

MINISTRY-LEADERSHIP: TOWARD IMPROVED LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

MINISTRY-LEADERSHIP: TOWARD IMPROVED LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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Westside Worship Center

Houston, Texas

The Leadership at Westside Worship Center, Houston Texas experienced this project to raise awareness for ministry leaders that knowing who you are is an essential and necessary component for being a great leader. The goal was to show that leadership effectiveness is possible, as mirrored in the lives of some well-known biblical characters and expressed by other experts on the subject.

The project entailed a weekend retreat during which elements of fellowship bible encounters, narrative discussions and liminal events including a seminal engagement with the personality profile known as D.i.S.C. occurred. Upon observing these events, it became clear that many leaders who had joined our church from a previous Pentecostal denomination realized post-project how things might have unfolded quite differently had that congregation been able to experience the same project components. We learned that creating experiences to transform culture, ministries and other types of institutions might better our world.

Observations of change and transformation among the participants provided evidence that this narrative research project highlighted for leaders that self-awareness is key to leadership effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

Often, I have seen the top person in the hierarchy of the church or in any leadership position use the privilege of authority to accomplish personal agendas. The divine will of God can be missed when human intervention is at play. In line to be the successor pastor for a well-established church, I was passed up, I believe, because the pastor had shaped the church's system to pre-select his desired choice for a successor. Though I had been on the path towards the senior pastor position at this church for which I had served faithfully, in the end, that human succession plan did not include me.

I served this local church as the children and youth pastor as well as head of the elder's board for over twenty years. This ministerial training path was set up by my father, the senior pastor of the church, in an unspoken invitation to become the future senior pastor of the church. Somewhere in the course of my ministry path, my father's direction changed as he initiated a quest to raise another of his sons to power. This son, my brother, had no experience as a minister, was not seminary trained, and had not served the church before my father chose him as successor.

My father's change of direction took place in three phases: one, suppress me, the heir apparent; two, place and keep the preferred successor, my brother, in front of the desired audience; three, make the atmosphere uncomfortable enough to obtain a voluntary resignation from me. Over the course of about three years, my suppression began in the form of my removal from influential church duties including leading prayer, teaching Sunday school and preaching.

My mother's wisdom had given both balance and guidance to my father and me. As God was preparing my mother for death, she encouraged my father to name his successor not based on personal preference, but instead to rely on the wisdom of God to guide the process. She understood the critical nature of the choice and its impact amongst her sons and on the church. My father did not heed the balanced counsel of my mother and proceeded with his plan.

Our Pentecostal organization has no written rules for pastoral selection, though all leaders must progress through some system, however vague that system might be. The intent of the larger Pentecostal organization was to prevent leadership from making decisions based on personal preferences (as can be prevalent in family-run ministries), limit lay leaders and others who might want to make unofficial decisions regarding the selection of pastors, and avoid leadership conflict in the local churches. The church had by-laws that were ambiguous about accountability, function, role and required credentials (such as ordination, education, training, experience and assessment). This inconsistent system was, and is, I believe, the major cause of a systemic dysfunction in our faith community that ultimately renders local and national church leadership ineffective and leaves congregations in conflict.

Foundational scholars in the postmodern research approach for faith communities Savage and Presnell indicate that when the laity is allowed to function as clergy with no credentials and accountability, the result is confusion and abuse of power. Those authors also mention that small churches are particularly susceptible to this reality.¹

Traditionally, my home denomination did not have nor enforce rules. There was no official training, assessment and required education for church leaders (such as seminary,

¹Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 117.

university or other theological education). Subsequently, churches “did that which was right in their own eyes.”²

I do not want it to be said of my ministry, “the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.”³ And so, as the new pastor of a non-denominational church plant, I am concerned about leaders who have never had formal ministry training. What do leaders understand about their own psychology, spirituality, strengths and weaknesses? Do leaders understand what true leadership is? What can be done in local ministry contexts to increase the effectiveness of present leaders? What can be done to prepare our future leaders to serve in their particular ministry circumstances and as their unique congregational systems demand? What would our church look like if we implemented a structure for leadership development that would help to identify leadership style and personality type? What would the church look like if the function and role of leadership were understood and contextualized for each current ministry setting? Would a well-ordered system help avoid confusion, abuse of power, leadership conflict and dysfunction? Can leadership effectiveness soar to heights untold and set a foundational path for a new church plant to build a long lasting legacy?

I see an opportunity to shift paradigms of church organizations and the leaders at Westside Worship Center (WWC) through the model that I am presenting. Some of WWC’s current leaders saw first-hand how much harm resulted from untrained leaders with unresolved internal issues. This project will provide a chance for leaders to change the way they understand themselves and how leadership might work better.

²See Judges 21:25 (KJV).

³See Jeremiah 31: 29 (KJV).

CHAPTER 1

MINISTRY CONTEXT

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, the term “ethos” (from the Gr. *ēthos*) means: custom, character, the distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution.¹ Donald McKim defines ethos in a similar way, but expands on the term by adding: “prevailing values, ideas, and cultural expressions that define a particular time or place, are shaped by religious or theological viewpoints.”² The history, our history as a denomination, who we were, and who we are, necessarily comes out of the mold of our denominational construct. Who we are? A New Church Plant, emerging, as we shall see, from the ashes of history. In our current situation we want to preserve the advantageous and discard that which would prevent us from developing into who God calls us to become.

Our history (who we were), begins with snapshots of my life. I was born in a family who had deep religious roots in Pentecostalism. The church in which I grew up is associated with the *Pentecostal Assemblies of the World* (PAW). PAW’s polity is episcopal: a hierarchical form of church government. The organizational structure of the PAW consists of a Presiding Bishop, First Assistant, Second Assistant, General Officers, Board of Bishops, Lay-Directors from different districts within the United States of America, as well as other retired Bishops with Emeritus status. The Board of Bishops is responsible for churches in each state or geographical

¹*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield MA: Merriam-Webster's, 2003), s. v. “ethos”

²Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 95.

region. There are state or regional meetings that convene three times a calendar year called Councils. Local pastors and their congregations in each state or region attend these Councils. Each state or region has a board appointed Bishop (Diocesan Bishop) who holds authority over the state or region. The State or Regional Bishop has three subordinate assistants called Suffragan Bishops. The subordinate positions to the Suffragan Bishops include District Elders, pastors who assist the Suffragan Bishops in managing other pastors in their jurisdiction. Lay leaders report to the senior pastor of a local congregation. See the chart (figure 1) below, which shows the jurisdiction structure set forth by the Board of Bishops.

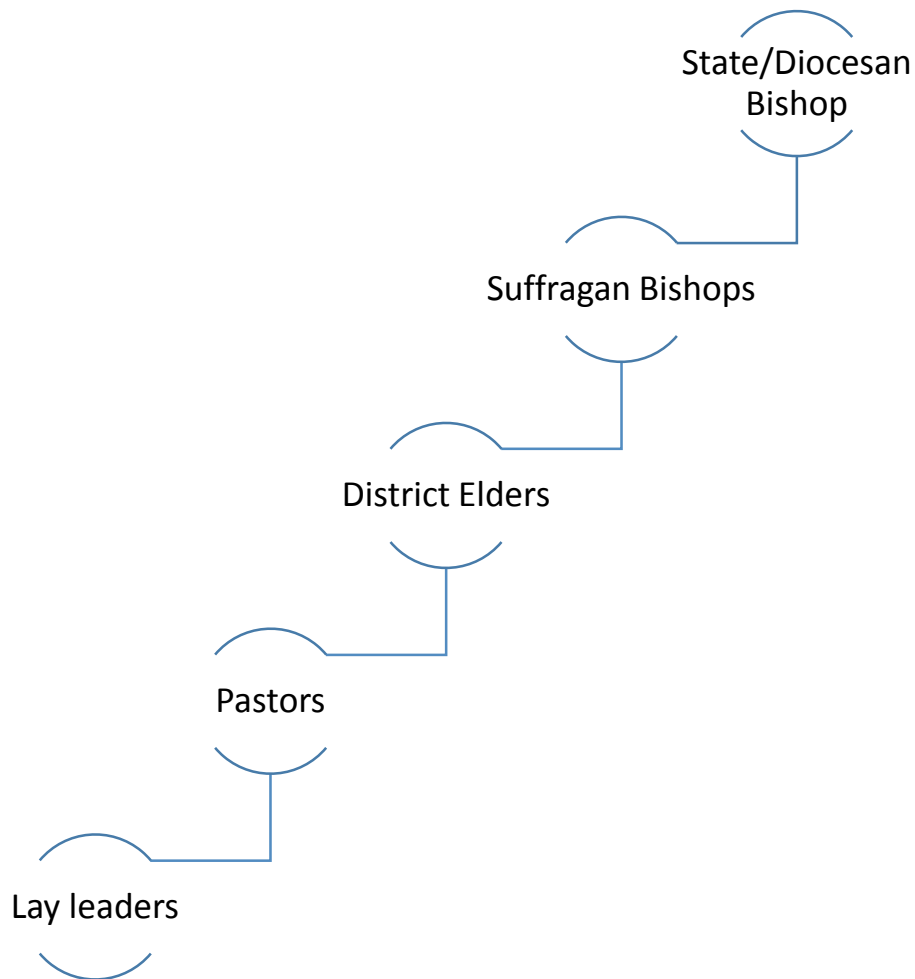


Figure 1. Snapshot of PAW Organizational Structure

My grandfather A.J. Patterson started *Christ Temple Apostolic Church* (or CTAC) in 1937 in Houston Texas and my father David Allen Sr. served as the assistant pastor. As I grew up, I spent the majority of my Christian life serving the church in many capacities. I was the founder's personal driver and armor bearer.³ In August 1986, I received the divine call of God to the preaching and teaching ministry. In our church, once someone acknowledges his/her calling to the pastor or elders, the church enrolls him/her into a program known as the Processed Proven Period (PPP).

The PPP program consists of various duties such as service ministries, teaching children, youth, young adults, adults as well as seniors. Requirements also include participating in menial duties such as maintaining the sanctuary and facilities (e.g. cleaning toilets and classrooms, washing windows, and cutting grass). Those enrolled in PPP must choose two service items per month: one on the church site and the other off-site. On church site there was ushering, valet parking for senior citizens who owned cars, waiting tables at dinners or luncheons and generally being of assistance to any visitors. For the off-site service, we went to the homes of some of our senior members to cut their grass and perform needed maintenance chores. In order to sharpen our ministerial skills, we also had to teach in different areas of the church's educational program. Christian Education (Sunday school), children and youth ministry was at the heart of the church's educational system. CTAC required both these menial duties and the service requirements in order to test a candidate's attitude and even aptitude for serving. The PPP is based on the Biblical notion: "if you be faithful in small things God will allow you to be ruler

³“Armor bearer “ were servants who carried additional weapons for the commanders. Armor bearers protected their leaders. For example, Abimelech (Judges 9:54), Saul (1 Samuel 16:2) and Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:6-7). Churches today have implemented a figurative position of armor-bearer. They carry the leaders bible “sword of the spirit” (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). In other words, they are the senior pastor's bodyguard.

over greater things.”⁴ During the PPP, my father appointed me to the position of Children’s Church Pastor. I served in that position for five years and then I was elevated to Youth Pastor and served in that capacity for over six years. I was assigned one Sunday out of each month to preach and was also given the duties of the Roaming Teacher in the Sunday school department. In the latter capacity, I had to be prepared to teach any class in the event a teacher was absent. After the PPP, I was ordained to the office of Elder and served on the church Elders Board for many years. After the experiences I outlined in the introduction to this paper, I answered the call to plant a church in West Houston, Texas.

New Church Plant (who we are): We planted a new church in the fall of October 2011. The name of the church is Westside Worship Center. We believe we have captured who we are (our brand) in the logo seen in figure 2 below.

