Title: The role of pastoral leadership in church conflict resolution within the Philippines Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Abstract:

PART I: DESCRIPTION

This study is an effort to understand the role of Filipino pastoral leadership in church conflict resolution within the contexts of Filipino cultural leadership values and biblical leadership style. The investigation begins by presenting the case of the Nelson Church and how pastoral leadership solved the church conflict. The study follows the four steps in pastoral theological reflection: description, analysis, interpretation, and action.

PART II: ANALYSIS

Four Filipino cultural values have been examined: social acceptance, reciprocity, kinship leadership, and paternalistic leadership. The study shows that social acceptance, reciprocity, and kinship leadership are primary and foundational social values among Filipinos in their interrelationships. The study shows that these social themes serve as foundation for paternalistic leadership, which is the authoritarian but generous, caring, and loving style of leadership exercised by Filipino leaders like the father. Leaders in Filipino society are known as Ama (father) because they function in the community as protectors, guides, and tutors of their subjects.
Among the indigenous religious organizations the leaders are looked upon as Ama by the followers. These religious leaders were authoritarian, but also exhibited care and love to their followers.

These findings were applied to the Nelson Church, and it was discovered that the church lay leaders exhibited authoritarian leadership style as well as caring and loving attitude towards their church members. Paternalistic leadership appears to have been practiced by the lay leaders in their ministry in the church.

PART III: INTERPRETATION

The study investigated pastoral leadership, its qualities, and its various dimensions. Because Jesus is the model in pastoral leadership, he is the focus of the study. Jesus demonstrated three styles of leadership: authoritarian, consultative, and participatory. The first was rarely practiced by Jesus, but in general Jesus exhibited consultative and participatory styles in his ministry. He is also noted as fatherly, tradition-breaker, and trainer. Further, Jesus demonstrated the values of a caring servant, loving shepherd, and true model in pastoral leadership.

The study also endeavors to demonstrate what pastoral leadership can do to solve church conflicts. The Biblical approach to handling church conflicts and the goals of resolving them were examined. Conflicts among members should be settled immediately in order to prevent serious conflicts that may arise. One goal of church conflict resolution is harmony among the members; the other is to glorify the name of God. Finally, the findings show that in conflict resolution in the church paternalistic leadership is a major factor.
PART IV: ACTION

Here is provided a synthesis of the study and recommendations on solving, if not to preventing, church conflicts. The synthesis shows that the Filipino paternalistic style of leadership is enriched by the pastoral leadership style of Jesus.

The qualities of Jesus’ leadership like being fatherly, a tradition-breaker, a trainer, and being servant, shepherd, and model may enrich the Filipino paternalistic style of pastoral leadership. Paternalistic leadership helped solve the conflict in the Nelson Church.

Among the recommendations on the resolution style, are a powerful aside from exhibiting a paternalistic leadership style, are a powerful church prayer group and a consistent visitation program. When these two programs are properly implemented by a paternalistic pastor leader, the church may avoid conflicts and enjoy a vibrant witnessing program.

The investigation concludes that a Filipino pastor leader who exercises paternalistic leadership style should be fully aware of his own psycho-socio-cultural leadership orientation and biblical leadership style. Full consciousness of motifs, especially paternalistic leadership, may lead to better and more satisfying results in church conflict resolution among Filipino Adventist churches.