




## Chapter 3

# A practical theological reflection on the leadership of the pastors in the township of Mangaung.

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### 1. Introduction

A township in the context of South Africa is a human settlement built during the apartheid era on the boundaries of towns and cities for previously disadvantaged communities. It is characterised as an urban human settlement that was often underdeveloped, racially divided, and reserved for non-white people. The apartheid government established townships according to the Group Areas Act of 1950 when non-white people were removed from the suburbs designated as ‘whites only’ settlement areas. Townships still exist in the contemporary South African democratic era. There are some developments that the South African democratic government tried to implement, but corruption and poor service delivery hindered and delayed many of the developmental projects in the township. As a result, the current situation in democratic South Africa still depicts townships as under-developed areas that settle most black, coloured, and Indian people. The majority of the citizens in the township were settled according to their race and ethnic groups. Churches were also divided according to race and ethnic groups, though in democratic South Africa, some churches united to form a multicultural denomination. However, some of the congregations in the township still reflect the relics of apartheid

and are dominated by specific ethnic groups and under-resourced. Presently, township churches in Mangaung<sup>1</sup> have black people as the majority and coloured people. Mangaung township is situated in the south-eastern part of Bloemfontein, the capital city of the Free State province. The city of Bloemfontein<sup>2</sup> has more than half a million population, and many of its residents are black people who primarily reside in the township of Mangaung.

Definitions of leadership are numerous, but how one understands leadership influences its practice and impact on those on the receiving end of such leadership. The role of leadership in a Christian context can be classified into the contemporary and ultimate roles of leadership (Plueddemann, 2009:159, 172). Often, the ultimate role of leadership is ignored or undermined, thus exposing leadership to all faults and errors of focusing on the needs of the self-serving leaders. The practice of congregational leadership tends to take influence strategies and the impact of leadership for granted. Many pastors are not clear on the appropriate influence strategies to use within their congregational context; hence there is no appropriate impact from leadership in the congregations; instead, there is a concern about leadership and congregations that are unable to bring about a profound change in the community. For example, congregational leadership has a mandate to facilitate spiritual transformation (Ramphela, 2008:18) of its congregation members and beyond. However, many pastors are yet to learn how to achieve that kind of transformation. As a result of this failure to understand their mandate, congregational leaders and their congregations have a long way to practise responsible involvement in their communities. This chapter will explore and reflect on how leadership in the township congregations understands and experiences leadership and its impact in

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1 Mangaung is a South Sotho name for place of cheetahs. During the apartheid era and even in the current democratic South Africa, Mangaung is mainly a human settlement (near Bloemfontein) for black, and coloured people. Before the municipal elections of 2011, Mangaung was a local municipality under the Motheo District Municipality in the Free State province. After the 2011 municipal elections Mangaung became part of Mangaung Metro Municipality within the Motheo District Municipality which initially served towns like Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu but now serves other towns like Dewetsdorp, Wepener, Van Stadensrus and Soutpan.

2 Bloemfontein is an Afrikaans name for fountain of flowers

their congregations and community of Mangaung township (Bloemfontein). The chapter will use qualitative empirical data to address the above aim, and the hermeneutical phenomenological approach will be implemented in this research.

The chapter contributes to the decolonisation of researched knowledge in the sense that it focuses on the context of South Africa and Africa for the purpose of learning, and research. It also incorporates the local epistemic perspectives, knowledge and thinking from the African continent and place them in critical interaction with the currently hegemonic Eurocentric scientific knowledge.

In this chapter, the researcher views the participants and himself as co-creators of knowledge; hence, collected data was shared, and discussed with the participants in this research. As a result, this chapter contributes to engaged research because it incorporates reciprocal community engagement practices into the discovery, teaching, integration, application, development, and mobilisation of knowledge to the mutual benefit of community and academic interests. This chapter is the product of the partnership of the pastors in the townships and some academics from the UFS, Faculty Theology and Religion. The partnership started a few years ago and grew to a township congregation research project which used mixed methodology to collect data. In this chapter, I will share some of the qualitative data collected.

The following discussion will focus on theological reflection on the Africa-centred leadership, definition of leadership, role, influence, and impact on the community. Then there will be a discussion on methodology and empirical data and a conclusion and recommendation.

## **2. Understanding of Africa-centred leadership**

The participants in this study identified themselves as black in terms of South African race classification and African in their culture, and their age range between 35 and 60 years. Some of them lived and experienced life in apartheid South Africa and as Africans they observed, listened, lived and experienced the narratives of African cosmology, culture and African struggles with life. I believe that participants' leadership as pastors

was practiced and influenced by the African context. Hence, this section discusses the understanding of Africa-centred leadership. Khoza (2006:109) describes Africa-centred leadership as leadership practise putting Africa at the centre of its existence and consciousness. It is a leadership that strives to genuinely comprehend the history, contemporary and future of Africa and its people. Furthermore, it is a leadership that contemplates about the solutions to the struggles of African people and celebration of the flourishing of life of African people. It is the leadership that aspires to revive and adopt the traditional African leadership tenets that are described as strongly communal, collaborative, consultative, with a character of integrity, responsibility and honour (Olajubu, 2002:54; Obiakor, 2004:405). Hence, in an ideal traditional African leadership context important decisions were made in consensus and consultation with others with the purpose that the implementation of the decision would honour and respect the protocol and human dignity of those affected by the decision.

