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**A Critical Examination of African Leadership and
Leadership Effectiveness among the Churches of Christ in
Meru, Kenya**

PhD, Stanley Earl Granberg

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Abstract

This thesis examines African leadership and leadership effectiveness, specifically the relationships between a set of personal characteristics considered to be important to African leaders, the behavioural complexity of leaders as assessed through the Competing Values Framework (CVF) of R. E. Quinn (1988) and the association of these two sets of variables with greater or lesser leader and organizational effectiveness. The leader personal characteristics used are age, education, wealth and experience as a leader. These characteristics are identified in the African historical and anthropological literatures as important contributors to the effectiveness of leaders. The CVF is a role based framework which defines a set of complementary and contradictory roles which, when considered within the CVF, are held to be indicators of the behavioural complexity of a leader. Behavioural complexity theory says that leaders who exhibit broader, more balanced repertoires of leaders roles will be more effective than leaders who exhibit fewer roles in a less balanced fashion. The setting of the study is central Kenya, in East Africa, among the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru (GEM) peoples, with particular focus on leaders among village churches of the Churches of Christ in Meru.

The study begins by exploring the concept of African leadership under the rubric of a moral economy of leadership. This African moral economy was developed in a frontier setting where the most able leaders were those who created networks of people through a compositional process which provided productive wealth. Two dominant, historical leadership patterns are identified, the traditional Mugambi (speaker) pattern and the exploitive Chiefly pattern. The theme of holism within African leadership is considered a primary theme for evaluating leadership effectiveness. The holism theme is supported by the empirical portion of the research where the results of a multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis demonstrate that the research data scale best with a more integrated three-dimensional solution rather than the two-dimensional solution typically reported by behavioural complexity studies using the CVF.

The expectation developed from the analysis of African leadership is that the leader personal characteristics would be important predictors of leadership effectiveness. While hierarchical regression analyses demonstrate that the leader personal characteristics of age, education, wealth and leader experience do make a significant contribution to both leader and organizational effectiveness, the behavioural complexity of the leader is a much more important predictor of leader effectiveness and an equally important predictor of organizational effectiveness. These results, occurring within a rural, African population, suggest that behavioural complexity is not just an attribute of an economically or technologically complex environment but may, in fact, be the result of the complex demands of the leadership process.