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# A Pentecostal Expression of Holistic Reflection in the Improvement of Pastoral Leadership Practices

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# A PENTECOSTAL EXPRESSION OF HOLISTIC REFLECTION IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DMin Dissertation

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The first person I want to acknowledge in this dissertation is the Holy Spirit.

> Even tho [sic] we honor the Father and believe on the Son, how little do we live in the Holy Spirit! May the Holy Spirit whose divine work I have uttered in human words and with stammering tongue, crown this labour with such blessing that you may feel His unseen presence more closely, and that He may bring to your disquieted heart more abundant consolation (Kuyper 1888:n.p.).

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*Soli Deo Gloria*

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## GLOSSARY

**Exploitable.** To use someone or something, usually selfishly or for profit.

**Epistemology.** Is the study of knowledge. "Epistemology is the part of philosophy having to do with knowing and believing." William Placher, *The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology* (London: John Knox Press, 2007), 83.

**Glossolalia.** Speaking in an unknown language defined by Russel Spittler as, "the usually, but not exclusively, religious phenomenon of making sounds that constitute, or resemble a language not known to the speaker. It is often accompanied by an excited religious psychological state and in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement it is widely and distinctively (but not universally) viewed as the certifying consequence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Russel Spittler, "Glossolalia," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 670.

**Hegemony.** Describes the representation of ideas, structures, and actions that are seen by the majority of people as normal preordained and working for their own benefit when in fact they are constructed and transmitted by powerful minority interests to protect the status quo that serves those interests. Stephen Brookfield, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995).

**Pentecostalism.** A renewal movement within Protestant Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God, through baptism with the Holy Spirit.

**Phenomenology.** Is the study of human experience and the way things present themselves to us in and through such experience.

**Pneumatology.** Refers to a particular discipline within Christian theology that focuses on the study of the Holy Spirit.

**Praxis.** Is the way in which a theory is enacted. It is a type of knowledge in which the learner engages, labels and alters the social realities of his or her existence. Jackie David Johns believes that the term praxis, "expresses a form of knowledge in which reflection and action are joined in twin-moments." Jackie David Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit: The Dynamics of a Pentecostal Model of Praxis" in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, eds. Murray Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Peterson (Carlisle, CA: Regnum Books, 1999), 71.

**Sola Scriptura.** By Scripture alone is the Christian doctrine that the Bible is the supreme authority in all matters of doctrine and practice.

**Transformational.** When the fundamental structure of the system is overhauled so that in addition to problem solving and symptom reduction, the system is permanently

redesigned. The distinctions in the level of change can be applied to the system of the individual as well as the system of the family or corporation. In theology, the transforming agent is the Holy Spirit. Transformation is when the individual experiences transcendence in relation to a distinct spiritual experience with the Holy Spirit.

**Transrational/Non-rational.** A way of knowing that is not of the mind but of the spirit, related to the knowledge generated by the Holy Spirit. These words are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an action research self-study undertaken with the aim of transforming my pastoral leadership practices with the extended application of assisting other leaders to do the same. The research question asks in what ways action research methodology with its inherent reflective methods contributes to pastoral leadership transformation. The primary outcome is a framework of holistic reflection that consistently and systematically works to transform my leadership practices. Through the action research methodology of constant iteration, I evaluated the effects of my leadership, reflected on the disconnect between my core values and my behavior and searched for a means to align my behavior and my values.

In the process I developed a method of spiritual reflection, consisting of spiritual disciplines as a means of non-rational knowledge creation associated with my experience of and engagement with the Holy Spirit. This method of spiritual reflection is in keeping with my pneumatological Pentecostal worldview and serves to extend the fundamental reflective thinking and critical reflection so useful in generating knowledge of a rational and affective kind. Traditionally these methods of reflection are common in action research as well as other inquiring approaches, including theological reflection. The application of holistic reflection in Christian praxis, explained in this dissertation, is applied to transforming pastoral leadership practices. Of note regarding the outcome of engaging with the process of action research is the identification of the internal processes and outward behavioral evidence as indicators of transformed leadership practices. The literature in the dissertation serves as a theoretical basis for an understanding of

transformation and grounding for the holistic framework presented, representing a whole person approach to reflective practice as it is applied in action research.

# INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I give an explanatory account of how my research has influenced me to transform my pastoral leadership practices. This account includes how my learning, developed thinking and changed practices have contributed to me leading in a more democratic and mutual way.

I view this way of leading as encouraging others to participate with me in collaborative, participatory and inclusive ways of leading. Through my inquiry I have discovered this style of leadership promotes cohesiveness of purpose and nurtures values that uphold the dignity and worth of all people, respecting their individual callings, gifts, talents, abilities, and knowledge. It is my belief that this way of leading calls forth the best from people and fosters honest and self-reflective organizational cultures that develop effective leaders.[1]

When I speak of having transformed my leadership practices in this way, I mean that my inquiries have facilitated the movement I am expressing, from a traditional autocratic and directive style of leadership to what I consider a preferred style that is more congruent with my values. Rather than my former task-oriented way of leading, which entailed giving directions, making decisions, and showing up as the solution, I now seek to facilitate and invoke the creativity of others, including team members, congregants, and global colleagues.

The dissertation also outlines how as an outcome of my inquiry, I developed a method of spiritual reflection as representing a more holistic approach to reflection, the

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[1] David Gortner, "Retraining Ourselves in Thought and Action: A Thematic Exploration of Leadership Literature," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (2010): 189-213.

application of which is outlined in detail, in a later chapter. The research associated with this dissertation suggests that action research with its inherent reflective methods contributes to self and practice knowledge leading to change and improvement. Evidence of this is drawn from an analysis of the data collected over an eight-year period of research. The data collected relates to undertaking cycles of research. Each cycle relates to a significant incident, a problem, troublesome or challenging personal or work-related experience or question often triggered by the outcome of the previous research cycle. The action research process therefore consists primarily of the journaling of these incidents or events with the practical application of reflective analyses that generates practitioner knowledge. From this knowledge ideas about new ways of acting emerge to be tested in practice. The learning that surfaces, contributes to developed thinking. Incongruences between actions and values are noted.

The accounts I provide throughout the dissertation sourced from my data archive are examples of the outcome of this inquiring process. The point of these practical accounts is to show my internal process and the outward behavioral evidence associated with the process. The main findings in this research are therefore how action research as a methodological approach contributes to self and practice knowledge, learning, development, and ultimately transformative change. Thus, inquiring into my practices in this way enabled me to challenge my routine ways of practicing leadership; it provoked thinking and questioning of these routines to see if in any way they were working against what I wanted to achieve with my leadership practices.

Action research is a form of thinking about knowing. Reflective methods associated with this approach facilitate understanding more deeply and critically about

what we are doing, how we are doing it, and how this impacts those we lead. Therefore, it has social implications. Improving the quality and effectiveness of my leadership as a pastor was crucial to me because my work is towards the flourishing of persons.

I believe in good leadership practices. In the context of my leadership as a pastor I clarify *good* to mean that I walk in integrity, hold myself accountable to God and others for my actions, and seek to serve people in a way that will make a difference and contribute positively to their lives. I also view good leadership as the willingness to learn, change, and improve. I do not believe that there is an ultimate or perfect way to practice leadership. However, I do hold the view that leaders who are willing to interrogate their practices and are open to having their thinking challenged and their practices evaluated are less likely to produce toxic leadership.[2] Anyone aware of what is transpiring in the world today understands the implications of toxic leadership on society. One needs look no further than our own organizations including the church to see that toxic leadership exists in every sector of society.