In an Africa-centred leadership context, leadership is understood as a commitment to a service to the people either in the form of a clan, tribe or community (Masango, 2002:708). According to Khoza (2006:11), leadership is a collective endeavour to pursue group survival, human rights, and claims. Based on the above, I understand the leadership in Africa-centred context as a relational activity that influences one another to an action of service by mobilising individuals to achieve the common goal that benefits the community, and by applying available traditional African tenets, philosophies and concepts of development.

The nature of leadership in an Africa-centred context has the following characteristics. Leadership is spiritual because the leader is understood as appointed by, and representing the spiritual being belonging to the African spiritual realm (Rukuni, 2009:20). In the context of Christianity, a Christian leader is understood to represent the Triune God. Leadership in an Africa-centred context is human-centred, communal, and collegial (Rukuni, 2009:48, 64). This implies that traditional African leadership's primary goal is about human development towards its best potential through interaction with and cooperation of a team of leaders. It is a leadership influenced by a philosophy of *Ubuntu* that aspires to respect recognition, and development of the other in the context of a community. Leadership in an Africa-

centred context is relational, in that it involves establishing networks and relationships for the purpose of achieving a common goal and promoting quality human values (Bolden & Kirk, 2009:81). Lastly, leadership in an Africa-centred context is interpretive, as it is useful for engendering hope for the future. This interpretive aspect helps African leadership to be creative and innovative amid challenges because new challenges cannot always be solved with old and outdated approaches.

The leadership in an Africa-centred context has various roles and a few that can be mentioned are as follows: According to Mbigi (2005:1, 2), the main focus of African leadership is the transformation of the community and social institutions. Mbigi (2005:7-15) maintains that the transformation of community members involves helping them to appreciate beauty in themselves, develop self-understanding, and understand the history and context in which they exist. According to Mbigi (2005:1), leadership in Africa is responsible for enabling the development and progress of an individual, society, and institutions. In the context of Christianity, pastors as leaders in their congregations have a responsibility to empower their lay leaders in responsible involvement in their community and demonstrate it themselves by being involved as individuals.

### **3. Shifts in the definition of leadership.**

Leadership is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. There are as many definitions of leadership as people who try to define leadership. To demonstrate the complexity of leadership, Bass and Bass (2008:15-22) classify the definitions of leadership into three categories. First, the leader-centric definition of leadership is a one-way influence effect attributable to the leader as a person (Yukl, 2002:12). The emphasis is on the leader's personality, attribution, or the leader as a symbol of the group process. Examples of definitions in this group include leadership as an ability to lead (Northouse, 2012:40). The other one is that leadership is a skill to induce compliance from the followers (Stogdill, 1974:9; Northouse, 2012:5). The last one is that leadership is a form of persuasion from a leader to the followers to attain specific goals (Stogdill, 1974:11; Northouse, 2012:5). The best biblical example of a leader in this first category is Saul (1 Sm

9:2; 10:23) because Saul's charisma, physique, and war skills made him an appropriate leader.

Second, Bass and Bass (2008:15-22) define leadership as an effect or a cause of some effect. Leadership, in this instance, uses authority to mobilise the followers to positive goals; therefore, leadership seems to initiate the process, but the followers respond naturally. The definitions of leadership in this category include leadership as an instrument of goal achievement (Stogdill, 1974:12). The definitions in this category emphasise the instrumental value of leadership in the functioning of a group or organisation. For example, leadership is a source, initiative, effect, or facilitation of group interaction (Stogdill, 1974:14). The emphasis is on the resultant interaction process because of the acknowledged presence of leadership. The best biblical example is Nehemiah (Neh 2), who had a passion for rebuilding the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and was mobilised by his inner will to serve God and change the situation of the citizens of Jerusalem. Nehemiah initiated the process of rebuilding the city walls and persuaded the people to co-operate with him. He guided them until the goal was achieved.

Third and lastly, leadership is the interaction between a leader and a follower. Leadership is assumed as a two-way process: Leadership is a quality relationship of influence (Northouse, 2012:5). Leadership is a reciprocal influence process between a leader and the follower (Yukl, 2002:15). The biblical example in this category is Paul and Timothy (1 Tm 1:2, 2 Tm 3:10). Paul's deep quality relationship as a father (1 Tm 1:2) and pacesetter (2 Tm 3:10-11) to Timothy influences his leadership to be mutual and transforming.

According to Wright (2009:2, 3), the above shift from the leader-centric definition of leadership to leadership as an interaction between a leader and follower has brought some positive leadership developments, particularly within congregations. The positive developments are; that the practice of leadership as an interaction locates leadership in the relations between a leader and a follower. Wright (2009:3) argues that the further benefit of leadership as an interaction between a leader and a follower is the broadening of leadership practice, as everyone can exercise leadership and influence people and situations in their own context. Lastly, Wright says that the other benefit is that the burden of leadership is removed from an

individual and shared by all involved in leadership practise; that is, both leaders and followers can share leadership responsibilities.

