

The Leadership Role in the Church – in the light of modern Leadership Theories

According to the Icelandic church official goal document the Icelandic clergy work in a “praying, preaching and serving”-church. However, this and other documents about the role of the clergy only have very diffuse guidelines as to how the ministers go about using their skills to gain these goals. In this perspective it is urgent for the Church to learn more about her strengths and weaknesses and get some instruments to estimate what kind of leadership-qualities most effectively improve the quality of the parish work.

In my doctoral work I define these leadership qualities taking notice both of practical theological perspectives and modern theories of organizational leadership. I study how they are related to personality types and vocational qualities on one hand and professional skills on the other. I observe how these qualities function in different parish types (contexts) that are in dialectical relation to how the lay people experience these qualities. The further purpose of my study is to develop an instrument to measure these qualities and to construct educational and training programs for theological students and courses for further education of ministers.

The first step in my analysis was to do some pilot interviews with parish pastors. In order to get a comparative material I used questionnaires for ministers and lay people developed by the German *Institut für natürliche Gemeindeentwicklung* (NCD) which focus on leadership qualities associated with quality work and church growth in parishes. After having identified some quality patterns I will make further deep interviews with leaders to cast a light on special Icelandic circumstances.

The main research question concerns the relation between Church leader’s suitable skills within their context and a successful church growth.