I have always had an interest in learning and over the years have pursued graduate and postgraduate education. I wanted to increase my understanding of how I interacted with the world and what types of capacities developed from these interactions. This interest about my place in the world and curiosity about leadership ultimately led me to a place of learning. It was at this place of learning where I was able to move away from what Peter Senge describes as the "habitual responses to superficial events, current circumstances and problems" that keep us disconnected from the whole to a more

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[2] Jean Kim, "8 Traits of Toxic Leadership to Avoid," *Psychology Today* (blog), July 6, 2016, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culture-shrink/201607/8-traits-toxic-leadership-avoid.

reflective way of thinking about the broader social and political implications of my leadership.[3] Prior to my inquiry I had never thought about the social and political effects of my leadership, although I had noted these effects in the leadership of others. Since my inquiry I function with a greater level of self-awareness, other awareness and practice awareness.

I chose to undertake an inquiry into my leadership practices because I wanted to ensure that the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and community contexts in which I exerted influence as a leader were benefiting from my leadership. Politically speaking I viewed leadership influence as related to power with the significance of how I perceived agency to have a central role in my actions. This political influence was associated with the dynamics of the organizational structures wherein I functioned in my diverse professional roles.

## Brief Outline of My Background

I have served as a full-time Pentecostal minister since 1986. My first pastorate was in Johannesburg, South Africa where I served from 1980-1993. Subsequently I spent two years in Canada where I established a Christian work among the marginalized in Vancouver's inner city. In 1996, our family moved to the United States, where we joined a Pentecostal denomination and where my husband and I were appointed as senior pastors of the church where I currently serve. In 2003, I was appointed as the divisional superintendent for thirteen area churches in our district and served in this capacity for ten

[3] Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, and Betty Sue Flowers, "Awakening Faith in an Alternative Future: A Consideration of Present: Human Purposes and the Field of the Future," *Reflections The SOL Journal of Knowledge, Learning and Change* 5, no. 7 (2004): 6.

years. In 2005, I became a board member of my denomination's foundation. I served in this capacity for eight years and as the vice chair for a year.

In 1996, I co-founded a non-profit organization together with my husband where I currently serve as Executive Director and am involved in the emerging world as a missionary educator. In 2002, I earned my Masters in inter-cultural studies with an emphasis in non-profit management.

My primary leadership role is directly situated in the church both locally and globally. Therefore given my three decades of leadership work and ministry experience in diverse sectors and nations, I believed that I had the background, experience, training, skills, interpersonal competence, capacity for empathy and cross cultural sensitivity to engage further in field work and analyses that could contribute to my own knowledge of leadership and later to use my educational influence to also help others.

## Interest in Leadership Practices

My curiosity about and interest in leadership is the result of my work in multiple geographical locations over three decades and is primarily related to my vocation as a pastor, missionary educator and concern for people. I view leadership as consequential. I see it as inevitably impacting the people with whom we live and work.

Leadership scholar Bernard Bass believes that fundamentally, leadership is built into the human psyche due to the long period we are nurtured by parents for our survival.[4] Leadership is a universal concept and is practiced in all societies. Leadership

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[4] Bernard Bass and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2009), 3.

occurs among all people regardless of culture.[5] Herbert Lewis' anthropological view is that "even when societies do not have institutionalized chiefs, rulers or elected officials, there are always those who initiate action and play central rolls in group decision making."[6] Therefore, leadership matters and anyone aware of what is going on in the world today would dispute that we are living in turbulent times.[7] It is my opinion that leading in such a climate requires increased leadership capabilities. These are capabilities that allow leaders to apply themselves to the task of responding effectively to the challenges and problems encountered in their practice contexts.