But, how does the above discussion relate to Africa? The African leadership principles of the precolonial African era reflect a communal, collaborative, consultative practice of leadership with a character of integrity, responsibility and honour (Obiakor, 2004:405). However, many of these African leadership values were compromised during colonial times; hence, postcolonial African leadership is struggling to restructure and develop its leadership (Kludze, 2000:27; Obiakor, 2004:408). There is a need to restore Africa to itself and shift from exclusive, self-serving and despotic leadership promoted by colonialism. Bolden and Kirk (2005:8) try to address this kind of need in their empirical study on leadership in Africa, where they share the findings that indicate a shift from leadership experience that is negative, exclusive and inhibiting towards leadership that is embracing a more affirmative, inclusive and “life giving” view. In the context of the above, African leadership in the precolonial era was never understood in the context of leader-centric terms but was relational, spiritual, human-centred, communal, and collegial (Rukuni, 2009:48, 64; Bolden & Kirk, 2009:81).

### *3.1 Ultimate and contemporary role of leadership*

Plueddemann (2009:161) describes the ultimate purpose of leadership is to bring people into a whole relationship with their Creator. Furthermore, Plueddeman (2009:160) discusses the ultimate role of leadership as knowing God through intimate relations with Him. To glorify God with our everyday life actions and decisions that we make: to love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind. Plueddemann (2009:158) argues that the ultimate role of leadership is spiritual and tends to influence universal principles of leadership. The current role of leadership is influenced by culture, ultimate purpose, worldview, methods, and leadership practice. Plueddeman (2009:174, 178, 179) discusses the current role of leadership as taking the initiative, helping people to grow into their God-given potential, helping the body of Christ to be mature, and so on.

In addition to the current role of leadership, Branson (2011:55-57) classifies leadership roles into three. First, it is the relational goal of

leadership which focuses on all human connections and interactions. These connections could be to God, the inner self, the community, and nature. Secondly, the interpretive goal of leadership is about guiding believers to create meaning from both texts and contexts. By texts, is meant scripture, confessional documents, and literature. By contexts, it means the world at large, the African context, and the South African context. Third and lastly, the implemental goal is about guiding practices, initiating activities, and forming and reforming structures that will help to embody the gospel in leadership's interpretive and relational work. According to Branson (2011:56), the implemental work involves initiating activities such as worship service, governance, and training on mission or faith.

African leadership in the precolonial era was spiritual (Rukuni, 2009:20), because the leader was understood as appointed by, and representing the spiritual being belonging to the African spiritual realm. Through dreams or visions granted by the ancestral spirits, one could be appointed to leadership. Consequently, the leader functioned as intermediary during sacrifices to the ancestral spirits. Furthermore, in the precolonial era, African leadership's primary interest was about human development; hence, in its everyday responsibilities it serves human beings towards their best potential through interaction with, and co-operation of a team of leaders. In light of the above practicing leadership that integrates knowledge of ultimate purpose of leadership is not new to African leadership but was a norm in the African leadership during the precolonial Africa era.

### *3.2 Influence of leadership*

The essence of leadership influences may yield either commitment by followers or indifferent compliance and resistance (Yukl, 2002:141). Biblical strategies used to facilitate influence include, firstly, coercion (Deut. 6:6-9), whereby threats and force are used to implement a decision. The second one is persuasion (2 Cor. 5:11), which implies winning over the follower to support the common goal. The third one is a set of examples (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; 1 Tim. 4:12) about offering a set of behaviours to be emulated by followers. The last one involved a mutual exchange (Jn 6:26), whereby one follows a leader because of the material benefits that they derive from them. However, persuasion through the Word of God and personal behaviour,

which reflects imitating the life of Christ, is regarded as the main instrument of influence in Christian leadership (Wright, 2009:4).

Considering the above, leadership in the precolonial Africa was profoundly influenced by *Ubuntu* philosophy and belief in the spiritual world, which influenced its communication and actions. In its communication it was striving to preserve relationship and cooperations by communicating indirectly, using intermediary and delay decision making if it will offend others (Plueddeman, 2009:79-82). In terms of its actions it was striving to demonstrate moral authority, guide communities spiritually, and safeguard cultural rituals.

### 3.3 Church and mission

The mission of the Triune God is a calling and the mandate of the congregation and involves witnessing the coming of the kingdom of God (Guder, 2000:66). Witnessing in mission entails spiritual and societal aspects derived from the mission of the Triune God, which is spiritual and involves societal engagement (Du Toit, 2005:263). The spiritual aspect involves preaching the gospel within and beyond the borders of the congregation. Societal engagement implies responsible involvement in transforming human and societal institutions globally. Witnessing God's coming kingdom can be achieved individually and on a corporate level of the congregation. Witnessing in mission is concerned with evangelising and transforming both an individual and the entire societal order to bring all into a deeper life with the Triune God (Strawbridge, 1991:63). Hence, one can also say that the mission is transformational to a personal situation and societal structures (Stetzer & Rainer, 2010:3). It involves concrete action against injustices suffered by humanity in society and witnessing against societal institutions that perpetuate those injustices (Kritzinger, 2013:2).

