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Reclaiming the Biblical Role of Elders: Equipping the Saints to Lead the Local Congregation [Dissertation Notice]

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Chu, Raymond Iao-Man (2011). *Conflict management styles of pastors and organizational servant leadership: A descriptive study.* Ph.D., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The purpose of this descriptive correlational study was to examine the relationship between the conflict management styles among senior pastors and the organizational servant leadership tendencies in their churches. This study should help senior pastors to understand how their conflict management styles and servant leadership behaviors may relate to the organizational servant leadership tendencies in their churches so that they may improve the congregational health and effectiveness of their churches. This research presented theological foundations of servant leadership by extracting biblical principles from two Old Testament and six New Testament passages: 1 Samuel 15:22, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5:1-12, 20:20-28, Mark 9:33-37, John 12:20-26, 13:1-35, and Philippians 2:1-11. It was followed by a detailed discussion on the theoretical foundation of servant leadership and the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) instrument (Laub, 1999) for measuring organizational servant leadership tendency. A theological foundation of conflict management and a discussion on the Rahim Organizational Conflict Instrument II (ROCI-II) (Rahim, 2001) for measuring the level of the five interpersonal conflict management styles (integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising) were also provided. The findings implied that as pastors embrace the integrating style and refrain from the avoiding style when handling interpersonal conflict in pastoral ministry, they model Jesus' character directly to the parties involved and

indirectly to their congregations. This is discipleship at its core, and it has a positive influence on the servant orientation of their congregations.

England, Tamara D. (2011). *The evolving self: A model of transformative leadership training utilizing the concept of mentoring for the ministry context.* D.Min., United Theological Seminary.

The focus of this research project was to design and implement an intergenerational mentoring program to train potential leaders for future church leadership. The researcher held a series of training sessions designed to prepare the participants for a three-month mentoring relationship in which elder leaders who had been successful as leaders would mentor potential leaders to ensure their future success. It was determined that when this occurred, the mentored leaders were better prepared and more confident to serve in a role of leadership, they became more involved in the life of the church, and they desired to mentor other leaders.

Jones, Bruce A. (2011). *Reclaiming the biblical role of elders: Equipping the saints to lead the local congregation.* D.Min., University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

This project focused on developing a biblically based elder-training curriculum for First Presbyterian Church in Janesville, Wisconsin. Four biblical themes of leadership informed both a retreat for elders and a preaching series for the congregation. The session spent an overnight retreat incorporating worship, instruction, and fellowship to strengthen their understanding of Christian leadership. Following the

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weekend retreat, the pastor preached on the same themes for the next four weeks. The effect of the training event and preaching series were measured through two inventories conducted before the elder retreat and then after the preaching series to measure the changes in perception of the participants. In addition, an evaluation of the retreat explored the experience of the training. The biblical role of eldership explored four themes: Servant Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Shepherd Leadership, and Shared Leadership. These themes, informed by Scripture and the Reformed tradition, provided the basis for the retreat and preaching series. The content of the curriculum included both theological and practical application of these themes. This project identified the importance of well-planned leadership development and the importance of a concentrated time for training. The project reclaimed the importance of elder training for the congregation.

Mays, Ronald Brent (2011).
Comparing turnaround leadership in a rural church and in schools.
Ph.D., University of Louisville.

This qualitative study sought to illuminate successful practices of a turnaround leader in a rural church that are applicable cross-contextually, so as to inform the leadership efforts of various organizations seeking to reproduce organizational renewal on a wide-scale basis. Utilizing the principles of case study research, the researcher conducted participant observations, mined documents, and interviewed the pastor, three part-time staff members, and 24 members of a rural congregation in a south-central Kentucky congregation that had grown 289% in active membership over the last 14 years. Proceeding with the assumption that leaders can,

by the practice of specific, intentional behaviors, positively impact the ability of a congregation to reverse its path and experience turnaround, and seeking to illuminate those behaviors, this study was guided by the following research questions: (a) In a rural church that has experienced revitalization (“organizational turnaround”), how do the pastor and congregants perceive the experience? (b) How do they perceive the characteristics and behaviors of the pastor as “catalysts” in this transformation? (c) What leadership principles of successful turnaround church efforts can be extracted from their experiences that are comparable to those reported in the literature on school revitalization efforts? The data from the study revealed that members did not recall specific events as much as they did their pastor who helped bring peace and a culture that was conducive to revitalization. Responses to the question of precipitants to growth essentially described their pastor's personality and five intentional behaviors. This study revealed consistent themes that existed in the theoretical framework on schools provided by Kouzes and Posner (1987) as well as in the church and school turnaround lore. These findings propagate the notion that turnaround leaders often bear striking resemblances to one another, exhibiting many of the same personal character traits and intentional behaviors. These findings also suggest that turnaround leadership is not so much a product of individual, charismatic leadership as it is the product of consistent, sustained attention to sound leadership behaviors.