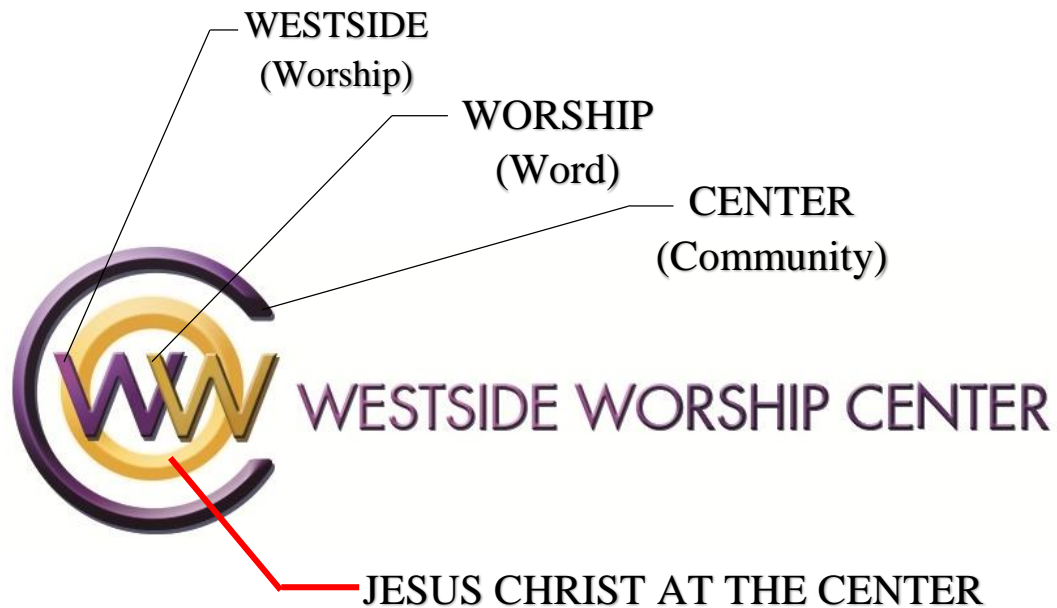


Figure 2. Westside Worship Center's Logo

⁴See Matt. 25:23 (KJV).

WWC is the acronym for *Westside Worship Center*. In addition, it is the expression of what our ministry is about. The gold ring in the center of the logo is an emblem that symbolizes Christ at the center of everything we do. The letters WWC also stand for: Worship, Word and Community. We present the love of Christ through these three main ministry emphases: Worship, Word and Community. WWC is a non-denominational church. For the most part, worship at WWC is contemporary in style and utilizes elements from the Pentecostal tradition. We begin with prayer and scripture reading and then we sing to a sound track while our technician displays the song lyrics on the big screen. Occasionally we welcome instrumentalists to play during the worship services – they enhance our charismatic worship style.



Figure 3. WWC's Worship Services

Here are the demographics of membership and attendees: 50% African American, 20% White, and 30% other (Africans, Asians, Hispanics and Europeans). Our church is still forming; we are committed to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ not only through worship, but also by preaching the word of God and through building community.

In keeping with this, we share the word of God every Sunday morning at our worship location. Currently, there are no weekday services. We use the weekdays to go out and blend into the surrounding market place. The goal is to meet people and have small group conversations on subject matters or issues that interest them. These group meetings take place at any establishment in the community.

In other words, because our form of evangelism is a relational approach, we like to meet with people in relaxed settings such as restaurants, community centers, coffee houses or even recreational centers. As these relationships grow, we will use this approach to invite those we meet to the Sunday morning worship location.

A French cleric in the Twelfth century first coined the phrase “Rome wasn’t built in a day;” the linguist Adolf Tobler was the first to record the saying in his book “*Proverbe au Vilain.*”⁵ In other words, the organizational structure of WWC is still forming. The process in place now is simple in function and employs four basic operating components. We agree with that French cleric – it takes time to build. For example, when building a house, we understand that the foundation is the most important component. If the foundation is not poured correctly, then it will not be stable and strong enough to hold the structure or the frame of the house. Thus, we are taking our time to build a long-lasting ministry foundation.

⁵Adolf Tobler, *French Proverbs* (Gaston Paris: Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1895), XIX.

The pictures below offer a sampling of how we deliver and present the word of God on a weekly basis. We teach, demonstrate and explain in a way that everyone, even the children, can understand it.



Figure 4. How we deliver the word at WWC

Currently, as the founder/senior pastor, I oversee all spiritual, business and administrative functions of the church. Since we are a new church plant, I chose a Board of

Directors (BOD) to act as initial advisors to WWC. In the former tradition, it was the pastor alone who selected the BOD's as a matter of practice. This does not mean we will continue with this practice in the new church.

The Board of Deacons has no spiritual authority but serves the church in a physical capacity. Initially, for startup purposes, as pastor I appointed the administration team to manage church business matters. I have made all departments responsible collectively for our Outreach efforts; I will discuss Outreach in more detail below. Additionally, there are other ministry leaders in the church who function in the areas of music, dance, mime and culinary services. See the relationship chart in figure 5 below.



Figure 5. WWC Existing Operation

WWC's Outreach programs includes providing canned and non-perishable food to the *Houston Food Bank* on a regular basis and donating clothing and other needed items to

Goodwill and the *Salvation Army*. WWC partners with the *Toys for Tots* foundation in giving away thousands of toys to low income families in the community during the Christmas season. Collectively, WWC continues to use modern means and methods to impact the community with our presence.

We frequent the local *Starbucks*, fitness centers, restaurants and retail shops stimulating everyday conversation strategically pointing those who might be interested to our ministry location. As I mentioned above, meeting people in the market place, developing relationships, meeting needs and inviting those we meet to church take the place of formal weekday services. WWC is located in the Houston Energy Corridor and a suburban community surrounds the church. WWC is in touch with the local elementary and high schools in the community and we eventually want to serve these schools by assisting them in hall monitoring. This is a program in which the local school district encourages the clergy and other community leaders to get involved with the educational process of high school students. The school district believes that if more people in the community gets involved with these students, they will have a better chance in life.

We are taking theologian and futurist thinker Leonard Sweet's advice "Pay attention: every bush is burning." By being in the market place, we are nudging and trying to awaken those that would open themselves up to the God who is present and active in the earth.⁶ Touching the community in areas of need is one of many forms of evangelism in which WWC is involved. The pictures shown below do not tell the full story of the impact our church has had within the community. Since we started, WWC has given away over two thousand toys to

⁶Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other To The God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs, Co: David C. Cook, 2010), 27-31.

families and charitable organization in the community. We have also given over three thousand pounds of food to the local food bank.



Figure 6. WWC Outreach Programs

Who will we become? We believe we are called to become a God-led ministry that will use every tool available to us to enhance leadership effectiveness. We believe that proper leadership is a tool that the church must use to its advantage. Developing leadership through self-discovery programs may comprehensively help us explore, discover, and release distinctive gifts and abilities that exist within our leaders. We believe God desires our ministry to become an organized body made up of diverse groups of people with different personalities, temperaments, gifts, talents and ideas coming together as a team to impact the community and the world.

The church is like that of a natural body with functioning parts and it is important that each individual find his/her place so the Body of Christ can function as smoothly as possible. We do not believe that one can look at church ministry as something that is to be done in a haphazard way. We strive to perfect every gift, talent, and calling because each of these is a crucial functioning part that makes the body complete, whole, and healthy. Gifted people, placed properly, can synergize the ministry by: developing and processing improvements; using

technology to streamline the way the church carries out service in congregation and community; improving communications and facilitating the process of building and connecting relationships. Before we place leaders, it might be useful to employ a good assessment tool.

In our era, changes in society have occurred at a rapid and unpredictable pace. There is a growing trust issue with the church. Some have turned to Christianity and churches for truth, yet left disappointed because they felt that Christians themselves had not implemented the principles the church professes.⁷ The church has sometimes not answered fears, and anxieties; sometimes the church focuses on outdated issues or continues to offer the same dead solutions to problems. For some individuals and groups there is distrust in institutional authority.⁸ From your reading of my own story in the introduction, the reader can understand my concerns in this area.

Wide gaps exist between some church leaders and the laity due to organizational models that are solely based on matters of authority.⁹ There might not be any relational component in the structure. What might then occur is that relationships between pastors and parishioners could start to fail. One result might be evidence of wasteful spending on non-essentials with the results that benefactors and donors might begin to hold back their generosity.¹⁰ We hear God's call to be a ministry that will train and offer leaders the resources to shift their paradigms regarding ministry so that we can see transformation take place individually and corporately. We want to be a ministry that models right processes for leadership. Being effective is not just

⁷Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We do Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2000), 15.

⁸Ibid., 16.

⁹Ibid., 68.

¹⁰Ibid., 69.

an option; it is an essential for successful twenty-first century ministry. Self-awareness is a vital component to achieve leadership effectiveness; Biblical and theological sources support this construct.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

Through this project, I came to see that knowing oneself is an essential foundational component to being an effective leader. In this chapter I will discuss self-awareness as a critical component for effective leadership. My sources will be the thoughts of leading experts in the field of leadership as well as the Christian Bible (Old and New Testaments).

Political scientist James MacGregor Burns, states: “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.”¹ A plethora of theories and definitions attempts to explain leadership. For example, former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, in a speech given on October 26, 2001, said: “leadership is knowing what needs to be done and getting it done.”² Business consultant Jim Collins, in his monograph “*Good to Great and the Social Sectors*” stated: “true leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to.”³ Psychologist Bernard Bass believes that there are four major behaviors that produce effectiveness in leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence.⁴

¹James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1978), 158.

²Baker as cited in Michale Ayers, “Toward A Theology of Leadership” *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 5.

³Jim Collins, *GOOD TO GREAT AND THE SOCIAL SECTORS* (Boulder, Col.: Jim Collins, 2005), 13.

⁴Bernard M. Bass, “From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision,” *Organizational Dynamics* 18, no. 3 (1990): 19-36.

The authors mentioned above represent but a portion of theories and models developed by experts in the field. Although, these professionals have a cornucopia of information to offer on the construct, I resonate with organizational consultant Warren Bennis on his concept of leadership:

“But until you truly know yourself, strengths and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the word. The leader never lies to himself, especially about himself, knows his flaws as well as his assets, and deals with them directly.”⁵

It seems that Bennis believes leadership begins with the being or person of the leader. He further implies that leadership is not principally about what one does, but more importantly about who one is. Thus, we tend to lead from who we are.⁶

Philosophically speaking I agree with the insight of Bennis because his argument has an ontological orientation. Ontology (from the Greek: *On*, “being,” and *logos*, “study”), the philosophical study of being as being itself, explores the underlying principles present in all things solely by virtue of their existence.⁷ Educator Parker Palmer’s chapter entitled “*Leading from Within*” is in harmony with this ontological idea of leadership. Palmer states:

“A leader is someone with the power to project either shadow or light onto some part of the world and onto the lives of the people who dwell there. A leader shapes the ethos in which others must live, an ethos as light-filled as heaven or as shadowy as hell. A good leader is intensely aware of the interplay of inner shadow and light, lest the act of leadership do more harm than good.”⁸

⁵Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader*, rev. ed. (New York: Perseus Publishing, 2003), 40.

⁶Ibid., 40.

⁷Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 195.

⁸Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 9, 2014), 78.

Palmer suggests more research to examine ontological traits that affect leadership behavior. Palmer believes that many leaders hold unfathomable insecurities relating to self-worth and identity. These internal dysfunctions could spill over into action that might demoralize or undermine leadership.⁹

I see agreement between the ontological concepts of Bennis and Palmer and those we encounter in the Christian Bible. The Bible is full of leaders: Moses is a model for mentorship in the Old Testament and the Apostle Paul is a paragon for leadership in the New Testament. In Exodus 3: 1- 4:17:

¹ Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed. ³ And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴ And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I...need

The scene opens with an astonishing interruption of nature's fixed laws that stirred Moses' curiosity - the burning bush.¹⁰ In that moment, God's self-revelation came to Moses on a whole new level. The suffering of the Israelites had become so intense that it got God's attention. God needed a leader to lead the dejected Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. God could have acted alone in the deliverance of the people, but, God chose to work through humanity. Moses was the one selected to deliver the Israelites from Egypt. I do not think Moses was chosen just because he was handsome or had wonderful credentials. I think it was because Moses had

⁹Parker J. Palmer as cited in Larry C. Spears, *Insights on Leadership* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 197-208.

