3-4) *nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

There is only one who is the Shepherd, the Only Pastor → Lord Jesus, the rest here are co-labourers, examples to the flock.

While heathen nations always created special caste of revered religious leaders – medicine man, shaman, witch doctor, priest, wise man → in God’s plan it was for everyone to have personal relationship with him.

When two servants of God, Eldad and Meldad received the Spirit and began to prophesy, a young zealot Joshua, future leader, urged Moses to ‘restrain them” (Numbers 11:26-28) Moses reproved such an attitude saying that he wishes all God’s people would prophesy (v.29)

A brief look at early churches described in the New Testament reveals that Paul and Barnabas travelled to ordain elders in every church (Acts 14:23), Paul would later write to Titus recommending to ordain elders in every city as authority (Tit. 1:5).

In Paul’s letter to Timothy it is evident that a presbytery, a board of elders was formed to ordain others by laying on hands (1 Tim.4:1).

Note the plurality! Not a singular elder, but plural elders for every church and in every city was the model for the New Church.

There was an elder, called Ignatius of Antioch, and around A.D. 107 on his way to be martyred in Rome he wrote seven letters to churches:

- “regard the bishop as the Lord Himself….” Ephesians 6:1
- follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father….” Smyrnaeans 8:1
- wherever bishop appears that’s where Jesus may be…” Philadelphiaans 7:1
- do nothing without the bishop….” Magnesians 7:1
- look on your bishop as a type of the Father…” Trallians 3:1

he is credited with the official “organization” of the Christian church hierarchy, presenting bishop in the place of God, and other elders as apostles. ²

Then it started – all elders had to sit with bishop at the Lord’s Supper.
Without bishop presiding no Communion was valid.
He suggested that to survive heretical schisms we must pattern the church after the centralized political structure of Rome, which seemed to be perpetual and eternal.

² Frank Viola & George Barna “Pagan Christianity>”
is anyone revolted by these suggestions?
Isn’t it what we still practice today?

By mid-2nd century somehow the term “stewardship” was moved from Grace to money. The bishop was not anymore the steward of God’s grace, and Plan of salvation, but the administrator of church’s wealth.

I still get this attitude today – people come to ask pastor for money. I want to tell them they are 1000 years late…

People were moved into passivity, from active service to passive watching bishop’s professional performance. Bishop became the “solo pastor” controlling church activities.

Another genius – Clement of Rome around 100 A.D. introduced word “laity” In order to distinguish regular people from the ministers. Tertullian about century later introduced word “clergy” to describe the special class of Christians. These two propagated cast system, class separation that was non Biblical at all. Not only that – it propagated dichotomy between sacred and secular. Dividing life into secular and sacred, some people are to live holy, others to remain secular, limiting God’s presence to certain times, places, and people….Sadly many Christians prefer even today this model ➔ holy sometimes, living in sin the rest, most of, majority of the time!!!!

Who are the people of God? All are laity (from Greek LAOS = people)
How many are called by God? All are clergy (CLEROS = called)

Then comes Cyprian of Carthage, former pagan orator, priest, rhetoric teacher. And introduces the concept of “priesthood” in the 3rd century. Converting fellowship tables into “altars” and meals into “sacrifice”

After Constantine, and council of Nicea in 325 bishops were elevated to the “high priest” office, no one above them but God, and presbyters received delegation of priestly duties – “sacerdotes” distributors of the sacred ➔ pushing the “laity” further from God and His presence.

By the end of the 4th century bishops were with the Political Powers together. New converts brought their cultural and social baggage into church, and they were more comfortable with the church that looked like world they were familiar with...

One term that was popularized then, coming directly from pagan rituals was “pontifex” = bridge, connector, mediator
Same time Gregory of Nyssa said that “ordination” makes clergy different, it endows person with divinity. “he is your earthly god, vicar, ruler, governor”

To translate into today’s reality – your elders/presbyters are your priests, and your so-called “pastor” is the bishop – untouchable to lay folks, political figure…..

Do any of you accept this model of church?????

One historian observer said: “Judea gave Christianity ethics, Greece – theology, Rome – organization.” he is reflecting on the fact that Emperor Constantine organized church into dioceses according to the pattern of Roman Districts. (called parishes in the Anglican church). later pope Gregory would shape the ministry and manual of the church according to the Roman Law.