How church practises societal engagement: Swart (2006) adapted Korten's model of societal development to congregations to analyse how congregations engaged the societal challenges throughout history. Swart (2006:98) argues that the first strategic approach used by congregations was a welfare approach. In this approach, churches volunteer and act to provide immediate relief to an emergency in the form of a war or a natural

disaster. In contrast, the relief provided can be food, clothes, healthcare, and temporary shelter. The second strategic development approach used by congregations was small-scale community development (Swart, 2006:100). This strategy focuses on community self-help actions in various sectors of the economy, culture, or politics to provide some skills for the sustainability of life. The third strategic development approach is sustainable development (Swart, 2006:101, 102). In this development strategy, the focus is beyond the local community, and the church facilitates the change of dysfunctional policies and institutions to benefit those who are affected on a broader scale. The fourth and last strategic development is people-centred (Swart, 2006:104). This approach aims for human growth in the context of values such as peace, justice, and inclusiveness. This human growth involves striving towards self-reliance and sustainable development through the systemic, effective management of resources, complete system change, and a challenge of the causes of injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment.

#### **4. Methodology**

The empirical data discussed here is from individual interviews with the pastors from Mangaung townships. The researcher is one of the founding members of one of the ministers fraternal within the townships around Bloemfontein. Through this minister fraternal the researcher has conducted many workshops on the role of Christian leadership and congregations in the community. The researcher has an experience of more than five years of relationships and interactions with the pastors within the townships around Bloemfontein. Purposeful sampling was used to select the five participants in this study. The participants were known to the researcher as ministers with more than five years' ministerial experience of leadership in the township congregations, active in the township community and participated in the workshops that were organised and conducted by the researcher. Participants were all male, and one was from a mainline denomination (P1), the other from a charismatic background (P2), and three were from African Independent churches (P3, P4, P5). Confidentiality of the participants was maintained using a code: P1 to refer to Participant One, P2 to refer to Participant Two, and so on. Their age ranged from 35 years to 60 years

and according to race classification in South Africa, the pastors regarded themselves as black. Their qualifications in theological training ranged from higher certificate to Honours degree.

Data collection was performed through oral interviews of the participants. Observation of participants' body movements, language, facial expression was undertaken during the interviews. Data analysis was conducted through deductive and inductive coding of the collected data. Deductive coding used were definition of leadership, role of leadership, influence of leadership and so on. The inductive coding derived from the data was on shift in leadership definition, ultimate purpose of leadership and so on.

In this study, the hermeneutical phenomenological approach is used to analyse the context, data from the participants, observations and the literature. According to Guillen (2019:222), the hermeneutical phenomenological approach is about explaining and interpreting the various aspects of the lived experience for the purpose of understanding the meaning and the value of this experience. In application of this approach, I discussed from the literature the conceptual analyses of definitions of leadership, role and influence of leadership. The purpose is to acknowledge or discard preconceived ideas that may hinder the meaning of lived experience. Second, I discussed the empirical data collected from the lived experience of the pastors. Empirical data was collected through individual interviews of pastors and observation. Third, I will reflect on the data collected from lived experiences to give meaning, and lastly, I will give more in-depth interpretation on the reflection on the lived experienced of the pastor about leadership, its role and influence in the community.

This study is part of practical theology, focusing on ordained leadership and its role in the church and society. Ganzevoort (2009:3-7) says that practical theology is a hermeneutics of lived religion, and Ikenye (2010:38) understands practical theology as a theological discipline descriptive of African lived experience. In this chapter, I take practical theology as critical, hermeneutical, theological reflection on the lived religious experience of the believer in the praxis of the church and society.

## 5. Discussion of the empirical data

The following discussion will be about discussion of the empirical data and I will engage it as follows: participants understanding of the definition of leadership, the role of the leadership in congregations, the influence strategies of the congregational leadership, Congregational leadership role in the community, participants’ view on the best leadership for the township congregations and then is the discussion on the participants’ inspirational stories. The last one is an interpretation of the results and conclusions.

### 5.1 Leadership definition

**Table 1:** Participants’ definition of leadership.

Q1	What is your understanding of leadership in your congregation ?
P1	“Leadership is about being a servant who is serving the people. It is part and parcel of how one acts.” A leader as a shepherd must lead, be present, and offer spiritual protection.
P2	“Leadership in the congregation, according to my understanding, is that it is of the nature of serving the people of God ... having a character of a servant and having a character of Christ to serve your people and to show them [congregation members] the way to Christ that’s in my understanding.”
P3	“Leadership in the congregation is about giving direction.”
P4	“My understanding of leadership in the congregation is that I must lead by example as a leader, and then the congregation must, in other words, there must be changes.”
P5	“As a leader, one needs to have the ability to address people properly and respectfully.”