For example, church leaders like myself face difficulties related to changing church demographics and changing times, particularly as these are connected to globalization. Many church leaders in larger cities face challenges associated with the multicultural, multiethnic, socio-economic, gender, age, and language diversity represented in their congregations. Furthermore, leaders face challenges related to changing cultural perceptions about church. Church leaders are no longer deemed as influential as they once were, with a decreasing number of people seeing the relevance of consulting with clergy when making important decisions.[8] This, together with research

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[5] Henry Lester Smith and Levi McKinley Krueger, "A Brief Summary of Literature on Leadership," in *The Bass Handbook: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2009), 167.

[6] Herbert Lewis, "Leaders and Followers: Some Anthropological Perspectives," in *The Bass Handbook: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th ed., ed. Bernard M. Bass, and Ruth Bass (New York: Free Press, 2009).

[7] Paul Kinsinger and Karen Walch, "Living and Leading in a VUCA World," *Thunderbird School of Global Management*, July 9, 2012, http://knowledgenetwork.thunderbird.edu/research/2012/07/09/kinsinger-walch-vuca/.

[8] Jeff Karoub, "Americans Rarely Seek Guidance From Clergy," *Religion News Scinence,* July 8, 2019, https://religionnews.com/2019/07/08/ap-norc-poll-americans-rarely-seek-guidance-from-clergy/.

that shows that church attendance is on the decline in the West, is significant.[9] As a church leader it was important that I understood the changing dynamics of the clergy/congregant relationship. I also needed to comprehend the changing nature of the role of the church in Western society. This was to better engage and connect relationally with my congregation and the larger community, especially if I was going to be accepted and trusted to spiritually guide the people I was called to serve. For me achieving good leadership was the ability to embrace, accept, and transcend the complexities associated with pastoral leadership. Therefore, to think about leadership as a church pastor was to think about what it meant to effectively communicate the love of God to the people of the world. In order to spiritually influence my community, I had to therefore provide a safe, nonjudgmental, accepting environment in which people could experience healing, wholeness, spiritual awareness, and an enhanced relationship with God.

Ultimately, it was my curiosity about leadership and interest in practice improvement that arose as a Christian response to what I perceived to be the pain and suffering of others at the hands of decision makers and power brokers. At the time I did not relate what I was feeling as being contrary to my values. It was later as my inquiry progressed that I understood the importance of articulating these values so they could serve as the guiding principles by which I would later come to judge my leadership practices.

When beginning my research, I intuitively knew that I was to address the limitations of my own leadership in regard to the growing disconnect between people and the church. I assumed leadership inquiry was relevant because leadership behavior

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[9] David Voas and Mark Chaves, "Religion is on the Decline in the West, and America is No Exception," LSE US Center, n.d., http://bit.ly/2c5Y0ns.

determines the outcome of our leadership engagement. John Maxwell stated: "everything rises and falls on leadership."[10] I understood this to mean that who I was, what I did, and how I did it had consequences. I knew that how I led was a determining factor in my influence as a leader.

Furthermore, I discovered that Christian leadership scholarship revealed how some church leaders had abused their positions of authority. It also showed how some pastoral leaders were not only disconnected from the people affected by their actions, but also void of self-knowledge and awareness in terms of how their practices affected the people they were called to serve. Research conducted by Barbara Orlowski, showed that 54 percent of the people surveyed said they left the church because of controlling and abusive behavior by church leaders.[11] A survey with over 1000 respondents, conducted by Jane Overstreet leading up to Lausanne 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa, revealed leaders were perceived by their peers to be prideful; the big boss; having a lack of integrity; refusing to listen; uncaring; always right; untrustworthy; harsh; and critical.[12] It was evident to me from this research that an opportunity existed for pastoral leaders to transform themselves and their leadership practices.[13]

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[10] John Maxwell, *The Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), xi.

[11] Barbara Orlowski, *Spiritual Abuse Recovery: Dynamic Research on Finding a Place of Wholeness* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 187.