All this in contrast with Jesus and His Way for His Church. When Jesus entered in he removed hierarchy and invited every believer to the priesthood, to come boldly before the throne of God, praying for unity possible only in God’s Presence

The Reformers attempted to restore Biblical way of doing things. The bishop was downgraded to “pastor” (Calvin) and priest to “presbyter” (Knox) They stopped on the first stage of restoration, called mid 2nd century style church. The restoration of the “Priesthood of All Believers” was only partial, in respect to people’s salvation and personal relationship with God – no need for earthly priest! No need for human “pontifex” for human mediator/bridge to access God on high.

The soteriological/salvific/relational aspect was restored. But not the ecclesiological/corporate/ministerial priesthood.

The Ministry aspect of the “Priesthood of All Believers” is yet to be restored. That is why I am preaching today the “Ministry Conversion: Who is your pastor?”

Luther was so opposed to allowing people to speak in the meeting that he called it “pit of hell” practice. Anabaptists who started restoring more – allowing people to speak up in the public gatherings – were put to death for their “heresies.”

Is this a Lutheran Church? Is it Reformed Calvinist? Is it Presbyterian? No?? Then why do you need a pastor?

One of the ideas Luther had to justify pastoral role was “preaching” The whole Lutheran church gathering and service was based on preaching: 3 times a day – morning – epistle; main – Gospel, vespers – Old Testament. Luther said “mouth of every pastor is the mouth of Christ, you ought to listen to the pastor not as a man but as God” you can hear same ideas as Ignatius.
To Luther the church was a preaching station, and people should not assemble unless sermon is preached. He made this alarming statement: “the ears are the only organs of a Christian.”

Church was called Mundhaus → mouth-house

This German influence was so strong, in my childhood ordained minister was called “preacher” (проповедник in Russian)

You could see where we made some improvements – elders preach too.

But, is it our idea that only members of the body are EARS?

Calvin and Bucer, Reformed emphasized pastoral duty as “physician of souls”

Diagnosing maladies of people and prescribing either medicine or knife, either counselling or censoring by removal. They called pastors “curate” & in Calvin’s Geneva it was taken to an art form of “pastoral visitation” – just as doctor and a nurse make rounds in a hospital, so should pastor and an elder make rounds visiting every home on schedule to check for spiritual viruses and possible maladies, bringing cure, healing, and dealing with preventing epidemics. You could see the emerging pastoral role as a counsellor, psychologist, visitor!

After all the reformation just returned pastor’s role back to the bishop supremacy of the 2nd century → just a semantic change.

We read with you New testament description of Church leadership → elders were bishops and pastors to people. Apostles called themselves “co-elders” and “ministers”, which by the way is well known Greek “diakonos”

The Apostle Paul constantly places himself in the role of a “deacon” servant, minister, supporting local elders in their responsibility for believers in their care. Today we will ordain deacons for this supportive role of service. They are “ministers”!

I appeal to you – do not let centuries of Catholic tradition and Protestant short-change stifle and damage the Body Life by dividing community of faith into first and second-class citizens.

We are all living stones. Do not let ancient errors of hierarchy transform us into stones that do not breathe. Body is not about a giant mouth and 100 ears. It is about hands, and feet, and fingers, and muscles, and all kind of other important organs.

In a book “Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church” Russell Burrill, former (now retired) director of NADEI highlights one more reason why Reformation failed to return ministry to the people.

I want you to hear this → because it continued the union of church and state.

To support reforms they believed they needed enforcement of the state laws, hence the hierarchy was not abandoned, and it was also in the state interest to keep the people in line.…
Our roots are in Methodist revival that led to ministry & training of all believers. A brief look at history of Methodism shows that most leaders of class-meetings and house churches were women!!! Emphasis was on discipleship, mentoring. Role of women in providing nurture and oversight (who else?!) was not questioned in our movement as we sought to return to the ideals of apostolic time. It was not until 1930’s depression era, and structural hierarchy development that women were sent away from ministry, and the “ordination” as a rite returned…

Until that time itinerant leaders, representing the worldwide church had one function – evangelism, raising up new churches, training local leaders.