¹⁰Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 14.

something God could use, both before and after he murdered an Egyptian.¹¹ Moses was unaware of how this act would affect him.

God must have seen Moses as an asset, and not a liability. After all, God called Moses to the task despite the murder rap. With the cloud of this crime hanging over Moses' head, other things began to surface: timidity, an inferiority complex and a negative self-image. In addition, Moses developed a speech impediment (stuttering) which I believe emerged from his own traumatic life experiences. Psychologist John Harrison seems to echo this idea in his paper on "*Fluency Disorders*" stating, "I have come to understand stuttering, not simply as a speech problem, but as a system involving the entire person—an interactive system that's comprised of six essential components: behavior, emotions, perceptions, beliefs, intentions, and physiological responses."¹²

In other words, life experiences can impact these human components in various ways. In Moses' case, his past experiences and choices, I believe, affected him in unhealthy ways. I believe God's calling of Moses was indeed a literal commission to go and carry out a very important divine assignment. At the same time, I see God using the call as a stimulant assessment to show Moses how important it is to deal with unresolved issues (past, present or future). If you hold onto negative emotions too long, they surface. I see this as Moses began to express what he thought about himself. God understood Moses' emotional dynamics, but Moses needed to hear himself admit weakness, see himself and understand how destructive his internal dysfunction was to himself and others. I believe God wanted Moses to have an acute awareness of his dysfunctions so he could move forward and have an impact on his community. Even

¹¹ See Ex. 2:11-14 (KJV).

¹²John C. Harrison, *National Stuttering Project*, paper presented on "Fluency Disorders" at the First World Congress, Sponsored by the International Fluency Association, Munich, Germany, 1-5 August 1994, 3.

though this was not easy, it was necessary for Moses to continue with emptying (*kenosis*) himself in preparation for becoming an effective leader.

At first glance, based on his prior behavior, we might conclude that Moses did not have the capacity to be an effective leader. The old adage: “You cannot judge a book by its cover” could apply to Moses in view of what transpired next in the Biblical narrative! Rather than judge our books by their covers, Moses shows us the importance of observing and assessing potential leaders to help them find their place and guide them to increased self-awareness. Why did Moses resist God’s call? Why did he use so many excuses? What was the real problem? Let’s take a closer look at the scriptures and examine some things that transpired at the burning bush. Perhaps this will lead us to added clues. Let’s explore the assessment and evaluation that took place with Moses at his initial call.¹³

With regard to what we might call the “Burning Bush Assessment,” normally the assessor asks the interviewee a series of questions. In this instance, the reverse was the case. Moses seemed to be hiding behind some deeper issues. What Moses had not yet understood is that the creator and omniscient God could see below the surface of the questions he was asking. God’s call, however, revealed something that had been boiling in the heart of Moses. Despite the divine call from the Holy God of the universe, the experience re-opened deep emotional wounds of the past and, as a result, revealed an avalanche of ripostes.

When God told Moses the plan to send him to Pharaoh to bring the people out Egypt, Moses’ first question in response to the commission given by God was “Who am I?” (Ex. 3: 11). The commission acted as the stimulus (like that of a question) and generated a retort from Moses. Again, perhaps this was the intervention that could draw out of Moses the information

¹³Gene A. Getz, *Men of Character: Moses, Freeing Yourself to Know God* (Nashville, TN.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 53.

he needed to absorb about himself - that he was uncomfortably self-conscious. If Moses had taken the D.i.S.C. assessment before killing a man in Egypt, I think he would have scored high in the D (Dominance) category. But, it seems to me that his behavior at the burning bush was in stark contrast to how he was prior to the murder and his flight to Midian. Why did Moses resist God's call? Perhaps he was reluctant to accept the call because it was to go back to face the very people (Israelites and Egyptians) who rejected him because of a terrible mistake he made.¹⁴

In the second question by Moses: "What shall I tell them when they ask what is your name?" (v 13) we learn more about Moses. This question seems to be related to his inability to represent Israel without a mandate from the people and without even knowing the name of the God for whom he was asked to speak.¹⁵ God responded by revealing more about the Divine character and attributes. God's answer to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM," revealed God's infinite existence, self-existing, as One who always existed and will forever be present to help the people.¹⁶ God wanted Moses to shift his paradigm so that he could continue to unveil the Divine plan.

The third question by Moses was "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?" (4: 1). Moses was hesitant, skeptical and very suspicious about approaching his people and Pharaoh. His apprehensions could have stemmed from multiple experiences: a) the rejection of his own people when they asked the question: "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" (2: 14); b) when Pharaoh sought to kill him (v

¹⁴D.i.S.C. is a behavior assessment tool based on the D.i.S.C. theory of psychologist William Moulton Marston, which centers on four different personality traits: Dominance, inducement, submission, and compliance. See Chapters 3, 4 and 5 for more details.

¹⁵Sarna, *Exodus*, 17.

¹⁶Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), Ex 3:1.

15); c) Moses' knowledge of the Israelites' expectations about prophecy: the legitimacy of a prophet was determined by the actualization of what had actually been prophesied (Dt. 13: 2-6);

d) Moses grew up in Egypt where magic was a profession that permeated the Egyptian culture.

Whether these demurrals were legitimate or not, Moses knew he would face a people full of doubt when he challenged an ideology in Pharaoh that was antagonistic towards God.¹⁷ These experiences seem to have informed and shaped his philosophy. I believe God understood Moses' rationale, but God was trying to get him to embrace and trust God to act in favor of the people. At this point Moses seemed to be scoring low in the i category of the D.i.S.C. profile (Influence: suspicion, aloof and pessimistic). I get the sense that Moses' memory of his past was creating stress for his entire psyche. This point becomes more clear as we see the persistence of Moses in his fourth protest before God: "Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou has spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Ex. 4:10). It is amazing how far Moses took this discussion with God. Thus far, God had not brought up Moses' past even though God was aware of that past life. All God wanted Moses to do was trust and say yes when God called. Instead, Moses became reticent and almost recalcitrant as though God did not know the difference between what one says externally and what one means in the heart.¹⁸ God was being sympathetic and patient with him, although Moses seemed to be testing God.¹⁹

God responded to all of Moses' concerns. But, Moses was not capable of answering God's question, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing

¹⁷Sarna, *Exodus*, 20.

¹⁸Ibid., 21.

¹⁹Getz, *Men of Character: Moses, Freeing Yourself to Know God*, 58.

or the blind? Have not I the Lord?” (vs. 11). God did not expect Moses to have the answer. God wanted Moses to simply have an increased self-awareness, get up, and carry out the divine directive. God knew Moses needed to understand more about his own tendencies, needs, preferred environment and strategies for effectiveness. Moses needed to explore his intensity index to become more aware of his strengths and weaknesses. There are other Old Testament (OT) examples that point to the strength of having an assessment idea or technique.

Gideon is another leader in the OT whom God called to carry out a divine task. The former generation of Israelites died in the wilderness. The new generation crossed over Jordan to possess the land of Canaan under Joshua.²⁰ The people had lost their devotion to God in seven years of cruel taunting and oppression by the Midianites. Like the former generation of Israelites who cried out to God for deliverance from Pharaoh, the new generation of Israelites cried out to the Lord for liberation as well.²¹ Gideon was the person God called to save the Israelites from the hands of the Midianites. Note what Gideon said to God: “Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house” (v 15). Now, this sounds familiar. God dealt with Gideon in a manner that is similar to his treatment of Moses (v 16). Gideon’s call was a similar stimuli that led him to an assessment causing him to put his own self-consciousness and weaknesses in perspective as he dealt with challenging tasks. Gideon served as an ideal conduit for God’s incredible work of deliverance.²²

²⁰See Josh. 4:1 (KJV).

²¹Judg. 6:6 (KJV).

²²Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 530.

Not only did Gideon undergo a similar sort of psychological assessment, so did his army! To go to war with the Midianites required a certain number of people who had to be wired a particular way. God commanded Gideon to take the potential candidates through a testing (assessment) phase that would serve as a proving ground for those prospects.²³ God seemed to be saying that not everybody was equipped to join Gideon in the war against the Midianites. Those who were not as qualified might have caused more harm than good, and thus, were better off in their tents. This narrative could support the implementation of an assessment program to increase self-awareness for leaders and participants. The more one understands about oneself, the more one has a chance to excel in effectiveness as a leader. Our final Old Testament example is Jonah.

The book of Jonah is included among the twelve Minor Prophets and, for the most part, is a narrative of God's call to Jonah to go to the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, to preach repentance. But instead, Jonah disobeyed and attempted to escape in a ship that set sail for Tarshish (Spain). God intervened, allowing him to be thrown overboard and swallowed by a big fish. After being in the belly of this big fish for three days and nights, God commanded the fish to vomit Jonah out. Having learned his lesson, Jonah ran to do his mission and ironically (for him) met with great success!²⁴

It's my view that Jonah was disinclined to go to Nineveh because he knew that God might use the Assyrians as instruments to punish Israel. Indeed, the Assyrians were brutal people. They were known for burning people alive, driving spikes through the jaws of humans,

²³See Judg. 7:4-7 (KJV).

²⁴F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 904.

chaining them to stakes like dogs and crushing the skulls of living people. Some scholars believe that some of Jonah's own family met with similar fates at the hands of the Assyrians.²⁵

One might wonder if God knew that Jonah had unresolved negative emotions. This could explain Jonah the prophet's reacting so coldly to his commission.²⁶ In order for Jonah to be as effective as possible the call could have been an assessment of emotional baggage he thought he had hidden and tucked away. The call opened the drawer of Jonah's subconscious and out came: un-forgiveness, bitterness, resentment and negative intentions toward the Ninevites that Jonah may not have thought he had inside. The call brought these dark things to light and gave Jonah self-awareness, not for condemnation, but for improvement and empowerment.

As we have seen, Moses, Gideon and Jonah had something in common: they were good prospects for leadership. These Biblical characters needed the right tools to help them discover some deeper things about themselves as they prepared to become effective leaders. These examples are but three from an Old Testament that is full of wonderful examples of how God was at work preparing leaders to take on some heroic task. Similarly, we may consider other examples in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul is one such example.

Saul's name was changed to Paul after an encounter with God whose people he had persecuted. Saul was born around 3 C.E. to a prominent family whose members were proud Roman citizens in the city of Tarsus.²⁷ Paul, a member of the prestigious tribe of Benjamin, had the privilege of being reared in a traditional Jewish home and so had experienced

²⁵ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 123.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 731.

²⁷See Acts 22:28 (KJV).

circumcision.²⁸ His training in Jerusalem was under the guidance of Rabbi Gamaliel. Paul was a Pharisee, adhering to strict Jewish laws and customs and was also a well-known member of the Sanhedrin.²⁹ He had a burning zeal and would do anything to support and protect his faith. This intense loyalty to Judaism was a prime motivator that led to his persecution of Christians, against whom he spared nothing.³⁰ Paul persecuted with such a vengeance and at first thought he was in the right.³¹ It was not until much later that he interpreted his actions as blasphemy.³² It seems God saw Paul's zeal as useable for the Christian agenda and so Paul had an encounter with God on the road to Damascus that changed his life forever.³³

In my view, Paul was the quintessential leader. Paul had great leadership skills all along. He knew who he was, and his strong family and political connections seem to have given him the edge in the secular world as someone with strong self-confidence (in the D.i.S.C., he may have discovered he was a Dominant personality). Paul's conversion experience was an illumination (tool) that he needed to bring to the surface missing pieces in his life that would make him a well-rounded leader for his divine calling. Paul discovered these missing pieces after his intense and abrupt transformation. He understood that being a dominate leader with no meekness and humility would impede his effectiveness. This conversion and call (that stimulated assessment) was the component Paul needed to re-align the way he saw himself. His new self-awareness rendered increased effectiveness.