Most of the participants (P1, P2, P4) defined their leadership understanding by using leadership metaphors like servant, shepherd, and exemplary leadership. Other participants (P3 and P5) define leadership from a leader-centric perspective. In light of the above definitions of leadership, some participants (P1, P5) elaborated on their understanding of leadership by saying that leadership involves doing. That is how one acts, behaves or treats

others. Leadership must lead people in a right way and not impose on them (P3). According to P3, right-way refers to listening to and reading the word of God to obtain the guidance, listening to the Holy Spirit to give guidance and lead one. Leadership is not about the one being taken into the hierarchy (P2) but having the character of a servant and Christ. The character of servant and Christ involves meekness, humility, the attitude to serve, and love (P2).

What is important to note is P1, who reports that as a leader, he is part of a congregation and belongs to a ward as a member; therefore, before he is a leader or pastor, he considers himself a member of the church so that he has the feeling of a member before he becomes a leader. In short, the meaning of the above is that before one becomes a church leader, he belongs to and is a member of the church. Therefore one has to have the experience of being a church member before becoming a church leader. Furthermore, P5 remarked that leadership is a calling and sacrificial because he left his things and accepted the calling from God to serve in his church.

“But because of having people [congregation members as followers], I leave my things. Then I help this guy [congregation member who is ill]. You start with the people first and you, me, I am the last one... my calling in this church is not easy like someone who came, and came here in church with us, no it is not like that. Because I was very very sick before, it is when I received this calling.” P5.

## *5.2 Role of the pastors in the leadership of the congregation.*

Leadership has various roles in the congregation and community and participants were asked the following question: Describe your role in the congregation that you have especially as part of your leadership? (Q2) In response to describing the role of their leadership in the congregation, P1 said that his role in the congregation is to facilitate the decision-making process through participation, allowing others to give their input and collaborative practice. The above-mentioned role of leadership brings about benefits such as achieving a collective decision, giving freedom and space to other leaders to express their views without looking at the pastor as the one with the first and the last word in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, it is to avoid a gap between a pastor and other leaders and ensure that no one is left behind in the process of decision making.

P2 indicated his role in the congregation as multi-dimensional and gave it as:

“My role as a pastor in the congregation is that of giving inspiration, that of giving counselling to the people of God, giving guidance, showing them the direction and most importantly preaching the word of God, preaching the Bible and you know with the hope of as a Shepherd they would listen to me as I listen to Christ they would imitate me as I imitate Christ that is my understanding.”

According to P3, his role is to guide to the right path and, more importantly, is to be an overseer and prefers to work with other leaders who form the church council to make a collective decision. His goal is that though he is not the Messiah and does not like to order people around or take decisions alone, he wants to leave a legacy of a well-lived life. P4 mentioned that his leadership role is to ensure that no one of his congregation members are left behind and assists others in performing their ministry. Lastly, P5 reported that his leadership role is to work according to the church's constitution and consult with leaders in the upper hierarchy of the church for further clarity on matters that are not clear to be performed in the church.

### *5.3 The influence and impact of pastors' leadership on the congregation's ministry.*

In this section, participants were asked to discuss the influence and impact of their leadership in their congregation's ministry (Q3). From analyses of the data, the participants' leadership influenced their congregations by words, actions, and relationships. According to P1, his influence as a leader is based on conduct and behaviour. P1 believes that conduct and behaviour influence people in how they must view one as a leader and accept whatever one directs them and the directions one gives as a leader. The influence that people derive from him is taking cue from the way that he can conduct himself and his relationship with them as congregants.

Furthermore, P1 mentioned that the way that a leader conducts himself amongst and away from congregation members is crucial to influencing others. Hence, he advises that relationship with the congregation members must be of nature and that there is a boundary as a leader. Lastly, P1 raised other points of importance when he discussed the distinction between spiritual leadership and political leadership. He acknowledged that spiritual leadership emphasises elements of spirituality and high ethical standard; hence he believes that a spiritual leader must influence congregation members to be like their leader.

P2, in his discussion on the influence of his leadership, said that he influences his congregation through preaching and setting an example. “My preaching is not just only a simple talk, but it also leads by example” (P2). Concerning P3, one can derive from the data that he influences his congregation through his collective leadership style that allows input, participation, and sharing of responsibilities in the process of decision-making.

Concerning the impact of their leadership, the participants mentioned the following. P1 understands the impact of leadership as the outcome of what one relays to the congregation members and the product of what one derives from the leadership ministry itself. In his understanding, the impact of leadership is consonant with whether one’s leadership is on the right path. He realises the impact of his leadership from the reflections made by the congregation members, whether positive or negative. According to P1, the more positive reflection from the congregation members is an indication that he is on the right path. As a result, P1 remarked that the impact he wants to see is that of people appreciating one’s presence as a leader and the spiritual protection that one provides as a shepherd.

Other participants, like P2, indicated that his leadership impact is recognised in his leadership ministry, igniting the love of God to congregation members whom he leads through his example and preaching. P3 reported that his leadership impact could be recognised by introducing new ideas to the ministry like introducing a brass band, exemplary leadership and healing services have brought about the church’s growth. Lastly, P5 mentioned that his leadership impact could be seen in the change

experienced in the leadership and congregation members within and beyond the congregation.