The landmark work of J.N.Loughborough (1907), commissioned as the growing church needed more definite structure, states: The office of elders (note plurality!) is expressed by the words: overseer & pastor. Today this work is known as the Elders’ Handbook I would like to read a paragraph from Elder’s Handbook, p. 23 The New Testament outlines two types of leadership in the church:

1. Apostles who cared for evangelism, teaching pure truth, planning, administration. Itinerant workers, whose influence and labour extended beyond local church, connecting churches together for a common goal and purpose.

2. Elders who performed pastoral duties in their local congregations, giving oversight of congregational activities and ministries.

Now it’s time to invite your elders: (call all elders by name to come to the front)

As elders come up front – introduce them to the congregation:
These are your bishops overseers of your needs.
These are your pastors nurturing you in your requests.
Welcome! pastor Johnny, pastor Ingrid, pastor Rudy, pastor Mike, pastor ………. They are worthy of double honour!

As for me – after doing the work of Evangelist, Administrator, teacher of doctrine, and apostolic office of coordinating the network of churches in Western Ontario, I am also an ordained elder, and as a member of your church, when you call – I will visit…

It is in my job description, you know…. “perform other duties as requested”
APPENDIX I

IDEAS FOR MINISTERIAL DISTRICT COORDINATORS

1. All District coordinators to be a team where support is given on a personal level to each pastor, recognizing that one Ministerial Director physically cannot attend to the regular issues of 100+ pastors.

2. Monthly meetings are a "must" if we are to create momentum and take the ministry to the level of advancing into new territories. Quarterly meetings would be sufficient to maintain the status quo and create accountability.

3. A more intentional approach to what we do as pastors is needed, from managing day-to-day activities, to setting and reaching higher goals. A joint meeting of ministerial coordinators with Conference Ministerial Director is essential to know what the Vision is and how to advance it. Currently there is a lack of compelling vision.

4. Ministerium meetings in each district are to fulfill at least following expectations:
   a) Celebrating what is happening at each church. Seeing success encourages others to try, to increase efforts. Seeing God's blessings builds hope where there is a lack of it.
   b) Sharing needs and concerns. Our churches are so interconnected that what takes place in one congregation will affect others through families and friends. Pastors are to be vigilant regarding all trends developing.
   c) Prayer time for pastors and their families.
   d) Planning joint efforts to advance the work in the whole district
   e) Assisting and guiding pastors to join local evangelical pastoral networks to expand Adventist influence into cities and counties.
   f) Reviewing Conference initiatives that require cooperation of pastors
   g) Professional development through peer-to-peer seminars.
   h) Sharing useful materials, resources, and ideas.
   i) At least once a year - a social interaction for families
   j) At least once a year - a spiritual retreat

5. Conference should expect from and offer to the ministerial district coordinators reciprocal communication, representation for pastoral causes or concerns.

6. Mandatory attendance and employment are mutually inclusive terms. Being a part of ministerial team is one of our job description tasks.

7. Lay participation should be encouraged as a part of mentoring effort. In our district pastors are welcomed to invite elders, especially if we are discussing plans for evangelism or youth work. While more reserved meetings could be planned as retreats, there is nothing to hide in our growth and planning from our elders and lay leaders.

8. The Ministerial Secretary, when empowered, can empower district leaders by investing some authority. I am not speaking of positional authority, but the spiritual one.
APPENDIX J

SEQUENCE FOR MAXWELL’S 21 LAWS OF LEADERSHIP
Having presented laws of leadership according to Maxwell to elders and board members, I introduced the sequence to it. When I first read the book myself I wondered if there was a sequence to those laws. Maxwell defines leadership as an influence and emphasizes that everyone has an influence, some negative, some positive, but all are directional impacting and moving others. Where would someone begin? Respect? Integrity? These are to be gained, earned, developed.

In 2000 I taught a class for youth based on these laws, and for the final session I suggested a “graduation” game of sorting the 21 suggestions into a logical sequence. 21 large 8x8 cards with symbolic images and texts identifying 21 laws were printed and laid randomly on the table. The whole process was recorded and transcribed. The following is the paraphrased description of the group reasoning:

We started with the question: consider the end result, the desired outcome of this leadership process. A group of sixteen youth agreed after a short discussion that the Legacy is the desired outcome. It was noted that having a Vision was not listed as one of the “laws”. Vision was implied in these “laws” as seeing the Legacy and moving toward it.