²⁸See Phil. 3:5 (KJV).

²⁹See Acts 5:34 (KJV).

³⁰See Acts 9:1–2; Phil. 3:6 (KJV).

³¹See Acts 23:1; 2 Tim. 1:3 (KJV).

³²Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 103.

³³See Acts 9: 1-19 (KJV).

The Pauline epistles depict leadership lessons that seem to be useful as principles for Christian leaders of the twenty-first century. Paul's strategy was to lead by example in a "do-as-I-do" approach. He modeled looking out for the well-being of others through self-sacrifice as well as engaging in activities that value others.³⁴ Paul also expected other leaders to do the same.³⁵

The New Testament scriptures reveal that Paul adopted a diversification strategy aimed at embodying diversity and multicultural ministry. He was trying his best to banish racism and build up tolerance to differences. Scriptures reveal that the early Christian church dealt with many issues such as gender, religion, class, and race that involved diversity and multiculturalism. With regard to this, Paul used scripture to oppose division and promote unification. He also discussed different gifts Christ gave and showed how diverse spiritual gifts are meant to work together. Diversity and unity were important for the advancement of integration in the early church.³⁶

Paul clarified the Biblical principle that equal opportunity has to be operative for the church to move forward. Paul understood that for his strategy to be successful, the components of diversity, unification and equality had to be active.³⁷ Paul's strategic activity was to reveal his vision of God's plan, articulate the purpose of Christian life in community, create a sense of

³⁴See Phil. v.18; 1 Cor. 1:4 (KJV).

³⁵See Gal. 2:14 (KJV).

³⁶Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 928.

³⁷Chantel C. Upshur-Myles, *Organizational Leadership Lessons Based on the Pauline Epistles*. MSW, Regent University the School of Global Leadership & Entrepreneurship, 1-4.

urgency to which Herrington refers and operate with flexibility.³⁸ Paul sought to achieve unity through an educational process.

As I read the Scriptural accounts, first, Paul revealed God's plan of redemption that he eventually realized included Gentiles. Paul wrote: "For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all..."³⁹ Second, he articulated a common purpose to serve the same God, "There is one body with many parts." Third, Paul explained how important it is to grasp the way spiritual gifts work so that each leader functions in a manner that benefits the whole. For him, this was an urgent matter and he wanted the churches he founded to see that. Fourth, Paul operated with flexibility. An example is his sending Timothy to provide help at another church. Paul understood how to get people engaged in the process. Paul was persuasive, influential, confident, observing, change oriented and guided organizational change by facilitating. He tapped into the wisdom of God as he applied Biblical principles for change. His leadership of organizational change involved transformation and development concepts that were radically centered on improving the effectiveness of organizations and the people in them. In other words, if change were needed, Paul would find the core components within the system that would facilitate that change. As a result, the whole system might then realize positive changes.⁴⁰

Even so, Paul had a propensity to allow old personal issues to surface. But I believe that the thorn in Paul's flesh kept his internal dysfunction at bay. The thorn seems to be a constant reminder to Paul that church business is not about him, but about God's purpose and plan for all

³⁸See 1 Th. 3:1-3 (KJV).

³⁹See Gal. 3:28 (KJV).

⁴⁰Upshur-Myles, 10.

of humanity acted out through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paul's thorn seems to be a symbol for restraint. As I read the text, the phrase "exalted above measure" in 2 Cor. 12:7 means uplifted, puffed up and arrogant. The scriptures caution that self-exaltation is a dangerous proposition, and the apostle saw that he required additional restraint.⁴¹ Perhaps God allows certain tensions to arise in order to caution leaders to think through decisions more fully. Whether it is a thorn, a weakness or people that God is using, accountability is a necessary component of leadership.

God raised up prophets to keep the kings of Israel and kings of other nations aware of their wrong-doing.⁴² In addition, and in Mark's Gospel in particular, Jesus warns leaders about causing people to sin.⁴³ I see an element of accountability throughout scripture. I believe Paul's grasp of this idea, his preparation and what he understood about himself added value to the church and helped him and other churches to solve problems.

I have spent most of my life serving the church and have worked closely with ministry leaders as well as senior pastors. These experiences have exposed me to human weakness at a higher level. I have seen leaders who do not understand themselves and in many ways, I believe, lack of self-awareness has resulted in a leader's disconnection from the larger ministry context. If leaders are not in touch with themselves, the result could be a trail of bad decisions made individually and corporately. Paul's writings on leadership resonate for me and I believe Paul was doing his best to promote the interest of other leaders through humility, listening (kenosis) and self-sacrifice. To me, these traits are characteristic of persons who are in touch

⁴¹Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 2 Co 12:7.

⁴²Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 282.

⁴³Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 621.

with themselves. I believe Paul understood himself first, and this understanding of self-resulted in effective leadership for the body of Christ.

The Biblical characters mentioned above had many negative experiences in common. Moses, Gideon and Jonah each experienced family crises, made bad choices and seemed to display negative self-images. Additionally, as I read the Biblical narrative, pre-conversion Saul/Paul had an unhealthy approach to leadership: egocentric, domineering and competitive. In all these cases, the turning point that re-positioned these individuals toward a successful career in leadership was the stimulus (A Divine Call) that presented alternatives and inspired a personal incentive to change.

In my view, each of these individuals had to decide between two realms of reality: paralysis or progression. Paralysis is a state of remaining as you are with no change. Progression is the impetus to move forward and advance towards a goal. In life, there are many things we encounter and experience that have unrealized effect on us. The bad news is that in many cases we do not recognize the nature of the impact circumstances have had on our life. But then something happens that reveals what has been hidden. I believe the good news is that God can inspire a leader to seek an opportunity to discover the hidden self. Whether it be an unforeseen event or an assessment tool that digs into the psychological and emotional parameters of our soul, God encourages our discovery. We then see it, believe it and determine its best use.

In my experience, understanding who you are, good or bad, is a necessity. If what you discover about yourself is positive, hold onto it and build upon that strength. If what you discover about yourself is negative, that becomes an opportunity to change. Also, the process helps the leader realize that one does not have all the answers, nor all of the gifts necessary for

leadership. It is an opportunity to search for someone else who is gifted in areas you are not. I think it is good for a leader to discover his or her weakness so that you can discover someone else's strength. Moses had Aaron to speak and strategize; Gideon had a team of warriors to fight. Leaders must take advantage of whatever means are available to increase self-awareness for personal effectiveness. God's call requires that we do so.

Transformation after discovery can take place from the point of one's strengths or weaknesses, and in my experience obtains maximum effectiveness when it begins with the leader. Assessments are not a guarantee against all mistakes, but they can point a leader in a good direction and offer a chance to avoid pitfalls.

What I observed in the scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments was information that seemed to support the idea of self-awareness as a starting point for improved leadership effectiveness. When design engineers come up with a new product idea they invest energy and imagination to figure out how to bring that idea to fruition. Then, they begin to plan the steps that will eventually bring their vision to life. The first couple of tries might not produce exactly the imagined results, but the creative process asks them to continue trying even if they fail at first. Like a design engineer, I designed a project and developed a methodology to test the idea of assessment of leaders. It is this project to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In my past denominational experience, there was an enormous relational disparity between the pulpit and the pew. By pulpit I mean: bishop, pastor, priest or someone who holds a senior position of authority within the church. The term pew refers to those who do not hold positions with authority to make final decisions in their church. In many cases, I have seen leaders in the hierarchy use the privilege of authority to achieve personal agendas. The church had by-laws that were ambiguous about accountability, function, role and required credentials (such as ordination, education, training, experience and assessment). No one had developed any specific guidelines for selecting leaders. This became painfully obvious when the former senior pastor acted alone to choose a new pastor (his own preferred successor) who had no prior ministerial experience or no seminary training. After much reflection, the previous church seemed to have had, as described by Savage and Presnell, a systemic problem. It was a situation in which certain leaders operated with un-recognized personality and behavioral traits that were not the best fit for the overall health of that particular church.¹ As we have already seen in this paper's introduction, when the dust settled, the results were disastrous: the church split and parishioners and leaders scattered.

Out of the church split, a new church was planted in which I currently serve as the founder and senior pastor. Some of the leaders who serve at WWC now witnessed firsthand the

¹Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 117.

prior leadership dysfunction. In discussion with them, we discovered that we share the same concerns about ministry leadership and what it should look like in the new church. This is very much in evidence when I raised these questions: what can be done to point leaders in the direction of increased leadership effectiveness? What do leaders understand about their own psychology, strengths and weaknesses? Do leaders understand what true leadership is? What can be done in local ministry contexts to increase the effectiveness of present leaders? “Knowing our past, we are determined not to forget our history, so that we do not repeat that which is not productive for our future.”² As leaders of WWC, we know that avoiding the pitfalls of the past can be easier said than done. We also knew and understood that something had to be done to help us become better at leading people. We did not want to repeat the model and mistakes that we experienced in our former church. After sermons on leadership and conversations with leaders at WWC, those leaders consented and were very excited about forming an LAC board to launch a project. Together, we would seek to gain insight or even answers for these lingering questions and concerns.

We formed the LAC whose members included individuals who are leaders in a variety of professional career fields. Collaboration between the LAC members and myself began with the framework of my own story, pre-project events, current ministry context and a preferred future. In the existing ministry context, the LAC re-approached WWC leaders and some members to confirm narratives and stories that I had brought to them as the LAC formed. During this time we positioned ourselves to listen carefully for clues about areas that would interest leaders to continue to share their own narratives. Information gathered from the pre-project events was valuable in guiding the design process. Out of these discussions, we heard key words such as

²The quote is by Steven Allen, statement made to Westside Worship Center on November 12, 2014 and used in the project paper, Doctor of Ministry Program at Drew University.

trust, confidentiality and safe environment. It was clear that the leaders were interested in sharing more narratives as well as to listen to ideas that would help them become more effective in leadership. Importantly, there had to be a place and space set apart so as to hear ideas and impart areas of formation.³ The LAC and I continued with numerous meetings via face to face meetings, emails, conference calls and individual phone conversations throughout the project design phrase. During one of the meetings, we agreed that based on the concerns/questions, the project design and methodology should consist of the following components. The LAC suggested that a two day retreat (Friday evening and Saturday) should be the foundational platform whereby potential participants could explore their personal lives in forms of meaningful exchange. The LAC and I then took some days to ponder the content that would be most suitable for the retreat agenda. The LAC and I agreed on the items shown in (figure 7) below.



Figure 7. LAC Approved Retreat Agenda, Friday Evening

³Pre-Project Events: this was a recreational event that allowed the LAC and I to get up close and personal with some of WWC's members and leaders to gather more information needed for the project design.

The LAC and I discussed and worked through the agenda items in detail. We wanted to make sure there was clarity, explanation and purpose. The LAC and I outlined the agenda in annotated format to make sure we were not missing anything of substance.

CHECK-IN: LAC and I felt that the check-in should be planned to allow participants time to get checked in and settled with their room accommodations. If there were any issues, this would give them time to resolve these concerns to avoid distractions during the session.

REGISTRATION: The LAC meetings suggested that there be an assembly point for the participants to sign in, pick up name tags, and meet and greet others informally. Also, certain LAC members thought that this gathering time would allow the organizers to keep track of whether participants had arrived and were to ready to proceed with the event.

ADDRESS: The LAC and I discussed what should be in the address. It was their hope that the address would be couched in welcoming language; include our stated purpose, goal & objective; and introduce the agenda for the next day. The LAC felt the address would allow the organizers/researchers to set the tone for the event.