“I see changes in myself as a leader and in the congregation. There is more life in my congregation since they started being under my leadership. For example, we have people who came here with mental illness. They became healed with our prayers and support. Due to our traditional church, we pray for and heal people according to their culture and tradition.” (P5).

#### 5.4 *Role of congregational leadership in the community?*

On the question (Q4), “what role does your congregational leadership play in the community?”, participants indicated that their congregational leadership role in the community starts with observing and analysing what is happening and what can be performed in the community. The outreach in the community targets the members of the church first, then an immediate and distant community from the church (P1; P2). The participants in the outreach to the community are the pastors and the congregation members. The kind of help that is provided to community members is spiritual and material assistance. The following table is about the kind of assistance offered by the pastors through their congregations.

**Table 2:** Community projects of the participants.

<b>P1</b>	Food and clothes Raised funds for poverty alleviation projects Offered job opportunities to congregation members and those beyond Provided free pastoral care to bereaved families and those in need
<b>P2</b>	Provided food and clothes Offered employment opportunities and entrepreneurial skills
<b>P3</b>	Food and clothes Engaged drug abusers, gangsterism, gender-based violence, parents, and child relations projects Deployed ministers in police stations and schools to assist with counselling and prayers

<b>P4</b>	Food and clothes Evangelisation Visited prison inmates
<b>P5</b>	Healing ministry to members of the church and beyond Assisting with funeral services to members of the church and beyond

P1 sees himself as a spiritual leader and father of his congregation and community members around the church. As a result, people look to him with the expectation to assist them in their needs. Hence, after his in-depth observation and analyses of the possible needs of the people in and around his congregation ministry, he devised means of how he may provide relevant help to those in need. P2 says that his church has a slogan, “Transforming community through hope, love, restoration, and empowerment.” They use that slogan to inspire their congregation members to engage in their context. P3 uses his networks like Mangaung Minister’s Fraternal (MMF), Motheo Faith-Based Organisation Network (MFBON), partnership with the Department of Social Development, the South African Religious Forum (SARF) and Christian Network in the Free State (CNFS) to engage the community around his church and beyond. Hence, in general, his ministry impacts his congregation members, the community of Mangaung and beyond.

### 5.5 *Towards best leaders for their congregation and their community?*

This question was asked to find out from the participants, what kind of leadership would be most appropriate for the township ministry in Mangaung? (Q5). In response, P1 provided an elaborate discussion on how we may strive for the best leadership in the township congregation ministry:

- leaders must listen to those whom they lead without belittling them.
- Leaders must avoid an attitude of we know it all, making leaders lose the battle in leadership.
- The practice of collective leadership is essential compared to leadership that sees itself as Alpha and Omega.

- Leaders must use the skills of those whom they lead for empowerment and collaboration with each other.
- Members of the congregation do have confidence in their leaders; therefore, leaders must trust members of the congregation with what they have and allow them to share their skills for the sake of the congregation's growth.

The response of P2 to the question was:

“I think Christ is the great model of what leadership should look like more especially in our days whereby pastoral care has been taken to be so much glamorous and so much sophisticated whereby it is not easy nowadays to approach a pastor is not easy now to see a Man of God and seek help. I guess Christ should be our best model of what leadership in the context of church should look like, and it should represent meekness, humanity, the attitude to serve the attitude to love our community. Secondly being able to instil the principle of what congregation should look like from the content of the New Testament model as a body unified, as a system that works together not against each other. I think if we can uphold those principles, we would have great leadership ever in our lifetime.”

In summary, P2 stated that the best leadership for the township congregations is the leadership that models Christ as the leader. It is the leadership that is approachable, and reflect meekness, humility and attitude to serve and love. Lastly, it is a leadership that leads the congregation to live by the principles of the New Testament church, which are striving for unity of the body of Christ and working together.

P3 responded by saying that the best leadership for the township congregations must be hands-on, have servant character, humble and not obsessed with titles. Leadership in the township congregation must “*Be hands-on, just to be hands-on. They have to humble themselves you know, they have to be servants. Forget about being a leader, or being an archbishop, or bishop or reverent or pastor whatever forget about that (inaudible word).*” (P3). According to P4, one needs to follow up and look after or visit those who are no longer coming to church. Lastly, P5 reported that as a leader, one should look at one's needs and pay attention to the needs of one's congregation members and help them where one can. In conclusion, as a

leader, he said to give people free spiritual services and not be concerned with their money to pay for one's service.

### 5.6 *Inspirational stories of leadership in the congregation.*

Pastors in the township ministry experienced enormous and complex challenges that ultimately may demotivate them in ministry. As a result, we asked the participants the following: Are there any crucial or inspirational stories of leaders in the congregation that you can tell? The purpose was to find out what keeps them going or inspires them when it gets tough in the ministry. In response, P1 mentioned that he is inspired by what he learnt from his spiritual father: humility, to be grounded as a leader and that people must pick something out of one. As a result, this made him be a resilient leader and patient, and wait on God to direct him without pushing things. P2 reported that in his church building project, he learnt that performing a joint project with congregation members led to an outstanding level of enthusiastic sharing, a positive vibe, and incredible motivation to the congregation. Secondly, P2 mentioned that when *"the leaders in the church take ownership of things in our church we do not just only lead from the pastor, but we lead across whether a pastor is there or not the [worship] service [is] going through smoothly [and] the message of the gospel."* This means, for P2, what inspired him is his congregation members taking ownership of the ministry in the congregations when he is not around busy with other matters.