We had placed the “Legacy” card at the end of the journey. Some were suggesting working backward from it. Others argued that having a clear vision of the Legacy should order the first step. Thus, the “Priority” card was placed on the opposite end, at the beginning of the journey. Seeing the preferred future requires one to prioritize everything in a certain direction toward that Legacy.

Once priorities are set, the next step will be to sacrifice other important things that are not aligned with the direction chosen. Once a certain choice is made, all other alternatives are sacrificed, otherwise there will be no directional movement.
Embarking on this journey, an understanding must be embraced of the **process**. Legacy cannot be reached overnight and for the long-term process, planning and **navigation** are necessary. From the spiritual perspective all plans are better to be in accordance with God’s Will, hence, the spiritual discernment is needed. In the secular world it is called **intuition**. We understand it as being tuned to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The first thing the Holy Spirit does is to point out to the sins and barriers to be removed (John 16:8). John C. Maxwell calls this stage “**lids**.” It is when obstacles are removed, when leaders can stand their “solid ground,” and walk in **integrity** that God arranges timing and opportunities for advance. Until now it was leader’s or a team’s personal journey toward the legacy.

I also studied Clinton’s view on six stages of leader’s development (1988) and I saw a correspondence with Maxwell’s laws and the sequence my students once suggested. Clinton outlines the first two stages of sovereign foundation and inner growth as becoming, developing who I am(?). The next two stages of ministry development, maturity as granting position, permission, and working toward life maturity are all about producing, and focus on what I/we do (doesn’t make sense). The last two stages of ministry convergence and afterglow are about reproduction and personhood, and are about what we do for, and with, others; about the legacy we are building.

So, the first seven steps are about becoming and personal development. The second leg of the journey is about being productive and doing the work. This is where the public action begins to take place, and the directive presence of the Vision becomes more evident.
Next seven laws fit in this phase, starting with **timing**. When a person walks in integrity, God opens opportunities and with each opportunity taken on time, a **victory** is achieved. Each victory builds **momentum**. Series of these timing-victory cycles build the momentum higher and higher, bringing the recognition and **respect** to the cause. Once respect is achieved things should become easier. It all should be “downhill” from there, as people begin to pay more attention to the **real** leader who speaks, and the directional **influence** causes people to make up their minds and either join or exit; “magnetically” attracting supporters and repelling objectors.

At this stage, each person is ready for the reproduction on the final stretch toward legacy. Those attracted to the cause are to be connected around the common goals and values. Connection makes “buy-in” possible and groups people toward efficiency. The empowerment happens in discipleship groups, causing reproduction, growth and producing the legacy.
APPENDIX K

NCD SURVEYS OF SELECTED WESTERN ONTARIO CHURCHES

PRIOR TO 2007
Figure 1. South London, May 2005

Figure 2. South London, June 2006

Figure 3. South London, June 2007
Figure 4. North London, May 2005

Loving Relationships
Empowering Leadership
Gifts-based Ministry
Passionate Spirituality
Functional Structures
Inspiring Worship
Holistic Small Groups
Need-oriented Evangelism

Figure 5. North London, June 2006

Loving Relationships
Empowering Leadership
Gifts-based Ministry
Passionate Spirituality
Functional Structures
Inspiring Worship
Holistic Small Groups
Need-oriented Evangelism

Figure 6. North London, June 2007

Loving Relationships
Empowering Leadership
Gifts-based Ministry
Passionate Spirituality
Functional Structures
Inspiring Worship
Holistic Small Groups
Need-oriented Evangelism

236
Figure 7. St. Thomas, February 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Leadership</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>Gifts-based Ministry</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passionate Spirituality</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Structures</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring Worship</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic Small Groups</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need-oriented Evangelism</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving Relationships</td>
<td>22</td>
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</table>

Figure 8. Woodstock, February 2007

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Empowering Leadership</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts-based Ministry</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passionate Spirituality</td>
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<td>Functional Structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspiring Worship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holistic Small Groups</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Need-oriented Evangelism</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving Relationships</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX L

VISION AND STRATEGY OF THE LONDON SOUTH
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AFFIRMED IN 2011
Vision statement:
Church is a Foretaste of Heaven in a Community Centre of disciples
where loving-kindness is an attitude of everyone,
where no generation is missing,
children are valued treasures, loved and cultivated as future leaders
where every ethnic group is present
where every believer is involved in ministry,
where discipleship is the way of life
where leaders are developed for new church plants
where a comprehensive life-improvement is available
APPENDIX M