ICEBREAKER: The LAC and I wanted to introduce an experience to get people engaged with each other and stimulate discussion with the session topics. In general, we agreed that an icebreaker would be a good instrument to use for engaging the participants. Finding the right one was not easy and the assigned LAC member spent countless hours searching for relevant options to suit our purpose. Having attended seminars, training sessions and conferences in the past, the LAC and I have observed some common mistakes experienced at these events. The events seemed to focus on getting people talking only and seem to lose sight of the importance of keeping the icebreaker relevant and aimed at the main objective for the attendees. The LAC member was intentional on making sure the icebreaker was pointed and purposeful. With great

care, the LAC member designed an icebreaker to help people feel at ease, comfortable, relaxed and stress free. The goals were for the participants to experience the exercise as meaningful without causing embarrassment or creating anxiety. More on the results of that experience will be forthcoming in chapter four.

FELLOWSHIP: The notion of a fellowship event idea surfaced in our LAC meetings. After some discussions, the LAC and I thought this would function as another breakout moment to bring people closer together in our ongoing efforts to foster trust, harmony and familiarity with each other. As we continued to brainstorm the idea, we decided that fellowship occasions such as dining, entertainment or recreational activities are good relational approaches to break through isolation barriers and create opportunities to collect narratives. As one of the members observed, many people seemed to be ready to tell their story, but were waiting for the right space, place and time to do so. The LAC agreed: in the process of collecting stories, the environment has to be just right. Another LAC member suggested that one might compare the process to the germination of dormant seeds.

Germination is the growth of an embryonic plant contained within a seed. Most seeds go through a period of dormancy in which there is no active growth. Dormant seeds are still ripe, but do not germinate because the surrounding conditions are not suitable for growth. If handled carefully, the same dormant seed could be removed from adverse conditions and be planted in soil rich with the proper nutrients. With the precise mixture of water, oxygen, temperature, and exposure to light, the seed coat will break and allow the seed to sprout.⁴

This analogy acted as the glue that harmonized our thinking in favor of the fellowship event. We came to a consensus that this would help the participants feel that this was a safe

⁴Wikipedia contributors, "Germination," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Germination&oldid=630673961> (accessed November 6, 2014).

environment to share their narratives. The LAC and I consented and designed a fellowship event for Friday's agenda and we continued with the ideas for Saturday's agenda. Figure 8 below shows the items agreed upon by the LAC and I.

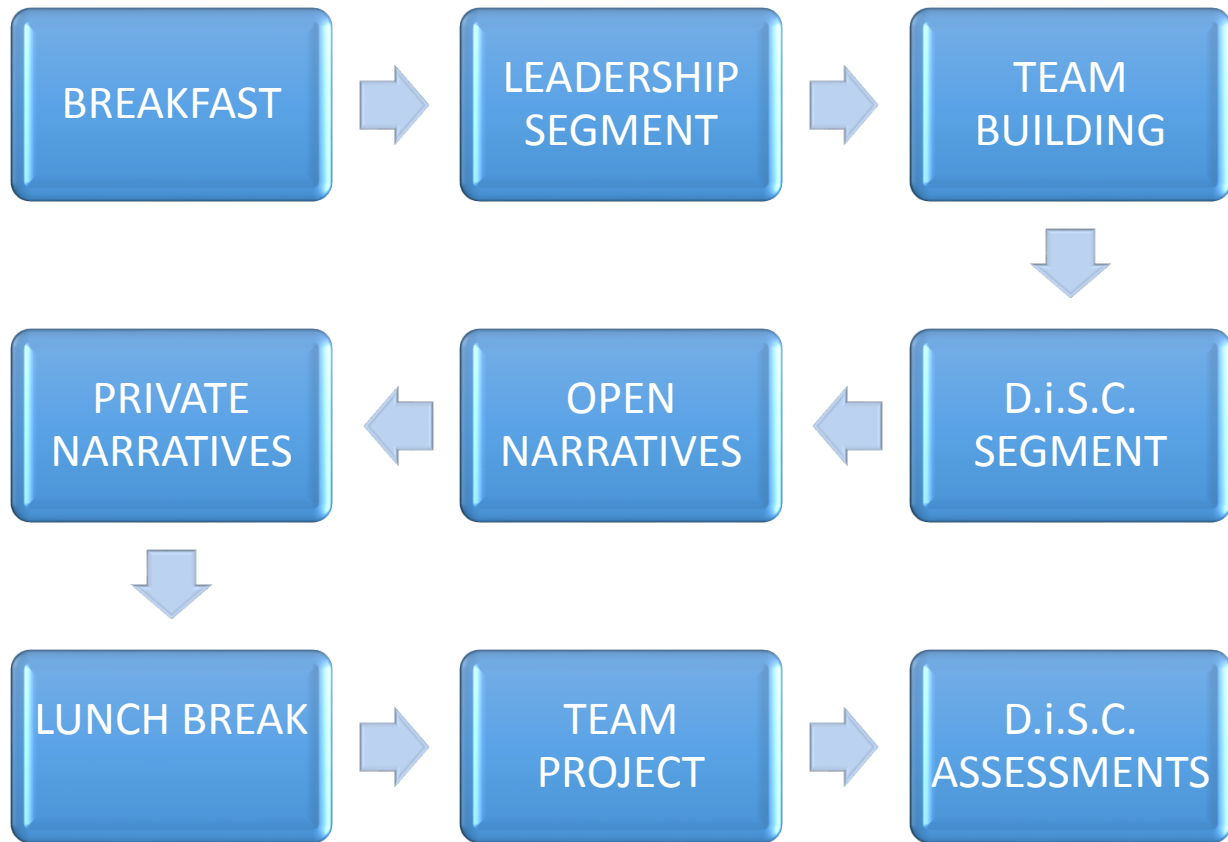


Figure 8. LAC Approved Retreat Agenda, Saturday

Designing and planning a Friday evening outline of events to suit an audience who had worked all week was a challenge. Designing an all-day Saturday event was even tougher. The LAC and I established that the agenda design for Saturday had to be unquestionably dynamic or energetic to avoid boredom.

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST: The LAC and I decided that a breakfast of some sort should be used to gather the leaders for a quick hello to start the day and to make sure they would be on time for the opening session.

LEADERSHIP SEGMENT: Since the project was centered on leadership, the LAC and I unanimously agreed there should be a session designed to explore the idea of leadership from a Biblical perspective. What we planned was a succinct Bible encounter, an interactive study on leadership viewed Biblically, theologically and practically. The Bible encounter would look at Christian Scriptures to explore and capture biblical narratives about self-awareness and leadership. The encounter would be another tool to further the momentum generated at the retreat. We expected that Old Testament and New Testament narratives would be a rich resource for our work together.

TEAM BUILDING: One of the LAC members designed this activity to get leaders thinking about leadership as a team concept rather than an individual venture. The idea was to help leaders see the big picture of how the components affect the whole.

D.i.S.C. SEGMENT: The narrative of concern and opportunity surfaced questions that prompted another LAC member, who works in the social sciences field, to suggest that we place on the agenda some sort of psychological or personality assessment program. Knowing that the program had to be simple, yet comprehensive, she asked if anyone were familiar enough with an assessment program to recommend? I proposed the D.i.S.C. classic 2.0. The LAC asked that a presentation and overview of the program be given for all of us to review.

In essence, the D.i.S.C. profile is a nonjudgmental tool. It is a system of personal profile personality tests developed from psychologist William Moulton Marston's D.i.S.C. research. We learned that the D.i.S.C. personality profile reliably describes dimensions of human behavior and

personality based on a four-quadrant model: 1) **Dominance**: a person who is direct, decisive independent and to the point. That person is a bottom-line and results-oriented individual who is often strong-willed, enjoys challenges and wants immediate results. 2) **Influence**: a person who is optimistic, social and outgoing. These people enjoy being on teams, sharing openly, entertaining and motivating others. 3) **Steadiness**: a person who is a team player, cooperative and supportive of others. This person prefers to be in the background, working in a stable environment. (S)he is often a good listener who prefers to avoid conflict and change. 4) **Conscientiousness**: a person who is cautious and concerned. These people are focused on quality, details and accuracy.⁵ Additionally, the LAC and I explored features and benefits offered by the D.i.S.C. program that would be useful for what we were trying to accomplish with the Doctor of Ministry Project.

FEATURES OF D.i.S.C. including a **D.i.S.C. Graph**: A visual display of scores in the four dimensions. As presented, this graph lists a person's Classical Pattern and explains more about the person in different stages. **Stage I: Highest D.i.S.C. Dimension** is an in-depth, personalized narrative of those characteristics that reveal the highest D.i.S.C Dimension. This describes patterns of interpersonal preferences, behaviors, and emotional reactions. **Stage II: Intensity Index Table** is a list of adjectives that may describe the respondent based on the score on each of the four D.i.S.C dimensions; together with the **Intensity Index Narrative** which is an explanation of each of the adjectives, highlighting strengths and growth areas within each of the four D.i.S.C. dimensions. **Stage III: Classical Profile Pattern** is a personalized narrative summary of the participant's Classical Pattern (D.i.S.C.). This pattern includes **Motivation** that describes one's basic incentives, personal goals for interaction with other people and the patterns

⁵"D.i.S.C. Classic 2.0 Profile." D.i.S.C. Classic 2. 0 Profile by Inscape Publishing. <http://www.internalchange.com/> (accessed November 7, 2014).

of behavior that result from these unique motivations. The Classical Profile Pattern provides information on **work habits** and describes behavioral tendencies at work, including how one gets things done and influences others. The Pattern also discusses goals that might be important for a person with this pattern and describes situations it might be wise to avoid.⁶

BENEFITS OF D.i.S.C. including: discovering behavioral strengths, learning to value the strengths of others, discovering ways to deal with conflict effectively and improving team effectiveness. D.i.S.C. is known to cultivate teamwork and reduce team conflict, develop strategies to meet a diversity of needs as well as improve communication skills through facilitating communication styles. In addition, it can be used in sectors such as sales to increase skills in understanding client or customer behavior and decision making styles, improve customer relations and satisfaction, reduce personal and organizational conflict and stress, manage interpersonal communication better and enhance and develop coaching and mentoring skills⁷

After reviewing the D.i.S.C. details as discussed and presented in the LAC meeting, the committee believed this was the assessment needed for the project. It seemed to be best suited to help us address the concern that self-awareness is the first step for leadership effectiveness.

OPEN NARRATIVES: The LAC and I discussed and planned to offer two platform options to evoke stories. We planned an open narrative option to shift the atmosphere and test the participants' willingness to share and discuss their stories in an open forum. We hoped to see if they felt safe telling stories in that environment. The open forum option offered an opportunity to observe body language and facial expressions. It seemed promising as a method to alert the

⁶"D.i.S.C. Classic 2.0" <https://www.onlinediscprofile.com/disc-classic/> (accessed November 8, 2014).

⁷"D.i.S.C. Classic 2.0 Profile." D.i.S.C. Classic 2. 0 Profile by Inscape Publishing. <http://www.internalchange.com/> (accessed November 7, 2014).

LAC and me of participants' preferred narrative setting (open/closed). We thought this option would put us in a Kenotic position to empty ourselves of fixed ideas and sharpen our hearing to identify emerging and preferred stories. We wanted the participants to sense we were interested in listening, hoping this action would literally open the narrative flood gates. We design this option to use as an indicator should the major participants not want to share in the open forum. If that would be the case then, it could signal the following: 1) The environment is not right because of lack of trust with one another. 2) The environment is not right because of confidentiality issues with the research staff. 3) Or perhaps, they just prefer talking about the narratives or stories in a private setting. If the majority of the participants did not want to share in the open forum, then, we would ask about their reluctance later. The other option would be to share narratives privately.

PRIVATE NARRATIVES: The LAC and I choose this option as another platform to evoke stories for those who are not willing to discuss their stories openly. This option would still test the LAC's and my ability to relate to people in the areas of patience, humility, compassion, understanding, respect and sensitivity. Also, we designed this option to see if the participants trusted us to share their narratives with us even in private settings.

