

TITLE: The Role of Servant Leadership in Church Growth

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OBJECTIVE: To examine the relationship of servant leadership to numerical church growth.

METHODOLOGY: Using a random sampling of churches affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (N=75), 23 participated. Pastors completed the LPI and 10 additional questions designed to measure servant leadership developed by the author. Each pastor has completed at least five years of service. Churches were grouped into five categories based upon congregational growth over a five-year period (1991-1996). Eleven were classified as declining and plateaued congregations and 12 growing congregations. Each pastor was asked to administer the LPI-Observer and constituent version of the author's servant leadership survey to 15 members of his congregation.

KEY FINDINGS: The rank order of leadership practices between pastors from growing and non-growing churches was roughly equivalent, with Enabling and Modeling most frequent and Challenging and Inspiring least frequently engaged in. The greatest absolute difference between pastors by church growth was with Inspiring, with pastors from growing churches more frequently engaged in this behavior ("the pastors of growing churches are particularly skilled at inspiring a shared vision of a better future for the church. This is apparently the most important ability possessed by the pastors of growing churches" p. 157). Challenging and Modeling also showed some differences, with growing congregational leaders more engaged in these behaviors. Enabling and Encouraging behaviors were engaged in about as often by pastors based upon church growth category.