REACH GOALS
1. **Revive & Transform:**
   i. Revive the **Sabbath School Classes** and transform **Bible Study Groups** for discipleship
      a) increase attendance of 7 adult classes to 100, involving 50% of our members
      b) start Sabbath afternoon Bible Study group for answering difficult questions
   ii. Revive the **Family Life** ministry and transform our **Families** for authentic life of worship
   iii. Revive the **Young Adults** ministry, seeking transformation of disconnected to disciples
   iv. Revive **outreach to Students at Western & Fanshawe**.
   v. Revive **Website Internet** development, transform our portal into an **Online Church**.
   vi. Transform **Women Ministry** to involve and include all women of all ages in our church
   vii. Transform the **Mid-week Prayer Meeting** revival, facilitating increase of attendance by members and inviting community to pray.
   viii. Transform the **Community Services** toward building relationships with people we serve
   ix. Transform **Children Ministries** and Adventurers to guide parents for spiritual growth
   x. Transform **Personal Ministry** toward intentional spiritual development of individuals
   xi. Transform the **Choir** toward building friendship among members, spirituality of people, professionalism of performers, inspiring value of ministry, and invite new participants.
   xii. Transform **Pathfinders** to become community serving ministry, training youth leadership

2. **Education for Discipleship:**
   i. List of all children ages K-8 of families that are members of our church, and work toward having **50% of our church children** attend Adventist Christian Education, where discipleship is practiced by **September 2013**
   ii. Invest in developing a **multipurpose facility** to expand the Church School to make it available to ALL our children by 2020
   iii. Offer support seminars for children in the Public School system on creation & ethics topics
   iv. Offer community classes for parenting, cooking, budgeting, tax-clinic, ESL.
   v. Develop Small Groups and House churches for discipling adults. To have **50% of ALL members belong to a small group or house church by the end of 2013**

3. **Alignment within the Church:**
   i. Annual **NCD survey** providing perspective on balancing alignment of all ministries
   ii. Unity among leaders and total support of projects. Synergetic coordination of all efforts.
   iii. Unity in diversity of our cultures
      a) Having a diverse congregation assuring fair proportional representation of ALL cultures on the Board, and in ministries
      b) Encouraging mixed participation in ministry groups to avoid cliquishness
   iv. **Cooperation with other churches in the district** on projects. Supporting projects to which we are invited by sister churches in the district.
v. Establishing communication with the North & Spanish congregations for planning and working together.

4. Community Outreach and Evangelism

   i. Continue, strengthen and further develop community outreach through CHIP, “Out of Depression” Seminars, Open House Community Service, VBS, Adventurers
   ii. Develop a strategy for reaching generational Canadian population
   iii. Purchase professional video recording equipment for internet broadcasting
   iv. Invest in developing social media based spiritual forum
   v. Connect with Native Aboriginal communities around London
   vi. Develop a Dialogue ministry reaching Muslim community
   vii. Develop a ministry for Karen people of Burma in London.
   viii. Identify unreached community in need of help and develop a relevant Mission project for our local London Community. Having 50% of our members actively involved as volunteers in mission outreach projects by the end of 2013.
   ix. Reconnect with young adults who left the church and make it a top priority.
   x. Connect with all the viewers of It Is Written in London, and have Interest Coordinator.
   xi. Develop a Gospel-sharing ministry for people with major disabilities (blind, deaf, etc.)
   xii. Prepare for planting a new church in West-London-Byron area, or North-Fanshawe-Hyde Park area, geared to become a Community outreach centre.
   xiii. Develop a “Stop Smoking” program

5. Healthy Leadership & Management:

   i. Leaders are held accountable for following REACH strategy and congregational goals.
   ii. Empowering all leaders for their personal spiritual and professional growth. Have each leader attend a training seminar or a spiritual retreat for encouragement annually.
   iii. Provide leadership training opportunities annually.
   iv. Facilitate education of the Church members on the matters of women in service.
   v. Transform Board meetings into leadership huddle, offering support and resources.
   vi. Transparency of decisions making and regular reporting to church members of actions. Preparing an annual report of activities, spending, plans, and reflections from leaders for accountability and communication.
   vii. Involve each leader and their families in a Small Group or a House Church experience
   viii. Each leader should demonstrate soul-winning by example, leading at least one individual to Christ every year. Such experience would enhance leader’s personal spiritual growth.
   ix. Annual evaluation of leaders, including the pastor, by members for empowering growth.
APPENDIX N

NCD SURVEYS OF LONDON (SOUTH) FROM 2008 TO 2011
Complete evaluations are published @ http://ncdbiblical.blogspot.ca/

Figure 1. June 2008. 23 out of 30 returned the survey.
Processed through NADEI @ Andrews

![Bar chart for June 2008 evaluation results.]