Other participants related that their inspiration is received from the humility of their parents (P3), seeing leaders whom he had trained being progressive in the ministry (P4), and seeing miracles and people being healed in his ministry (P5).

## 6. Interpretation of the results

The leadership definitions of some of the participants (P3 and P5) reflect more of a leader-centric understanding of leadership. Whilst an in-depth reading of the data, other participants (P1, P2), reflect a shift in the understanding and practice of leadership. This shift is from leader-centric understanding and practise of leadership to collaborative, collective, and participative leadership. This can be attested by the participants mentioning

how they relate to their congregational members and allow participation in decision-making process in order to reach a collective decision. African leadership is well known to be hierarchical and authoritative. However, all the participants are African and often emphasised that their leadership must be interactive, participatory, and collective in decision-making. The participants emphasised this despite some of them having a hierarchical leadership structure in their churches and expected to be authoritative according to their church structure and followers. The impact of this shift in leadership understanding and practise is seen in how participants emphasise the significance of sharing leadership responsibilities, consulting before making decisions, utilising the skills of others in the ministry, and avoiding dominance and lording it over others.

One can realise from the interviews of the participants that most of them (P1, P2, P4) believe that leadership does not rest with one person - the pastor - but in the team of leaders. One can learn from the data that the identity of leadership influences the actions of the leadership of the participants. For example, participants showed affinity with a servant, exemplary, shepherd and modelling Christ in their leadership practices. As a result, because of adherence to such leadership frameworks, their leadership practice demonstrated humility, servanthood, participation and modelling of the behaviour of a servant and Christ. The other point that can be derived from the participants' data is that leadership is not about titles or positions; actually, they warned that one should not be obsessed with titles but must be humble and serve the people of God. The last point we can deduct from the data concerning understanding of leadership is what one has observed very often amongst the pastors from many emerging churches, which tend to be controlling and owning people in their congregations as if they belong to them, forgetting that they belong to God. However, we learned from the participants that before pastors are appointed to congregational leadership, they belong to and are church members. Therefore, their relations with congregation members must be that of humility, not belittling or lording it over others.

The role of leadership can be classified as a current role and ultimate role of leadership. The majority of the participants focused on the current role of their leadership, like serving, facilitating change, guiding, counselling, and

leading humanity to the right path. It is important to note that the service of leadership is mainly directed to humanity or congregation members and those beyond the borders of the congregation, not necessarily leaders themselves. Humanity is viewed by the participants as people of God, thus meaning that they serve God when they serve people in their congregation and community. Leadership of the participants reflected interpretive, implemental, and relational roles of leadership. For example, interpretive role is applied during the counselling sessions and preaching of the gospel to give meaning to life, and the implemental role is demonstrated by the way that participants oversee and guide the decision-making process in their congregations. The implemental role of leadership is not the pastor's responsibility alone but the shared responsibility of every leader in the congregation of the participants. The relational role of leadership, which involves building networks and relationships with other human beings, government institutions, organisations and fraternal, was used by other participants to facilitate decision-making and taking participants' leadership roles to other levels. For example, P1 mentioned how important the relationship of trust and confidence can help facilitate the decision-making process in his congregation. P3 is a leader of different minister fraternals and non-governmental organisations. He used these organisations to enhance his ministry to impact various community levels in Mangaung, Province and National. Few participants mentioned the ultimate purpose of leadership: serving God with the whole of his heart (P2), worshipping and trusting in God (P3). Considering the above paragraph, future studies within the township congregations need to conduct further research on what kind of change is brought by the township congregational leadership to its members and those beyond the borders of the congregations. Participants (P2, P3, P4) mentioned change brought by their leadership practice within their congregations and beyond. The change brought by the participants' leadership on an individual level is igniting God's love and healing of congregational members. On a congregational level is congregational growth experienced and on a community level is mostly addressing immediate needs and providing some assistance on a small-scale level. Only one participant demonstrated the ability of his leadership to contribute beyond local context to provincial and national level of South Africa.

Despite the positive impact of the participants' leadership in the community, there is a need to find out more about what entails change in individuals and society and what its impact is on the township community. Lastly, the ultimate role of leadership is essential to be emphasised amongst leaders both in congregations and beyond; hence, in-depth research in the future is essential.

The participants' leadership used the following influence strategies: words of inspiration and preaching (persuasion), conduct (being exemplary in behaviour), quality relationships and collective leadership styles. Recent research indicates that pastors as leaders and congregations in Africa still enjoy the trust and the confidence of the communities in their vicinity (Ngaruiya, 2017:29). If both pastors and congregations could make use of such benefits in Africa, there is a possibility of profound change and the well-being of African communities can be facilitated. It is motivating to realise that the participants still insist on good leadership ethics, inspirational words and proclamation of the gospel to influence their congregation members and those beyond. It is essential to note the remark of P1 that as a leader, what one achieves amongst congregation members and away from them influences them to accept or reject one's leadership. In short, one can put it in other words, saying what one achieves in private has an impact on the integrity of one's public leadership. If used appropriately and with deliberate intention, the influence strategies mentioned above can potentially and enormously impact the followers of township congregational leadership.