LUNCH BREAK: The lunch break was the half way or three quarter mark of the retreat and was a major milestone for the project. The LAC and I created this moment to observe several things. 1) When the participants broke for lunch, would they go their separate ways, as if there were no developing comradery? 2) Would participants choose to eat together or alone, as if the leadership segment, team building or open narratives sessions had shaped group members' interaction with each other? 3) What topics of discussion would the participants bring up at the lunch break (e.g. retreat activities, ministry items/concerns or personal subjects)? 4) What might

we observe about the participants' thinking at that point and might we gather more narratives and observe early signs of changing paradigms?

TEAM PROJECT: The LAC and I decided that the participants would engage in a team activity where they would create, design and manage a small project together. The purpose would be to allow the participants to work together, hands on, to experience the importance of casting vision, organizing, training and preparing people for task. Also, we hoped that we might glean the conviction from this exercise that lack of proper preparation and out-of-place leaders could cause dysfunction in institutions and ministry.

D.i.S.C. ASSESSMENT: Strategically, the LAC and I placed the actual D.i.S.C. assessment testing at the end of the second retreat session. This would be the moment in which the participants would take the D.i.S.C. Classic 2.0, the online version, on-site. We purchased an online assessment test for each retreat attendee. The LAC and I assigned one person the task of administering the test to each of the participants. The online test takes only twelve to fourteen minutes online. The time we allotted for the testing was set for thirty to forty five minutes. As you can see, the project design and methodology included many components. In addition, this project incorporated two of Mason's research questions as explained by ethnographer Mary Clark Moschella. The LAC and I decided to adopt the Mechanical Puzzles that explore: "How does this work (this way)?" and Causal/Predictive Puzzles that ask: "How does this impact that?"⁸ We created questions to help the participants understand these two puzzles in connection with our overall concern of self-awareness as essential for leadership effectiveness.

In chapter 4, I will show how we implemented the project design/methodology and what we experienced.

⁸Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 68, 77.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, THE EXPERIENCE

In this chapter, I will discuss the implementation and the actual experience of the project. After the pre-project events, the project began as the participants came into a created space separated from their day-to-day activities and secured by a covenant of confidentiality. As demarcated by Hester and Walker-Jones, this was “A Liminal Space.”¹

The LAC and I created this liminal space by inviting leaders to an inclusive retreat held at the beautiful Wyndham Resort Hotel as shown in figure 1 below.

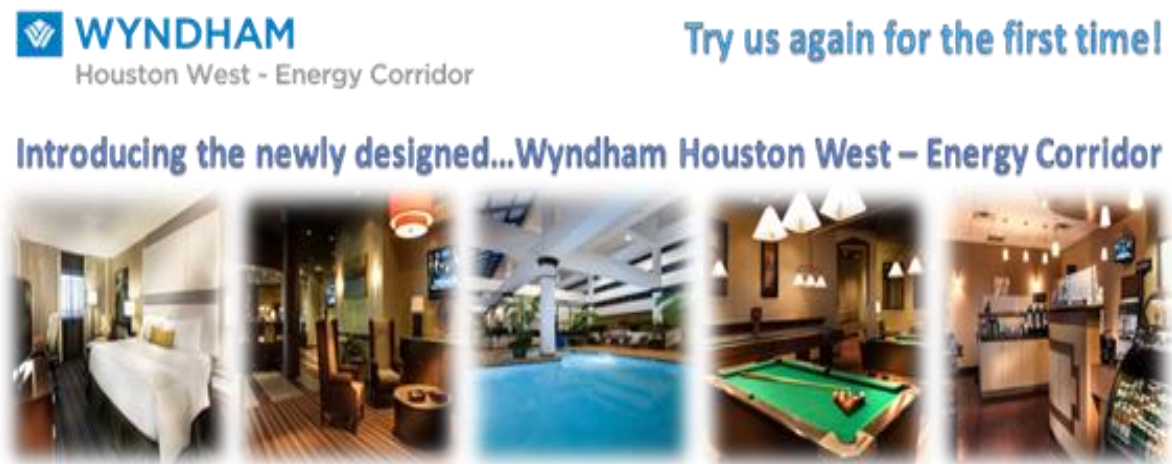


Figure 9. Retreat Site²

As the participants arrived at the hotel on Friday evening, they were met by one of the LAC members who directed them to the check-in station. The participants gathered for registration in

¹Richard L. Hester and Kelli Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It: The Power of Narrative in Clergy Leadership* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009), 66.

²Photo courtesy of the Wyndham Houston West-Energy Corridor.

the ballroom filled with grandeur and inspirational music and then heard a motivating address that included welcome, purpose, goals and weekend agenda. In conjunction with the opening display of pomp and circumstance, the evening shifted to some powerful engaging icebreakers.

The icebreaker was a three part activity. Part I was a grab bag of questions: 1) Tell us something unique about you. 2) If you could travel anywhere in the world right now, where would it be and why? 3) If you had a time machine that could allow you to go to any period of time in the past or the future, when and where would it be, and why? 4) Tell us someone you admire and why? 5) What do people say they most admire about you and why? 6) What do you value most in your relationships with people and why? 7) What was the best thing that happened to you recently? 8) What was the best purchase you made recently? 9) What is your favorite



Figure 10. Icebreaker Part I Grab Bag

room in the house and why? 10) What is your biggest pet peeve? 11) What is the one chore you hate to do and why? 12) Name something on your wish list right now. 13) What is your favorite food/restaurant? 14) What is your favorite ice cream flavor? 15) What is your favorite TV show/movie? 16) If you could live a day in the life of a Bible character, who would it be

and why? 17) If you had to be a type of animal/insect, what would it be and why? 18) If you could possess a superhuman superpower, what would it be and why? 19) What has been the most meaningful Bible verse to you and why? 20) Tell us 3 things you like (or dislike) about your current job or ministry. 21) What are you most afraid of? 22) What brings a big smile to your face? 23) When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? The instructions for this exercise were that the bag full of questions would be passed around and each person

would grab a question out the bag. Once the person pulled the question out the bag, (s)he had the option to answer, pass or call on the group to answer the question collectively. These questions generated a level of energy that spurred interaction and excitement among the participants. This energy carried into Part II.

Part II was an activity we called agree, disagree, strongly agree, and strongly disagree. We posted paper banners in four different locations in the room labeled agree, disagree, strongly agree and strongly disagree. The facilitator invited the participants to listen as the following statements were read, think about their responses and move to the labeled area that best represented their viewpoints on the statement. The list of statements was as follows: 1) When it comes to leadership, you either have it or you don't. 2) Everyone cannot be a leader, some are



**Figure 11. Icebreaker
Part II Agreements**

just meant to be followers. 3) Leadership should be earned, not given or handed down. 4) Titles, degrees, honors and awards determine leadership. 5) Experience is the key to effective leadership. 6) Self-awareness is the key to successful leadership. 7) An introvert cannot be an effective leader. 8) It is impossible to be an effective and successful leader apart from a personal relationship with God. 9) Leaders are born, not made. 10) I was born to be a leader. Leadership comes natural to me. 11) Even though I do not seek out leadership positions, it always seems to find me. 12) I am an effective leader. 13) My current job or ministry maximizes my leadership potential. 14) Everyone is a leader.

There was much debate and discussion among the participants regarding these statements. The room was buzzing with discussion and, at the same time, was marked by deep

thought as participants sought to present their cases. This activity seemed to get the participants really thinking about a collective definition of leadership. Their engagement was apparent in their countenances and expressions. Marcus R. stated: “I cannot remember an exercise of such that has provoked and challenged my beliefs on leadership.”

Part III was a board/flip chart word association activity. The instructions were for each person to write on a piece of paper the one quality that first came to mind when thinking of an effective leader. Once everyone finished, the facilitator asked each person to call out the quality



**Figure 12. Icebreaker
Part III Flip Chart**

and he wrote that quality on the flip chart. In addition, the facilitator asked the participants to name a person or character (historical or contemporary, fictional or non-fictional, real/cartoon) that (s)he considered a leader and to write one word on a piece of paper that described that person’s strongest leadership quality. On another flip page, the facilitator wrote down the character called out by each participant. Thus, we moved from Part I (talking about self) to Part II (thinking about how leadership evolves), to Part III (describing what true

leadership should look like). Shawn B. had never facilitated an icebreaker and felt that his personality profile was not fitting for the task. Afterward the icebreaker session he stated: “Leading the icebreaker exercise revealed an ability that I did not know I had.” The three part activity set the tone for the evening fellowship and the events that would take place on the next day.

We began Saturday’s events with a continental breakfast. The participants gathered with great feelings of expectation. We had enough time to say hello and ask some quick questions:

How are you? What do you think thus far? And we got the day started with the planned leadership segment.

We initiated the leadership segment with an interactive Bible encounter. Here, we attempted to answer the questions “What is leadership” or “What does leadership look like? The facilitator led us in a study during which we looked at several Bible characters such as Gideon and Jonah. However, the facilitators gave leadership emphasis to the life of Moses and Paul due to participants’ familiarity with these individuals. These two Bible characters seemed to best model the notion that self-awareness is essential to leadership effectiveness. As previously mentioned in chapter two, we examined some of Moses’ qualities as a leader. We studied the indicators that he was the type of leader who showed much concern for God’s people. He had a



Figure 13. Facilitator Leadership Segment

certain kind of self-less demeanor about him. At the same time, he was willing to fight against anyone who tried to hinder the success of the people he was called to lead. Moses had some strengths and weaknesses that he seemed to be in touch with. One of the strengths we discussed was his ability to listen to others and one of the weaknesses was that he got angry at inopportune moments. Even so, we learned from Old Testament

scriptures that Moses seemed to be aware of who he was relative to his divine task. In the Bible encounter, the facilitator was careful to point this out from the Old Testament scriptures. The facilitator furthered the teaching by highlighting the qualities that made Paul an effective leader. The facilitator presented Paul as the paradigmatic leader. She aligned his leadership concepts with useful twenty-first century principles for Christian leadership. In addition, the facilitator

offered Myles ideals of leadership strategy, diversification strategy, strategic activities, and organizational change.³

This lesson brought out Paul's leadership strategy of leading by example. He was self-sacrificing and valued other leaders. He expected other leaders to do the same. The leadership lesson here is that effective leaders are often able to model or put into action their expectations. Can you be self-sacrificing and engage in activities that value others as Paul exemplified? Can you tolerate difference? The lesson reveals that Paul welcomed difference and change.⁴

The lesson was effective in presenting Paul's diversification strategy. Paul was called to a multicultural ministry. His goal and mission was to banish racism and build tolerance of differences. The early Christian church dealt with many issues such as gender, religion, class,



Figure 14. Participant Leader

and race that involved diversity and multiculturalism. The facilitator demonstrated Paul's use of scripture to oppose division and promote unification. In addition, the facilitator articulated other key points about Paul that increased his effectiveness. 1) Paul passionately wanted to reveal his vision of God's plan. 2) Paul wanted urgently to convey the purpose of Christian life in community and then, operate with extreme flexibility. 3) Paul guided organizational change by facilitating rather than dictating.

4) His leadership of organizational change involved transformation and development concepts that were radically centered on improving the effectiveness of organizations and the people in

³Sandra Johnson, "Leadership Lecture Series" at WWC retreat, April 26, 2014. Referenced Chantel C. Upshur-Myles, *Organizational Leadership Lessons Based on the Pauline Epistles* and used scripture references: Phil. v.18; 1 Cor. 1:4; Gal. 2:14 (KJV), 2.

⁴Ibid.

them. 5) Paul was trained secularly, religiously and, more importantly, he understood both who he was and how leadership worked in practical terms.⁵ There was much discussion among the participants on this subject. Mike C. expressed: “The Bible study shed a different light on Paul that has open my eyes to some areas that I must improve in as a leader.” We then implemented an illustration emphasizing the importance of unity, awareness and remaining keen to organizational needs as Paul was. This took the form of a team building activity called listening instructional action.