Empowering Leadership: 31
Gifts-based Ministry: 34
Passionate Spirituality: 24
Functional Structures: 41
Inspiring Worship: 35
Holistic Small Groups: 35
Need-oriented Evangelism: 34
Loving Relationships: 27

Figure 2. May 2009. 29 out of 30 returned the survey.
Processed through NADEI @ Andrews

![Bar chart for May 2009 evaluation results.]

Empowering Leadership: 33
Gifts-based Ministry: 53
Passionate Spirituality: 52
Functional Structures: 47
Inspiring Worship: 45
Holistic Small Groups: 32
Need-oriented Evangelism: 53
Loving Relationships: 31
Figure 3. May 2010. 27 out of 30 returned the survey. Processed through NADEI @ Andrews

Figure 4. December 2011. 28 out of 30 returned the survey. Processed through NCD Canada
APPENDIX O

2012 NCD SURVEY
SUCCESS OF THE TRINITARIAN LEADERSHIP

Figure 1. December 2012 NCD evaluation results for the London (South)

Quality Characteristic Current Profile

Figure 2. 2012 NCD Comparison with surveys of 2009-2011

Dynamic Progress
Figure 3. Progress of Empowering leadership in 2012 in comparison with 2009-2011

Figure 4. 7 out of 10 highest changes occurred in 2012 within Empowering Leadership
APPENDIX P

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AGAINST CHANGE

A COLLECTIVE DIAGNOSIS OF ELDERS TEAM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Commitment Improvement goal ONE BIG THING we wish would be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What we are Doing against or Not doing for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hidden competing commitments. Things we worry about:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Big (but wrong) assumptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To be balanced leaders, operating from all three bases – ① transcending influence of speaking from the front, ② involved spiritual nurture from within the assigned parish of families; ③ supportive oversight of ministries and mutual accountability of going alongside people</th>
<th>Not doing much between meetings</th>
<th>To not look stupid with outlandish ideas</th>
<th>I am judged and criticized for my ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following a routine approach of managing tasks, not using “Trinitarian lenses” to discover more effective approach</td>
<td>Not to make a mistake in solving typical problems in a new way and set an unpredictable precedent</td>
<td>Tried and tested methods are more secure than allowing unpredictable “Trinitarian” perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not visiting with people in assigned parish</td>
<td>Not to become a target of people’s emotions</td>
<td>People are harmful, pessimistic and aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving pastoral responsibility to the professional vocational paid pastor</td>
<td>Not to diminish paid pastor role</td>
<td>Pastor is insecure and Conference wants to maintain hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding confrontations when accountability is needed</td>
<td>To be liked by people</td>
<td>Peace must be preserved at all costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not taking initiative in supervising ministries, waiting to be invited</td>
<td>Not to be accused in looking over and being “control freak”</td>
<td>Other leaders do not want our involvement Other leaders are insecure and have hidden agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting secular work as a priority over the church obligations</td>
<td>Not to lose the sustenance and finances needed</td>
<td>I need to be financially secure and independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compromising the teamwork because of family commitments</td>
<td>To not upset family members who may disagree with what church is doing</td>
<td>Family unity is key to a happy church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX Q

POWER POINT PRESENTATION WITH AN OUTLINE

FOR TEACHING ELDERS TEAMS
Everything could be either an icon on which we arrest our sight, adore, worship and turn it into idol—worship, ministry, even evangelism.

Or it could be a window—a vehicle to go beyond, to reveal greater destination. Worship is designed to encounter God.

1. What Does Leadership Reveal about God?

2. What do we learn about Leadership from God?

How could leadership help people to know God, to believe and to accept God? Could Leadership become a venue to God, and not an evil to endure, a necessary tool to put up with? Does our leadership reveal God?

