

TITLE: Leadership Formation in Ministerial Education--Part I: Assessment and Analysis of Leadership Traits in Seventh-Day Adventist Pastors in North America

RESEARCHER: Skip Bell and Roger L. Dudley
Andrews University (Berrien Springs, MI)
Unpublished Working Paper: February 2002

OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to discover if leadership practices are a predictor of success in pastoral ministry.

METHODOLOGY: The ministerial director of 23 conferences in the North American Division was asked to list the five pastors in that conference who best fit a list of “pastoral success criteria” and five pastors who would represent average performance under this standard. Sixteen conferences responded, generating 66 pastors meeting the success criteria and 56 judged as being more average. Three lay leaders from each congregation were asked to complete the LPI-Observer about their pastor and return their responses directly (anonymously and confidentially) to the researchers. There were 120 responses for 62 pastors from the “success” group and 79 responses on 47 pastors in the “average” group. The effective (usable) response rate was 59%.

KEY FINDINGS: In all five leadership practices, the average scores of the successful pastors were significantly higher than those reported about the “average” pastors. The authors conclude: “Adventist pastors who meet the success criteria adopted are significantly more likely (.001) to be rated higher on leadership skills than pastors whose performance is considered average” (p. 21), and “it seems logical to assume that using superior leadership practices enables pastors to be more successful in their ministry” (p. 22). Within this sample population, the rank order of the leadership practices was Enabling, Modeling, Challenging, Encouraging, and Inspiring. Results indicated that “when a respondent scored high on leadership they also tended to score high on knowledge-sharing” (p. 91). Both job title and length of service were also positive related to leadership practices.