The team building exercise was a six sided figure drawn on an 8-1/2” X 11” piece of paper with explicit instructions: 1) keeping all five squares together, cut only the perimeter. 2) Make two additional straight-line cuts, and two only, to create the pieces which together form a single square, with no remainder pieces left over. 3) In case of a tie, the cleanest square (fewest extra markings) wins. See appendix 1 to view the diagram for the six sided figure.

The instruction were tedious, perhaps difficult to understand. Therefore, participants had to take their time to listen and carefully think through the instructions. The idea was to test their



Figure 15. Participants in Action

ability to hear instructions or important information coming from a leader or others. This exercise was given to experience kenotic listening or hearing together with follow-through in responding to the needs of leadership and perhaps the institution or ministry in which you serve. Lynette H. said: “For me, this exercise is a reminder of how critical

⁵Ibid. Gal. 3:8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31; 1 Th. 3:1-3 (KJV).

it is for leaders to hear and comprehend instructions.” Our next activity was the D.i.S.C. assessment.

As stated in Chapter 3, the D.i.S.C. assessment is a tool geared to help individuals understand their personality style and behavior through a four-quadrant model. Each quadrant of the assessment reliably describes a different style of human behavior. To prepare to administer the D.i.S.C. classic 2.0 profile online version, we purchased access to the online portal for each



Figure 16. Participants Taking the Assessment

participant, ensured that the hotel had Wi-Fi and checked that each participant brought a Wi-Fi capable laptop or iPad. Toward the end of the day, we gave instructions for accessing the online test. We provided a fifteen minute question and answer session about the assessment and once we resolved these issues we began the online assessment process. As described earlier, the online D.i.S.C. version has approximately twenty-eight questions and takes twelve to fourteen minutes to complete. We allowed the participants thirty to forty minutes to take the assessment in order to reduce possible stress. Once the participants completed the assessment, they were allowed to break momentarily while the administrator collected the profile examinations.

Once the assessments were completed, the Center for Internal Change scored them electronically and sent a PDF report to the project administrator. The report included individual names, the date the assessment was administered and, for each participant, a twenty page narrative detailing personality and behavior profiles. The administrator handed each participant a folder with profile results enclosed. After each participant received his/her assessment results, we allotted time for private review. We resumed the D.i.S.C. segment with open discussion about

the assessment and the results the participants viewed. Then, facilitators and I began asking the participants questions to get a feel for their views on leadership post assessment review.

The probing questions consisted of: After the assessment, what surprised you about the assessment results? What disappointed you about the assessment results? What strengths or weaknesses did you discover about yourself? What behavior patterns did you discover of self? Is your personality style or behavior patterns effective or ineffective for your current leadership position? If ineffective, what would be your plans to change? What do you think the long term implications of self will be on your leadership tenure? Do you feel like you are in the right place as a leader? If not, what general steps would you take to realign yourself? What has been your experience with ministry leadership? What do you think ministry leadership should look like? Or what would you like ministry leadership to look like? Do you have a new definition or understanding of what leadership is?

The decision about sharing individual results with the group was left up to each participant. Regarding the D.i.S.C. assessment, Chereese A. said: “seeing the actual leadership qualities, helps me to visualize what leadership should look like.” Sylvester H.: “I struggled with whether or not assessments are accurate portraits of one’s character. However, I was surprised about what it revealed about me.” Charlie R.: “I was not expecting the kind of results the assessment produced about me. I do see some advantages in favor of assessments for leaders.” We closed the D.i.S.C. segment/assessment and moved to a team project/exercise.

As a team, the participants came together and designed and planned a house party that would convene after the retreat. Each participant and each team member gave ideas on the type of event, place, time and date. Also, they helped plan the agenda and food menu. They assigned

an item on the agenda and menu to each participant and each had a responsibility to accomplish whatever the assigned item/task might be.

The house party took place the month following the retreat. All the participants met at the home of one of the participants. The first half of the evening's agenda included an opening prayer, greeting, recap of the retreat and dinner. After dinner, we continued with the agenda items: gathering narratives, continued with discussing individually and corporately the participants D.i.S.C. results. At the end of the evening event, we paused to thank and show our appreciation to the organizers, facilitators/researchers, participants and LAC members.

The purpose was to engage the participants in an event where they had to create, design and manage together. It allowed the participants to get hands on training experience of the importance of casting vision, organizing, training and preparing people for task. Also, we hoped that this exercise showed our conviction that lack of proper preparation and out-of-place leaders can cause dysfunction in institutions and ministry. Kayla N. remarks: "The team exercise has helped me re-align how I viewed leadership tasking. Working together seems to make a difference." Courtney G. commented: "Experiencing the various components laid out on Saturday including the team exercise has opened up something's about myself that perhaps is not good for leadership."

The project evaluation consisted of results from narratives, icebreaker, leadership segment, D.i.S.C. assessments, team exercise and observed changes. We shall move into these things in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

For the project evaluation, I began with Savage and Presnell's two-part contextualization of evaluation, observing change and discerning transformation. Savage and Presnell says:

“To observe change is when you compare the state of the context prior to a new ministry intervention and afterward. In a sense, this part of evaluation is only a measurement process. Has there been change in activity, habits, stories told, etc.?” Savage and Presnell also state: “The definition of transformation is a marked change, as in appearance or character, usually for the better.”¹

The authors go on to offer five perspectives for examining the project results in depth. I used two of the five for this project: both the Functionalist and Structuralist approaches. Savage and Presnell states:

“The Functionalist approach seeks to discern how parts of the narrative matrix fit together pre-and post-project.”² “The Structuralist approach looks for unnoticeable patterns that could impact the context and it is helpful in finding hidden elements that might stimulate change for the better.”³

We (the LAC and I) base the evaluation of this project on a recapitulation of what actually happened interwoven with narrative voices pre-project, methods and means implemented for the project, and post-project narratives. We also looked for conceptual signs of transformation using questions similar to those mentioned by Richard L. Hester and Kelli Walker-Jones: “How do they define themselves and stay connected to those who disagree with

¹Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 124.

²Ibid., 128.

³Ibid., 129.

them?”⁴ “How do they find ongoing community with clergy peers?”⁵ “How do they express and invite playfulness?”⁶ As we shall see, the pre- and post-project narratives differ. Also, the participants’ responses to the project revealed change and, further, indicated that the project may have seeded nascent activities of possible future transformation.

In my experience, trauma such as physical assaults, family feuds and nefarious schemes within secular systems, may be frequent. In contrast, when I think about the characteristics of a religious organization, qualities such as integrity, honesty and trust come to mind. Even though the Christian church as a whole is stained with blood of a dark past, I believe and think that there are still certain expectations that secular society and Christians have with respect to the church.

Pre-project narratives revealed that most people (leaders and lay members) within our ministry context never expected to be involved with a church split and the resulting leadership issues. Why? Because, their experience was not what they envisioned nor expected from such an influential and established institution as the church. They mentioned this with regard to WWC’s leaders who were directly or in-directly exposed to bad leadership praxis. The pre-project narratives were retrospective in nature, but forward in expectation. For example, in a group discussion, one of the leaders stated, “We all have experienced aspects of leadership that was not so pleasant. The question is, how will we use these experiences to better our present and future ministry?”

The pre-project narratives, collected in settings of recreational fellowship events and group sessions with leaders, reflect their past ministry experience with a view to what they want

⁴Richard L. Hester and Kelli Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It: The Power of Narrative in Clergy Leadership* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009), 74.

⁵Ibid., 81.

⁶Ibid., 86.

to see in future leadership and the new church. Another leader mentioned: “We need leaders that are genuinely concerned about the well-being of others and not just themselves.” Pre-project narratives from the group begin with discussing experiences with denominational barriers. These included that, as Pentecostals, the focus was primarily on the experience of signs and wonders with no orderly connection between these experiences and an effective structure for the church. As another leader stated: “The structure was of such God way of speaking to the church was through the mouth of only the pastor.” The structure was a hierarchical form of leadership with the primary responsibility, duties and decisions of the church falling on the shoulders of the one and only pastor. There was no organizational team of leaders with broad-based empowerment. With regard to financial issues, most of the church’s income went directly to the pastor. There was no financial accountability on behalf of the institution. The vision of the church seemed to be somewhat exclusive and if these issues came up in conversation or confrontation, satisfactory explanations had not been forthcoming.

The round table group discussion continued. Participants were WWC leaders, members and other leaders in the community who were familiar with the past denomination and now indirectly involved with our new ministry at WWC. As they talked, the narratives kept pouring forth in swarm-like fashion. Narratives about worship thickened: there was no theological explanation for the practices of a Pentecostal worship service (e.g. shouting, running around the church, speaking in tongues, exuberant expressions of bodily exercise and the like). To the seeker, the worship service could seem like a room full of confusion and crazy people. Pastors would get up and preach sermons off the cuff and say that it was Holy Spirit led. (I think the Holy Spirit can prompt you to give a sermon on the spot, but a pastor has to be careful of using this as an excuse to avoid study or preparation.)

Leaders were not valued as 1 Corinthians 12 would expect. Our original denomination made little investment toward ministers and leaders with regard to formal training. In fact, leaders were discouraged from receiving seminary training in many cases. Leadership may have done this to enhance their own control of the church or perhaps because they felt insecure. In discussion about this matter, some WWC leaders and members supposed that perhaps leadership did not know any better. Perhaps those leaders themselves had mentors and models of leadership that taught them independence and individualistic ways of thinking. Even one of our oldest members, eight-one years of age, said, “Certainly, the model of individualistic thinking is outdated and it cannot and should not be used for our new ministry. A paradigm shift is necessary for the future.”

Ray Anderson, a seminary professor for Theology and Ministry, shares thoughts similar to WWC’s leaders and members as he sheds light on the academic pursuits of the Pentecostal movement. He discusses how, in times past, Pentecostal movements focused largely on the manifestation of signs of the Spirit with attention given to experiential form of Christian faith. This movement had a great influence on people who were interested in the experience of the Holy Spirit and its effects; so much so that theological reflection on leadership was not a priority. Retraining leaders willing to re-tool to meet the demands of this changing society will be critical to the survival of the church.⁷

The pre-project narratives we have shared here represent the thoughts and concerns of leaders and laity at WWC about leadership actions and effectiveness, past, present and future. In the project phase, we sought to address their concerns: why did leaders make certain decisions that ultimately created and perpetuated dysfunction in the faith community? What can we learn

⁷Ray S. Anderson, *Ministry On The Fireline: A Practical Theology For an Empowered Church* (Pasadena CA.: Fuller Seminary Press, 1998), 155.

in the exchange of narratives about others and ourselves that would awaken our consciences toward becoming more effective in our leadership roles?

We implemented this project primarily in “a liminal space” as defined by Hester Walker-Jones.⁸ Our liminal space was a retreat, a weekend get-away with ministry participants that included: group activities (icebreaker), team building activity, fellowship and relationship building events. The weekend also included, a D.i.S.C. assessment, a tool to help individuals understand their personality styles and behavior profiles based on a four-quadrant model that reliably describes four styles of human behavior. We introduced a Bible encounter that was an interactive study on leadership viewed theologically and practically. In the Christian Scriptures we explored and captured Biblical narratives and characters that highlighted self-awareness as an essential component in achieving leadership effectiveness. In addition, the participants coordinated and managed a special team project which helped participants understand the importance of creating, organizing, training and casting vision as a team. The team project also illustrated our conviction that lack of proper preparation can cause dysfunction, reveal the weak link in the leadership team and expose the leader who might be out-of-place in the ministry context.

Finally, we implemented a survey based on Mary Clark Moschella’s Causal/Predictive Puzzles. We sought to ask: “How does this impact that?”⁹ Secondly, we considered her notion of Mechanical Puzzles that explore: “How does this work (this way)?”¹⁰ The scripture used to exemplify a Causal and Mechanical puzzle is Ephesians 4: 11-12:

⁸Richard L. Hester & Kelli Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It: The Power of Narratives in Clergy Leadership* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009), 66.

