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INTRODUCTION

SPIRITUALITY IN LEADERSHIP. RESEARCH INTO SCHOOLS, CONGREGATIONS AND THE WORKPLACE

What drives leaders to inspire, orientate and motivate members in organisations such as schools, congregations, and parachurch organisations, and to transform social life forms? We need leaders who transform organisations and society at large; who are authentic and a moral example; who know how to discern in view of the interest of the people they serve; who are transformed themselves from the cultural and power-related forces of history as, for example, in South Africa that struggles with issues of injustice and reconciliation. Transformative, authentic or servant leadership is highly valued, but there is a lack of knowledge as to how to develop or educate leaders in this way. The question of theory development centres around the concept of spirituality. Different disciplines such as management sciences, psychology, education, and business ethics study the concept of spirituality in relation to leadership. This special issue aims to contribute to this theory-building from the perspective of practical theology and religious studies. Theology has much to offer on this topic and theology,

specifically congregation studies and theological education, has much to learn from leadership theories.

How do we define spirituality that is not equal to belief in God, not reduced to goal-setting or feelings, and not reduced to a self-construction of human beings? Our concept of spirituality should determine leadership as we define it. To put it differently, spirituality needs to characterise the person of the leader (in thinking, willing, feeling, judging, and/or acting) in a manner that influences the competencies of leadership, as defined.

This special issue offers new theoretical insights in this regard: on the concept of spirituality as open category (both religious and non-religious) (Hermans); on the concept of lived spirituality (Hermans & Anthony), spiritual discernment (Hermans & Anthony, Van Wyngaard), as well as ethical and competency-based spirituality (Moranamele & Schoeman); spirituality as contingency receiving (Copier, Hermans & Van der Zee); biblical and missional spirituality (Venter & Hermans), and spirituality as passion of the heart (Hermans & Kornet).

The different concepts of spirituality are connected to different concepts of leadership, notably transformational leadership (Hermans & Anthony); authentic leadership and servant leadership (Moranamele & Schoeman); the 4D capability framework of leadership, and transformative leadership (Venter & Hermans). This interconnectedness of spirituality and leadership is studied empirically in South Africa, Lesotho, India, and The Netherlands, and regarding leaders in different organisations such as school leaders, ministers in congregations, leaders in parachurch organisations, and general practitioners. The result is a rich and unique theological contribution to the enduring social issue of leadership in a context of injustice, inequality and race reconciliation.

The articles are arranged into three groups. The first group of articles focus on the concept of spiritual experiences as open category. Spiritual experiences can be, but are not necessarily religious. In the first essay, Hermans offers a general introduction to the concept of spiritual experiences as defined by contingency, transcendental openness, and happiness. Copier, Hermans and Van der Zee study contingency receiving, including experiences of both religious and non-religious people. Hermans and Kornet focus on passions of the heart as transcending anticipation of ultimate value. The second group of essays focus on the concept of lived spirituality. In the first essay, Hermans and Anthony define the concept of lived spirituality and, in their second essay, they study the influence of lived spirituality on the degree in which leaders perform transformative leadership. The third group of essays focus on biblical and missional

spirituality related to different types of leadership in congregations or parachurch organisations. Van Wyngaard calls for a spirituality that is informed by the historical-cultural situation of South Africa and aims at a deep transformation of whiteness as marker of the identity of congregational leaders. Moranamele and Schoeman describe personal spirituality as caring, relational, and ethical in the context of workplace spirituality. Venter and Hermans define biblical, missional and transformative spirituality as a competence of DRC ministers.

The first article in this special issue offers a general perspective on spirituality as open category, which can be reported both by religious or non-religious people. According to Hermans, spiritual and religious experiences express an “unexpected possible happiness”. Specific for religious experiences is a reference to God as ultimate. The author describes spiritual experiences as layered forms of experience, using five building blocks to distinguish between different types of experiences.

Hermans and Anthony focus on discernment as spiritual compass of on the high sea of life. They presume that a person grows in discernment, when his/her spiritual character traits, spiritual capital, and spiritual experiences grow. The authors present results of a research among school leaders in Catholic schools in India who report higher levels of discernment, when they report a stronger spiritual character trait of self-directed-cooperativeness, more spiritual capital (both claiming the absolute truth of their own religion and/or growing from religious pluralism) and a higher level of mystic experiences.

Anthony and Hermans study the influence of discernment as predictor of transformational leadership of school leaders in India. They show that transformational leadership is strongly predicted by discernment combined with the spiritual trait of self-directed-cooperativeness and moderately predicted by the situational contingencies of schools having more financial resources (private schools) and fewer students.

Moranamele and Schoeman explore the role of authentic Christian leadership in workplaces in Lesotho. The theoretical framework and empirical analysis propose a leadership strategy that pays attention to servant leadership and team leadership that peruse an open and inclusive communication strategy. The leader as a person should have good relationships, care for employees, have a strong ethical character, and open and transparent communication with employees.

Copier, Hermans and Van der Zee focus on experiences of contingency in biographies of school leaders as an approach to spirituality. The authors suggest a new definition of contingency receiving, which incorporates

experiences of religious and non-religious people reporting transformations in their self-understanding, understanding of the world, and what is of ultimate meaning in life. This concept of contingency receiving is a building block in an open concept of spirituality.

Van Wyngaard describes the results of a 2019 survey among DRC ministers and licensed proponents aged younger than 40 years. The author highlights an envisioned leadership role of younger ministers, as noted in the tension between the current actions of the church (notably the charity work of local congregations and members) and their reliance on the privilege and power inherited from the past when envisioning the future, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the spiritual formation that would be required in the disruption of a particularly White Christianity. A kind of spirituality and missional leadership that is deeply committed to action and allows for grappling with White complicity and ties to historic injustice.

Venter and Hermans describe the result of a research to find consensus about competencies of congregational leadership in the DRC. Five competencies are part of an agreed upon framework: spirituality, sense-making, visioning, relationships, and implementing. Biblical and missional spirituality transforms the other four competencies of congregational leadership. Based on this result, the authors advocate the concept of transformative leadership for congregational leaders.

Hermans and Kornet studied the spirituality of physicians. Spirituality as passions of the heart are characterised by transcendental openness, which interpenetrates human feelings. They identify four markers of passions of the heart: fulfilment, receptivity, life-organising power, and ethical nature. Based on these markers, the study distinguishes between concerns identified as passions of the heart and other concerns. Four core values are identified in the concerns of general practitioners: personal proximity, self-direction of clients, the whole person, and giving all people access to the healthcare they need – specifically the vulnerable. According to the general practitioners, passions of the heart help them deal with burnout and emotional stress.