

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

FACTORS THAT FOSTER *FOLLOWERSHIP*  
IN SPIRITUAL MENTORING AS DESCRIBED BY SELECTED RESEARCH

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Carrying out pastoral ministry in the context of a senior pastor—intern pastor relationship, I have wanted to investigate the contributing *followership*<sup>1</sup> factors to spiritual mentoring in my study of leadership. This writer has been an intern pastor under the supervision of several senior pastors, but is also presently a senior pastor who has worked along side intern pastors eager to learn from both his leadership and those who, for whatever reason, explicitly or implicitly, indicate by their behavior they have already mastered the practice of pastoral ministry and do not need the extra assistance of the senior pastor.

#### **The Problem**

On a couple of occasions I have been baffled when graduates from college assigned to my supervision chose to neglect or reject my *followership*, but I am quite interested to learn what might attract pre-seminarians to follow my leadership example. Thus, I have elected to research the term *followership* in the context of spiritual mentoring. Especially, since Lynn R. Offermann suggested in my reading that “the role

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<sup>1</sup>This writer has chosen to italicize *followership* to highlight its significance throughout the research paper.

that followers play in the dynamics of leadership has historically been understudied and often even ignored.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to discover factors that foster an attraction between the pastoral intern and the senior pastor; thus, influencing a *followership* model in a spiritual mentoring relationship, specifically pastoral ministry.

### **Significance of Study**

A page from the personal past highlights the value of spiritual mentors. Scanning the horizon of the past, this writer observed teachers, pastors, parents, evangelists, and peers (some probably forgotten) who took risks, provided opportunities, guided in decision-making, sponsored in mission assignments, monitored in practice sessions, trusted, and showed him the way. These mature models influenced others to follow them and/or their examples. Reflecting upon the mature models of adults who invested in those others, it is natural to want to determine what factors might have influenced them to following their leadership.

### **Basic Assumptions**

This researcher assumes that the reader has some working knowledge of the Seventh-day Adventist sponsorship to pastoral ministry. The process of preparation for a pastor to be placed in the field of ministry usually includes studies in one of our liberal

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<sup>1</sup>Lynn R. Offermann, "Leader-Follower Relationships," *Encyclopedia of Leadership* (2004), 2:828.

arts colleges culminating in a theology degree. Near the end of collegiate studies one of the Seventh-day Adventist state conferences negotiates sponsorship of the soon-to-be pastoral graduate. The young pastor will usually be teamed with an older or experienced senior pastor for in-the-field experience. During this field work and before seminary studies, the crucial issue of this paper may or may not occur—certain factors may foster *followership* of the senior pastor's leadership in the senior/intern pastor relationship.

It is also assumed that the reader will have some understanding of mentor/mentee relationships where in the context of pastoral ministry a generally more experienced professional pastor is utilized to model in-the-field education for a younger pastor in the assignment of exposure to ministry events.

### **Limitations**

The scope of this paper is limited to developing an understanding of leader-follower relationships in the pastoral ministry. To range beyond this discipline too far, time and paper will not allow. Unfortunately, nearby seminaries with adequate leadership, *followership*, and pastoral ministry resources here in Northeastern Tennessee were not easily accessible; most resources come from purchased books.

### **Delimitations**

The reader must also recognize that *followership* occurs in multiple disciplines; but, as indicated before, this paper will deal only with senior pastor and intern pastor relationships in spiritual mentoring.

While it has been demonstrated that adult mentoring relationships make significant contributions in the disciplines of business, education, and government,<sup>1</sup> this writer will primarily focus upon *followership* in pastoral ministry. It is to be noted that limited research has been done in the discipline of *followership* as pastor. For this additional reason and personal career growth, this senior pastor is pursuing this study.

### **Definitions**

The coined term *followership* became significant to this researcher while reading Offermann's essay on leader-follower relationships. There he wrote of "needs of a diverse *followership*" and "the importance of active *followership*."<sup>2</sup> Giving credit to Offermann and others that will be cited in this paper, *followership* will be defined as: Leader-follower relationships where an exchange of behaviors, conditions, and values exist that benefit both the leader and follower.

In this present study, the term *spiritual mentoring* has been borrowed from Anderson and Reese's book with the same title.<sup>3</sup> From their citations this definition has been extrapolated, limited again almost solely to the senior pastor and intern pastor relationship: *Spiritual mentoring* is the process of a senior pastor listening to and guiding

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<sup>1</sup>Norman J. Cohen, *Mentoring Adult Learners* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1995), 159-185. See appendices A and B.

<sup>2</sup>Offermann, 832.

<sup>3</sup>Keith Anderson and Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

the life of a younger pastor; and then by example and exhortation, giving the more inexperienced pastor incentive to follow God's direction.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding there are a variety of terms which could define the more experienced and less experienced pastoral team relationship such as a sponsorship by a church body or a supervisory role of the head pastor, this writer will refer most often to the senior pastor being the older and more experienced pastor while the younger and less experienced pastor will be the intern.

### **Methodology**

Moving from the introduction in chapter one, it is the plan in chapter two to give a brief history of leader-follower relations as offered by the review of Offermann.

Subsequently, in chapter three and from Offermann's essay review, the writer would like to glean some perspective from Bible examples of followers like Joshua, Elisha, Timothy, and Jesus from teams which also included great leaders. Attached to this scriptural perspective will be an explanation of a few biblical terms that apply to this study, namely *disciple* and *follower*.

Chapter four includes some fairly common *followership* relationships in society which have connection to this research such as apprentice, athlete, mentee, and protégé. The author acknowledges that these four metaphors of *followership* as partners or team members are not exhaustive, but have extrabiblical definitions which contribute to the value of this paper. These definitions also bring to bear similar themes as their relationships apply to *followership*.

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<sup>1</sup>Anderson and Reese, 61, 101.



Chapter five selects authors that present twenty-first century research on mentoring and specifically *followership*. In selecting the six pairs of religious authors (Anderson and Reese, the Blackabys, Clinton and Stanley, the Hendricks, Johnson and Wilson, and the Joneses) this writer wishes to extract factors that directly or indirectly speak to this understudied field of *followership*.

Chapter six will present conclusions drawn from this study of *followership*. This writer has learned that followers are becoming more influential in their relationship with leaders. Especially interesting will be the exploration of the various factors that foster *followership* in the spiritual mentoring relationship. This power-factor of influence in *followership* may be a new thought for the reader. Contemporary thinking has mentees or followers being more intentional in their relationships with mentors. Other potential factors germane to *followership* that this paper will cover are collaborating or sharing a vision, confronting, empowerment, inspiring, listening, modeling, risk-taking, self-sacrificing, serving, and trusting factors in following a leader.

Some implications that will be probed for insight in senior pastor and intern partnerships include the balance of rational/relational factors of *followership*, the example of co-authoring mentoring materials, and the serendipitous discovery of followers focusing upon Christ rather than themselves.

While acknowledging that much more remains to be revealed on the subject of *followership*, this writer is delighted to discover that the day of inferior followers and superior leaders is over if they are to benefit from a spiritual mentoring relationship.