⁹Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 77.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 58-59.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

In Greek, the meaning of the term pastors/leaders (gr. ποιμήν) is a herdsman, a shepherd, someone who cares, someone who is a manager, director, steward of any assembly. He/she is there for the perfecting (gr. καταρτισμός) furnishing, equipping and bringing completion to the saints for the work of the ministry. The pastor/leader has the job of edifying (gr. οικοδομή) building, building up (i.e. the thing built, edifice), the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness. The scripture above describes a leader/pastor.

Business consultant John Kotter describes leaders as change agents who will prepare others to transition our organizations, business and churches to levels that will keep the life of these institutions healthy, wealthy and spiritual.¹¹

In contrast to the pre-project narratives, the post-project narratives yielded some interesting expressions. They indicated that something deeper had taken place. In the pre-project narratives the LAC and I heard concerns over the erosion of good leadership. They responded to the project with what seemed to be a willingness to let go of counterproductive leadership practice and became eager to do what it takes to be more effective leaders in our ministry context. For starters, several observed that the icebreaker was a powerful mechanism to help introverted or shy participants feel comfortable about participating in the retreat. They had noticed that the introverts weren’t communicating much with other participants and seemed somewhat disconnected from the group. But when it came to the task presented by the facilitator, our introverts were the most responsive, focused and productive for the activity at hand. This opened the eyes of those who had misinterpreted the ethos of introverts. It was as

¹¹John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 165.

though there was this sudden enlightenment about who introverts really are. As understood later, introverts do not share their thoughts with groups of people, sometimes to avoid conflict. People often misread this trait and concluded our introverts had nothing to add. Thanks to the icebreaker, other participants began to see the value of the introverts' contribution. They discovered that introverts have gifts for leadership, and teams do well to learn how to tap their personality strengths for the betterment of the institution. We saw leaders connecting and communicating with others from whom they had originally stayed away. This was a valuable lesson learned and helped leaders see and understand the effects their leadership has on other leaders and the congregation. Participants realized that when leaders get to know other leaders and others in the congregation, they reduce their risk of not knowing and misjudging situations. The introvert narrative was an example of why it is important for leaders to know themselves and others. For example, if a leader has discriminating tendencies, this trait, taken too far, can lead to closed-mindedness. The narrative reminded some leaders of how prevalent discriminating practice was among leaders of the past and why we have to be aware of our personality and behavior traits. The leaders expressed that they see how damaging discriminating traits can be to a leadership team in any context. The D.i.S.C. assessment revealed some things about ourselves that were difficult to receive, but necessary to know.

The leaders admitted they had never believed in assessments. Tradition of the past taught that those things were not instruments used by God to reveal truth about oneself. In contrast, what leaders discovered was just the opposite. Leaders learned that the D.i.S.C. assessment was an untapped well of personal potential and at the same time they became more aware of strengths and weaknesses relating to personality and behavioral traits that may increase or decrease individual or group effectiveness.

One leader stated:

“It is hard to understand why the past tradition could not see the benefit in such tools assessments. If these God-given instruments had have been implemented, then, I believe that some of the disastrous mistakes leaders of past made, could have been avoided or minimized. I have learned more about myself in fourteen minutes then I have in thirty four years. I have identified several specific traits that seem to be reasons why I have not been effective as a leader. I am committed to change or work on traits that are not fitting for my leadership position. I will use the good of my personality and behavior traits to become the most effective leader in my ministry context.”

In response to the assessment many of the leaders agreed that assessments should be a requirement for all potential leaders.

After taking the D.i.S.C. profile, some leaders have been brave enough to acknowledge that they feel like they are in the wrong ministry position. Some have resigned from current positions and others are waiting further assessment to perhaps be placed in other positions. Still others believe they can make adjustments to their personality styles and behavior traits to increase their effectiveness in their existing positions. This was somewhat tested, illustrated and demonstrated during the special mission/team exercise where the idea was for leaders to interact with other leaders in creating, designing, planning and executing an event as a team. It challenged leaders to see if they had the wherewithal to adapt or make sudden changes to fit the current team environment. This was echoed in conversation with leaders. A conversation that seems to stand out is one with a very young organist. He said:

“After taking the D.i.S.C. assessment and working with other leaders in a team exercise, something, as a musician I have never done. It has finally dawned on me what my frustration as a musician is. I have individual skills, but I have to keep in mind and understand how my individual skills fit and should function within the orchestra (the ensemble or group). I have been so busy trying to get everyone else to play to my music and was not trying to work with them in blending as a group.”

Most were able to adapt, while a few struggled with making timely adjustments to meet the demands of the group. Those who were able to adapt are positioned to be solid leaders for the

preferred future. Those who are slower at making changes to suit the needs of the ministry context may need more time to determine how they will develop within leadership roles.

A common thread that now seems to run through the leaders and members of WWC is that we agree: one leader is not called to be the cure for all or to do everything for everybody. Unlike the leaders of our former church, diversity of leadership in team fashion is the order of the day. Leaders can no longer be a “one man band.” This is illustrated in a jazz band: there is mutual interdependence between leader and musician, musician and leader, musician individually and musicians as a group. Everyone must play their parts for the betterment or success of the band as a whole. I like how Gibbs echoes this analogy when he quotes Barna as saying: “A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead, possess virtuous character, effectively motives, mobilizes resources, and directs people toward the fulfillment of a jointly embraced vision from God.”¹² In order to accomplish this kind of effectiveness to its fullest, it is essential that leaders understand that the first step, as the WWC leaders discovered, is self-awareness.

It is remarkable to see how far our leaders have come, considering where we started. Our past tradition was a strict Pentecostal religion where there was no foundation to create and implement an intellectual platform from which to introduce a hermeneutical and theological study of Pentecostalism with freedom to explore the study’s real meaning. All we had was an experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and everything else (i.e. secular technology advancements and psychological assessment tools) was considered off limits. The leaders and I wanted to break that mold. Hence, our endeavor then and especially now is to educate, train and develop effective leaders. Our quest is to take our leaders beyond the Pentecostal experience and

¹²Gibbs, 114.

to connect them with theology and every technological advancement God is using to develop the people, especially leaders. It's not that we want to take away anyone's experience of God. But we do want to add substantive content to the expression of that experience. My belief is that theological and educational inadequacies among Pentecostals have led to misunderstandings concerning the church. A thorough examination on the subject within itself may bring clarity and correction to praxis that is not scripturally founded.

I myself have been impacted by the project process and the new emerging future of WWC. I think history serves a purpose in the life and journey of the Christian. In this case, history is being used as a stepping stone towards a divine destiny God has set forth for my life. My past experiences created the kind of thirst and drive for something more. Kotter's study shows that it is the "visionary that has the greatest potential to break through all the forces that support the status quo and has the ability to encourage the kind of dramatic shifts found in successful transformation...."¹³

As senior pastor, my strength is influence. I can recruit essential leaders to develop vision and strategy for the task at hand. My weakness is that I am not an expert on all subject matters. My perfectionism sometimes can annoy leaders. Ministry cannot be done in a vacuum. I've learned that I could be more tolerant with people. The church is an organized body made up of a diverse group of people with different personalities, temperaments, gifts, talents and ideas. Therefore, my actions, behavior, attitude have to reflect that reality. I have made a conscious effort to modify and make adjustments to traits that may have impeded my personal effectiveness as a leader.

¹³Kotter, 68,

EPILOGUE

The narrative that led us to this project is a story that talks about a ministry leadership experience that was, on the one hand, negative. On the other hand, it was a history lesson about practices that it would not be effective to repeat in any context, and especially within a new church plant. Participants in this project did not realize much of the history that surfaced until they stepped away and began to reflect on components of past experiences growing up in a Pentecostal context.

Determined not to repeat the mistakes of the past, leaders began asking questions that appeared in the introduction to this paper which I can summarize with the last of these: Can leadership effectiveness soar to heights untold and set a foundational path for a new church plant to build a long lasting legacy?

We are clear that the new church was not planted solely on the basis of what happened to us in the past. It was out of obedience to the call of God that we did indeed begin a new church. Most of the questions asked by the leaders will need years of spiritual growth to answer. The project was born to raise the consciousness of leaders that self-awareness is an essential component of leadership effectiveness. In the famous words of Yogi Berra: “If you don’t know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else.”¹ Although it might be difficult to predict the outcome of such a project, it is important to map the path as best as possible to avoid pit falls such as chaotic wandering.² Our planning roughed the trail for journey as ethnography

¹Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 63.

became the compass affecting both direction and logistics of this project. I hope I have conveyed our transformation at our discovery: self-awareness is the essential starting point towards effective leadership.

The purpose of this project is to educate, empower and encourage leaders at Westside Worship Center (WWC) to increase their effectiveness as transformational leaders. It is my prayer that WWC leaders will continue to re-discover who God has called them to become. In my own narrative, my gifts were misused and abused as I was passed over and overlooked. In this project, I hope to have raised awareness for church hierarchy (denominational and non-denominational) of how critically important it is to invest time, money and resources in church leaders. The idea here was for the hierarchy to understand the gifts of leaders to ensure that what happened to me does not happen to others. With great expectation and anticipation, I hope that this project is and will be transformative for my church (WWC) and faith communities of all types.

Recall that we designed the project around the narrative of concern surfaced by the leaders and me. The LAC and I then discussed and worked through the agenda items in detail. Gathering stories was not an easy task. We had to build bridges and platforms to create a comfortable environment for leaders to speak freely about their narratives. We created a liminal space that stimulated discussion.

A retreat, a weekend get-away with church leaders was the space created which included: group activities such as team building activities, fellowships, relationship building activities. We introduced an assessment tool called D.i.S.C. for the purpose of getting leaders to themselves better, and it was a major component of the project.

²Ibid.

We convened with a succinct Bible encounter and WWC leaders coordinated and managed a special team project. The use of questions similar to Mary Clark Moschella's Causal/Predictive Puzzle that asks: "How does this impact that?"³ and the Mechanical Puzzle that explores: "How does this work (this way)?" may help leaders to see and understand the effect their leadership has on other leaders and the congregation.⁴ We also hope that demonstrating effective leadership will strengthen the congregation as a system.

We used the two of Savage and Presnell's notions of evaluation to observe change and discern transformation.⁵ The authors' perspective for examining the renewed context post-project was valuable in assessing the work that we did. Of course, observation is ongoing as it relates to component changes. This project was an opportunity to shift the paradigms of church leaders. Some of the leaders currently at WWC saw first-hand how much harm was caused by untrained leaders with unresolved internal issues. This project provided a chance for leaders to change the way they understand themselves and how leadership works.

For me, personally, this project revealed that ministry cannot be done in a vacuum. I learned that I have room to grow in tolerance with people. The church is an organized body made up of a diverse group of people with different personalities, temperaments, gifts, talents and ideas. Therefore, I want my actions, behavior, and attitude to be reflective of team play. The church is like that of a natural body with functioning parts, and it is important to find one's place in it so that the Body of Christ can function as smoothly as possible.

³Ibid., 77.

⁴Ibid., 58-59.

⁵Savage and Presnell, 123.

We learned that it is not effective to view church ministry as something that can be done in a haphazard way. In the Body, every gift, talent, and calling has room to be perfected because it is a critical functioning part that makes the body complete, whole and healthy. Administration is very important to a church ministry. Gifted people placed properly can synergize the ministry. They can develop process improvements, use technology to streamline the way service is carried out in congregation and community, improve communications, and connect relationships. Before placing leaders, churches might find it useful to employ a good assessment tool.

APPENDIX 1

Six Side Figure

	<p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cut out the 6-sided figure, keeping all five squares together—cut only the perimeter.2. Make two additional straight-line cuts, and two only, to create the pieces which together form a single square, with no remainder pieces left over.3. In case of a tie, the cleanest square (fewest extra markings) wins.

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