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Spiritual Leadership in Religious Organizations: A Grounded Theory Study

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a Vietnamese mission theology which requires it to be both evangelical and Vietnamese. The proposed paradigm shift seeks to narrow the gap between the way evangelical mission theology has been practiced and the Vietnamese syncretistic spirituality. Within the larger context of East Asia, the study has navigated the religio-cultural dimensions of Vietnamese spirituality that have hindered the Christian faith being assimilated into the Vietnamese spirituality. The failure of Christian missionaries to identify the simultaneous "resisting" and "assimilating" forces characteristic of Vietnamese spirituality became the reason why Christian contextualization efforts have failed. At the same time, however, it seems promising that contextualization efforts could be possible once the dual force nature of Vietnamese spirituality is recognized, that is, identifying what needs to be resisted and what are the crucial religio-cultural elements or concepts needing to be assimilated. This nature would serve as the lens through which the contextualization processes would review the essential elements of Vietnamese spirituality which can be redeemed for evangelical Christian beliefs and practices, for instance, the concept of God the Dao (the Way) and the Vietnamese extended family perspective for both the Trinitarian relationship and the Vietnamese Christian community of both living people and ancestors. A Vietnamese mission theology must begin with the Vietnamese concept of God the Dao. Acknowledging that the Dao is Christ, the Incarnate God, is the key to unlocking the problem of believing in a God who is alien and strange to the Vietnamese. Any attempt at Christian contextualization in Vietnam, therefore, cannot overlook the dual forces of "resisting and assimilating," and the nature of the Dao of Vietnamese spirituality.

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Research has not yet identified one specific style or set of characteristics that represents overall leadership effectiveness among Christian pastors. This grounded theory qualitative study examined spiritual leadership in religious organizations in order to develop a theoretical model of effective leadership for pastors. The use of grounded theory design was appropriate in order to develop a new theory on pastoral effectiveness, grounded in the data collected from pastors and their congregation members. Twenty pastors and 20 congregational members of various non-denominational Christian churches throughout San Diego County were selected as participants. The data was obtained by querying the perceptions of the pastors and congregation members through the use of an open-ended electronic questionnaire. To ensure the accuracy of coding, data collected through the questionnaires was downloaded into NVivo10 qualitative data analysis software to uncover and analyze trends. The results of this study suggested the presence of five themes related to pastoral effectiveness in non-denominational Christian churches: (a) communication; (b) personal development; (c) business acumen; (d) religious practices; and (e) relationships. A key finding of the present study pointed to the integration of spiritual leadership theory and transformational leadership theory for use in religious organizations. The integration of the components of the two leadership theories may provide pastors with a means and common framework for understanding the process of leadership effectiveness.