Think of God as a Leader—all Three Revelations ➔ Father as a Leader, Son as a leader, Spirit as a Leader. Not one particular, but, think Trinitarian—our God is One God. Leadership of God is act of ALL GOD!

Consider Leadership beyond Servanthood

Christ Revealed All God, more than Servant
Christ revealed the Father and given the Holy Spirit. His claim is comprehensive. No single model of leadership, no single style can explain what Christ did, does and will do. He Himself claimed ALL, the Way, the Truth & the Life. His leadership cannot be fit into one paradigm!

It is heretical to think of Christ only as one of...all the claims that He made. He is ALL – the King, the Priest, the Prophet, the Judge, the Servant, the Ruler. Christ’s leadership was comprehensive leadership, revealing how God operates – not situational, but OMNIpresent and OMNIactive in all situations.

Theologian Ford speaks of Transformational leadership of Jesus as fulfilling 3 tasks: Storyteller communicating the Vision, Servant Deliverer positioning Himself to earn trust, and the turning sheep into shepherds.

In Christ’s ministry all leadership styles are combined and joint. His role as King Priest and Prophet brings together decision making, serving, involving others and sharing. Main branches of leadership – ruling, transactional and transformational are present in Christ.
When thinking of Comprehensive Leadership consider combining all: Ruler, Servant, Guide

Consider the fractal explanation of order. New Science is discovering order where only chaos was seen before. Fractal concept noticed in nature (broccoli, cauliflower, fern leaves, corals, lightning...) are revealing a common pattern from large to small. Leadership on earth should be a fractal imitation, carrying a pattern of Divine.

Christ’s motto for God’s Will to be done on earth as it is in heaven is our imperative

Consider how this threefold leadership was modeled throughout the Bible. Prophet Samuel was more than a seer, he was also a priest and a judge of the nation, thus fulfilling roles of visionary communicator, order setting and commanding leader, and also intercessor and servant of people. His leadership was a precursor to Christ.

Christ’s call to the Apostle Peter also contains all three authorizations: he was the first in the inner core, spokesman, the Rock (Matt 10, 17, 18), he was told to “strengthen brethren” (Luke 22:32) & to “feed the sheep” (John 21:15-17). Peter learned comprehensive leadership from Jesus.

Roles to which Peter was invited before his conversion included the leadership, even though it did not translate into hierarchical position of becoming first

When writing to his disciples, to the elders under his leadership he invited them to comprehensive duty – elders were to shepherd the flock (pastor) and to provide oversight (episcopos). Hence, refuting the hierarchical pyramid of leadership and instructing on threefold duty of Christian leader.

Closer study of terms in the New Testament reveals that terms presbyteros (elder), poimen (pastor) and episcopos (overseer) were used interchangeably and there was
elder of Jerusalem. His role of empowerment was that of stewarding the Great Commission of Grace and Mission, and even though he made gaffes he continued serving as teacher, overseer, pastor – multifunctional leader.

no hierarchy in the Biblical Apostolic Church. The hierarchical developments came later in the history of the church.

This ONE and the same office of church leadership implies three diverse roles of

Leading, teaching and accountability. The Apostle Paul appeals with the same calling to leaders

In the last few decades more research is emerging on the topic of threefold duty of spiritual leaders. Frank Viola presents “re-imagined” church leadership emphasizing the unity of office expressed in character maturity, caring, and vision giving

Meyer invites Christians to abandon secular models of leadership and participate in Christ’s High Priestly ministry, which includes character formation through relational communion with Holy Spirit through Christ toward Father. That alone qualifies to lead others too.
Authors I quote do not consider yet the Trinitarian model I am proposing, but their descriptions are Trinitarian. Rainer speaking of Breakout Churches speaks of an intersection of Community needs, leadership passion and gifts of congregation.

Leonard Sweet, postmodern prophet calls the church to three-dimensional DNA – Missional, Relational, Incarnational – thus presenting the work of the Father, ministry of Christ and role of the Spirit, working ALL-together within church for the purpose of Salvation.

A secular author working on the model for empowerment came up with three main areas – authority and knowledge granting, training for skills and abilities, and then providing accountability and overseeing resources. A brief comparison reveals the pattern of Biblical roles of elder, pastor and overseer, illustrated by the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A Christian author frustrated with church abdicating its role to parachurch organizations and businesses in his book “Organic Leadership” presents a similar to Sweet’s MRI ideal for functional church leadership: Absolute Divine Truth, Apostolic Mission, and Nurturing relationship, in other words – Biblical role of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit over and over again!
Another theologian speaks of the unity of God’s Action in three dimensions – His Wisdom, Work and Will. Never one or another, but always all three together.

