

TITLE: The Relationship of Leadership Practices of Senior Pastors and Church Growth

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OBJECTIVE: To determine the relationship between the leadership practices of the senior pastor and the decadal growth rate of the Sunday morning worship service attendance during the pastor's term of service.

METHODOLOGY: The population consisted of a random sample (N=291) of the 1750 senior pastors who have participated in the Pastors' Prayer Summit retreats (International Renewal Ministries) in Oregon, Idaho and Washington. Seventy-one percent responded (N=206) and 188 surveys were used for the analyses. Respondents were all male, ranging in age from 30 to 66 years (average = 45.7 years), with an average of 16.8 years in the ministry. Mean size of churches was 205.8, with seven in decline in membership, 22 were plateaued, and the rest (84.6%) were growing at various rates. Respondents completed the LPI-Self and provided demographic data about themselves and their congregations.

KEY FINDINGS: LPI scores were not significantly correlated with decadal growth rates of congregations. The leadership practices of older pastors were significantly different than their younger counterparts, especially for Modeling. However, there were no significant correlations between LPI scores and years in the ministry, or years with their particular ministry (congregation). For founding pastors, their Enabling scores were significantly higher than non-founding pastors; all other LPI scores were not significantly different. The longer the church had been in existence resulted in higher Challenging scores by pastors.

The author notes: "The significance of older ages and higher leadership practices may be a function of the simple art of 'getting the job done.' There may not be a direct mental association with the structure of leadership described by Kouzes and Posner (1987). If they are right in the importance of their five practices...then an individual who desires to affect others will likely discover them in time, based on what works and what does not. The factor that pastors who were not typically associated or trained in Kouzes and Posner's classification of leadership discovered the value of the practices should be very affirming" (p. 76-77).