Some essential criteria were highlighted by the participants in order for them to have relevant and responsible involvement in the community. First, one has to observe intently and analyse the context and community in the vicinity of the congregation. Second, a leader has to know that communities around the congregations have some expectations from one as the congregational leader. Third, outreach programmes have to benefit first members of the congregations, then those outside and beyond the congregation. Fourth and lastly, involvement in the community has to offer spiritual services like pastoral counselling and prayer and material assistance like food, clothes, and employment skills. Analyses of the data indicated that the leadership impact of the participants in their communities

starts on the level of addressing basic needs; then, to P1 and P2, leadership ministry functions on the second level of small-scale development where the skill of employment are provided for the sake of survival. For P3, leadership ministry, through its links with the minister fraternals or NGOs, has an influence on the local, regional and national levels, that is, Mangaung, Free State province and the whole country of South Africa. Observations from the workshops from the NGOs and fraternals led by P3, indicate that P3 leadership is making that multi-level impact. From SARE, he attended parliamentary meetings to represent religious leaders in church and state relations discussions. With other fraternals like MMF, CNFS, and NGOs, he managed to form a network and partnership with many community stakeholders like government departments, schools, universities, and other civic organisations. The above information indicates that for a congregational leader to make a visible impact on various levels of the community, there is a need to network with ecumenical and civic organisations. Hence, I can conclude that the P3 leadership functions on the four strategic levels mentioned above; that is, welfare, small-scale community development, policy engagement and people-centred movement

Leadership in the township congregations is overwhelmed by many societal challenges and the dominance of unethical leadership characterised by corruption, violence, and lack of service delivery. In their suggestions of what could be practical and best leadership for the township congregations, participants positively mentioned collective leadership that utilises the skill of others and values trust and confidence between a leader and a follower. Moreover, they mentioned that such leadership must model Christ as the best leader by being approachable, and demonstrate attitude of service and love. In contrast, participants mentioned that it is a leadership that does not see itself as Alpha and Omega, belittle others or lord it over others.

Lastly, since leadership involves suffering, sometimes leaders in the township congregations experience tough times like rejection and insults that lead to emotional and psychological pain. In such a tough time, what inspires the participants in their ministry? In response, participants mentioned their spiritual father, parents, participation in a joint project, and seeing progress in others who had been helped by a leader as aspects that keeps them going in the tough times.

## 7. Challenges and recommendations

An in-depth reading of the data and observations of the participants in their leadership ministry in township congregations made one realise that much is happening in the township congregations but is still under-researched. Most of the participants have many years of experience and practice of leadership in their congregations. However, they seem to have limited knowledge of functioning on the theological / theoretical reflective level of their leadership practice. This limitation can be attributable to a lack of formal training in their ministry, lack of communication skills in the English language, as many books are written in English, and lack of funds for further training as most of the formal training needs funds to enrol in them. Lastly, it can be an irrelevant curriculum taught at theological institutions that make pastors from township congregations, especially in emerging churches, become suspicious of these institutional relevance to their ministry.

The role of spiritual leadership is to engage both the ultimate and current role of leadership. However, often the current role is emphasised at the expense of the ultimate role of leadership. In contrast, sometimes, the ultimate role of leadership is mentioned without much commitment to its implication for the contemporary leadership role. More research is needed to explore the role of leadership in the township congregations to find out how it impacts an individual, society, and other creations of God-like plants, animals, and land.

Since, in Africa, the spiritual leadership of the pastors and integrity of churches are still valued, pastors in the township congregations need to be empowered to use influence strategies to make a relevant impact in the lives of their congregation members in society. Church and its involvement in the community have long historical challenges. For a long time, churches have been struggling to balance the proclamation of the gospel and responsible involvement in society. Often, churches, when they engage their community, this is on the level of addressing basic needs or developing skills for the small-scale development of an individual. The level of empowering community members about learning and challenging policies that affect their livelihood or functioning as activists in a people movement is not considered in many programmes of training that happen in congregations. More research and empowerment need to be conducted

on mobilising spiritual leaders and religious institutions towards higher levels of community involvement in their context.

In conclusion, more research that appreciates positive development and facilitation of practising effective and transforming leadership and publication of inspirational stories about the creative development of the township is needed for the well-being of those in the township and for transforming social institutions within the context of the township.

## 8. Conclusion

Leadership in the township congregations is experiencing a shift from leader-centric understanding and practice to leadership characterised by participation, collective decision-making, and collaboration.

In describing the role of leadership, more emphasis has to be placed on the ultimate purpose of leadership, which tends to contribute to the universal practice of leadership.

More research needs to be conducted to enhance and empower pastors to effectively use biblical leadership influence strategies, especially concerning deep change in an individual and community.

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