

**NURTURING SERVANT LEADERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A CASE
STUDY OF THE CHURCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN AOTEAROA/NEW
ZEALAND**

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Master of Education

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ZEALAND**

By

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Lesley Anne Cyril: Lesley Anne Cyril
Date: 11 December, 2006

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore conditions under which the human spirit flowers in modern organisations. The topic of the thesis was sparked by prolonged study at the Master's level of the writings of Robert K. Greenleaf, modern servant leadership theorist. Greenleaf was concerned with the ways and the conditions in which the human spirit flowers. He wrote a number of essays on the topic (Greenleaf, 1996b). He often questioned what organisations as they currently stood were doing to help people grow as whole people. As workers spend increasing amounts of time in the workplace, organisations continue to seek ways in which to increase employee satisfaction and decrease the compartmentalising of human experience.

The geographical context of study is that of Aotearoa/New Zealand with participants selected from the Church Educational System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Tāmaki-makau-rau/Auckland region. The Church Educational System, or CES, is a worldwide religious education provider headquartered in the Western United States. The context for study was chosen based on my perceived personal growth as a student for nine years in the CES programmes and my desire to understand how the programme was administered in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The project employs a qualitative methodology using as primary data gathering methods in-depth interviews with three CES directors, three focus groups made up of sixteen volunteer teachers, classroom observations, and document analysis. Using Greenleaf's descriptions of the servant leader as a central focus, I attempt through this qualitative study to address the central research question: How does the Church Educational System (CES) nurture servant leaders?

The central metaphor of the garden was used in processing and analysing data. The garden metaphor was intended to assist in the conceptualisation of relationships of service as they are at work in the lives of participants. Identified relationships of service from the findings were between participants co-workers (plants), love (life-force), Jesus Christ (sun), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (plot), purpose (strength), Aotearoa/New Zealand (soil), exemplars (canopy), experience

(seasons), Church Educational System (gardener), positions, training, programmes (gardener tools), growth (colour/aroma/fruit), knowledge (water), and organisational care (pruning/transplanting).

Findings indicated that nurturing in the Church Educational System is influenced by the ability of the organisation to bring people together in meaningful ways. Findings also show that understanding relationships of service that make up whole people may be an important step for organisations in the nurturing of servant leaders. Nurturing in the CES appears to be taking place in three primary areas: balancing, renewal, and regeneration.

The findings of this study have significance for those inside and outside of the CES. A chapter is dedicated to exploring possible application of findings in variant organisational contexts. Providing consistent formal and informal opportunities for sharing in spirit and intellect at the organisational level appears to be a key in the nurturing of servant leaders in organisations.