
**A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP
IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

Name of researcher: Gyeongchun Choi
Name of adviser: Stanley E. Patterson, Ph.D.
Date completed: March 2016

Problem

Leadership styles and the attendant behavior of mission practitioners and church administrators too often demonstrate leadership attitudes and practices that reflect cultural norms while violating biblical norms. There is both historical and contemporary evidence of a predictable migration from leadership as service to leadership as control—such as autocracy, coercion, self-ascendancy, and dominance. These problems are found in leadership practices primarily informed by cultural norms apart from God’s Word. These norms vary widely and may even be practiced within the faith community, thus violating biblical principles. This reality creates an urgent need for the application of biblical principles that transcend cultures and bring leadership practices into alignment with the character and behavior of the Trinity.

Method

Since this study aims to establish a theology of missional leadership through the motif of the Great Controversy and seeks to discover leadership principles from the book of Revelation, I examine the book of Revelation and compare it with relevant leadership theories. I also look at Revelation in order to arrive at a theology of missional leadership by looking at terminology and context linked to leadership. As appropriate, I examine the concerns of systematic theology—for example, free-will, eschatology, and pneumatology—to support the theological analysis.

Results

The book of Revelation is a valid source of understanding pastoral and missional leadership. Revelation contains leadership terminologies and concepts by revealing the Lamb’s leadership behavior and exposing the counterfeit leadership of the Dragon. Amid the crossfire of the Great Controversy between God and Satan, the Lamb leads his people by an exemplary model of leadership in which he manifests the fundamentals of Christian leadership principles. Three dimensions of the Great Controversy worldview—cognitive, affective, and evaluative—delineate the antithetical leadership practices between the Lamb and the Dragon regarding power and authority, equality and unity, motivation of followers, humility in the sacrifice of leaders, spiritual transformation, and emotional values. Also, the song of the Lamb in Revelation details characteristics of the Lamb’s leadership: unity in humility, motivation and a willing heart, transparency and trust, egalitarian relationships, and the similitude of the divine character.

Conclusions

The Great Controversy between God and Satan highlights the roles of the Lamb and the Dragon in leading the events of human history. The numerous topics of Revelation are expanded around these two antithetical characters. The purpose of this contrast is to give clear information about the reality of the Great Controversy, so that people cannot be deceived by the Dragon's counterfeit reign and, instead, give their allegiance to God before the final judgment.

The Lamb contrasts the Dragon's leadership behavior in paradoxical ways. While the Dragon shows coercive authoritarian leadership, the Lamb presents his power in powerlessness and activeness in passivity. While the Dragon promotes self-ascension, the Lamb humbly steps down from the top to serve his people. Nevertheless, his position is not threatened as a result. While the Dragon leads people with a devouring mouth (cf. Rev 12:4; 13:2), the Lamb leads without utterance. Although his way seems to be weak and less effective, his ministry is strong and eternal.

Consequently, the Lamb's leadership is not similar to secular leadership which pursues productivity and efficiency as its main goal. In contrast with the industrial model of leadership, the Lamb's leadership manifests a relational leadership model which transcends pragmatic thinking on leadership. The Lamb's leadership demonstrates Christian leadership as (1) spiritual, (2) theological, (3) moral, (4) eschatological, (5) ecclesiological, (6) relational, and (7) missional.