This brings me to the title name of the Leadership model I am proposing – “Trinitarian” – a concept after our understanding of God’s Self-Revelation.

God who is Transcendent, Eminent and Imminent, above, among & within.

Reading the Bible through “Trinitarian lenses” you see this intent almost in every chapter.

Consider how the Apostle Paul presents the diversity of Christian ministry and gifts. Or consider the story of Cornelius in Acts 10, where godly man who already believes in the God-Above, is told in a vision to send for Peter who would tell him about Jesus, God-among us, and then pours out the Spirit within the household.

Hence, the Trinitarian leadership is an invitation for church leaders, elders to practice such a comprehensive leadership, after God’s own model – above, among and alongside. I am choosing the term “alongside” to best illustrate to work of Holy Spirit as paraklete, the Comforter, Empowerer, Supporter, Coach, Guide,
God’s intent is that we would experience Him in all Revelations!

Definition of heresy is not malevolence, but partiality, step away from integrity. To chose only a part and ignore the whole would be heretical. Heresy chooses only part of truth.

Heretical approach to leadership, choosing and preferring one style above another leads to dysfunctional leadership, to extremes, to aberrations of superhero, dictator, *laissez-faire*

Biblical paradigm presents balance, perfection of all three being equal

I invite elders to grow balanced, in pulpit, among ministries, and coaching individuals

Retired Adventist leader Rex Edwards defined in the 1980s three functions of ministry as proclamation, serving and intersession. We believe in the priesthood of all believers, every

A leadership which would delegate and give authority, provide education, training and resources would be truly empowering. Imagine church Adventist leaders at all levels taking initiative to practice all these
Christian is a leader, having come to Christ we are to lead others too, and Adventist elders are to model comprehensive leadership.

principles! The dream of church growth by all believers will be in reach!

Natural Church Development model simplifies job description of leaders to explaining, motivating and setting people free to serve.

Our denominational handbook for elders since 1994 had mandated such threefold approach of church leaders sharing influence, providing pastoral nurture and accountability oversight.

This threefold model presents an ideal for local church leaders, where local elders would share with vocational pastor these responsibilities of leading, teaching, nurturing parishes, mentoring and supervising. Egalitarian shared leadership in our churches is to be aware of modeling Divine Leadership, where not a hierarchy but shared participation is effective. In all our actions and decision making we must keep the question in mind: how does our leadership emulates unity and cooperation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Does our leadership reflect qualities of God? Does our conversation begin with “let us”? Our theology has to determine our practice.
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VITA

Personal Information:

Name: Alex A. Golovenko
Date of Birth: February 7, 1970
Place of Birth: Bila Tzerkva, Kiev region, Ukraine
(Біла Церква, Київська область, Україна)
Married: September 5, 1993 to Sandra Maria Lopez Gomez Golovenko
Children:
  Stepan Allen Golovenko (1994),
  Michael Angelo Salvador Golovenko (1997)
  Daniel Elijah Alexander Golovenko (1999)
  Samuel (PK) Peter Karpo Anatoli Golovenko (2001)

Educational Information:

1977–1985-  Bila Tzerkva School No.10
1992–1996-  Bachelor of Science in Biology, Canadian Union College.
1997–1999-  Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies/Pastoral Ministry Emphasis,
            Canadian University College, graduating Cum Laude.
2002–2004-  M.Div. from Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,
            Andrews University Seminary,
            graduating with a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.94.
2007–2013-  D.Min. in Leadership from Andrews University.

Ordination:

June 2005-  Ordained by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada to the Ministry

Professional Experience:

1999-2002 -  Pastor of the Niagara Falls and St.Catharines Seventh-day Adventist
              Churches (Ontario, Canada)
2005-2009 -  Pastor of London (South), North London Seventh-day Adventist Churches
              and London Spanish company plant (Ontario, Canada).
              Western Ontario District coordinator.
2009-Present  Pastor- London Seventh-day Adventist Church (Ontario, Canada)
              Ontario Conference Church Growth Committee member