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The Impact of Values Clarification and Expression of Beliefs on Dysfunctional Leadership Among Church Lay Leaders

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DISSERTATION NOTICES

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Leaders face challenges both from within themselves and others. Dysfunctions within the leader and their group can lessen leadership effectiveness. It appears some leaders manage these dysfunctions better than others. More needs to be understood about how these dysfunctions are best mediated, and some have suggested the way to do that is through discovery and articulation of values and beliefs. This study followed a quantitative correlational research design. Data was obtained using surveys that 84 participants completed online. Participants were selected from current lay leaders and former lay leaders of not more than three years past from Christ United Methodist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Collegedale Community Church of Collegedale, Tennessee. The Dark Side Leadership Profile (DSLPL) was used to measure the degree of reported codependence, compulsion, paranoia, narcissism, and passive-aggressive tendencies (described as dysfunctions) while the Modeling-the-Way Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Self was used to measure the degree of reported discovery and authentic expression of values and beliefs. Regression and correlation analysis was used to test for a relationship between Modeling-the-Way and each dysfunction. The results of the study indicated a moderate degree of each of the dysfunctions existing among the participants; however, higher dysfunction scores were evident for compulsion and codependence, while lower scores, yet still in the moderate range,

were measured for passive-aggression. The results also indicated a consistently high degree of discovery and authentic expression of values and beliefs among the participants. Consistent with predictions, a statistically significant inverse relationship was observed between Modeling-the-Way LPI Self scores and the DSLPL scores, measuring each dysfunction with the exception of codependence among lay leaders in Collegedale Community Church. With that exception these results indicate that the higher one scored on the Modeling-the-Way LPI Self, a measure used to represent the degree one has discovered and authentically expressed values and beliefs, the lower one scored on the DSLPL inventory, measuring dysfunction. Results also indicated that a major component of Modeling-the-Way that asks constituents “for feedback on how my [the leader’s] actions affect others’ performance” significantly impacted every dysfunction with the exception of codependence.

The purpose of the study was to explore if the discovery and authentic expression of a leader’s values and beliefs may lower that leader’s tendencies toward these dysfunctions. The results of the study indicate that the more lay leaders in these congregations reported they were discovering and authentically expressing their values to their constituents, the lower were their reported levels of dysfunctional tendencies, with the exception of codependence in Collegedale Community Church. A review of the literature validates the results obtained. It is therefore suggested that the more leaders discover and authentically express values and beliefs, the less dysfunction will be reported and they will be perceived to be more effective.