[12] Responses from 1,000 leaders when asked to describe their worst experiences working under leaders, and what characteristics identified poor leaders. Jane Overstreet, "We Have a Problem! But There is Hope!—Results of 1,000 Christian Leaders from Across the Globe," Cape Town 2010 Advane Paper, Lausanne Movement, Lausanne Leadership Development Working Group, Cape Town, South Africa, https://www.lausanne.org/content/we-have-a-problem-but-there-is-hope-results-of-a-survey-of-1000-christian-leaders-from-across-the-globe.

[13] Overstreet, "We Have a Problem!"

Change, which is a process of transformation, is not easy. Kurt Lewin, well known in the action research community stated that in order to understand a system you have to try to change it.[14] That suggested to me that a primary way to understand my leadership was to pursue personal and practice change. This contributed to my decision to pursue action research with a precise focus on my personal transformational change. I realized that without the capacity to change myself there was little hope that as a leader I could influence change in others including society, in the way that I would like. Deciding to do something about my own personal practices for the benefit of others is a prayerful act of care.[15]

I will now outline how the chapters in this dissertation are organized. Chapter One of the dissertation outlines the theological foundations. Chapter Two reviews the literature associated with leadership with an emphasis on leadership and power. In Chapter Three I outline the process of action research; make explicit the methods of reflection, i.e. reflective thinking and critical reflection inherent in this approach to research and show how from the limitations of these methods of reflection emerged spiritual reflection to shape a more holistic framework of reflection. Chapter Four explains how the method of spiritual reflection works, what disciplines are associated with this method and the theoretical basis associated with spiritual reflection. In Chapter Five I offer some concluding remarks with suggestions for further research.

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[14] Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts: Selected Papers on Group Dynamics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1948).

[15] Jean McNiff, "Action Research a Methodology of Care," in *Rethinking Pastoral* Care, ed. Una M. Collins and Jean McNiff (London: Routledge, 1999), 51.

# CHAPTER 1:

# THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this chapter, I provide a theological foundation for my research. Given the broadness of this subject I will address only the issues that relate directly to my research inquiry and contributions. I will begin by outlining how I am positioned in the research as a pastoral leader and offer some background on pastoral leadership and the defining characteristics of this ministry office. I will then make known the theology that guides some of the presuppositions I bring to the research. This includes discussions about God, the Holy Spirit, and Pentecostalism. Lastly, I will articulate the values I hold and show how they are shaped by my Christian worldview and serve as criteria for the standards by which I judge my practices.

## Professional Context—Pastoral Leadership

In this section I offer some background on pastoral leadership. The New Testament provides an explanation of Pastoral leadership. Ephesians (4:11-12 NIV) lists the Pastor as one of the gifts that Christ has given to the church, together with other gifts to equip people for works of service.[1] This is relevant to my research as it sets the parameters of my work as a pastoral leader. It is important to me that my leadership is *equipping others for service.*

Practically, the appointment of Pastors to churches varies depending on the Christian denominational tradition, specifically the structure and polity of each particular

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[1] "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

group. In the Pentecostal Christian tradition, if someone *feels* called to Pastor a church, they would most likely do so by seeing this move as their obedience to the call of God on their lives. Stephen Sprinkle sees ordination as a sign of God's initiative, a liturgical act and a "sign of the covenant in that the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the ordained and to the church are mutually acknowledged and received in the bond of love."[2]

In Pentecostalism the verification of this calling is often sought through prophetic utterance rather than through a procedural system where validation is sought from a formalized structure. This is associated with the pragmatic nature of Pentecostalism, which focuses on the importance of getting things done. The focus is on the immediate with little time for reflection, intellectual theorizing or detailed analysis.[3] My own inclination to action has been a source of my success as a leader but also my limitation. Therefore, choosing to do this research is my attempt to strengthen my leadership practices.

Functionally the pastor's role can be seen as constituting relational, motivational, and directional aspects of leadership. Therefore, church leaders are expected to be socially capable, inspirational visionaries, and spiritual guides. The pastor's role is also one of teaching preaching, guiding, and leading God's people.[4] The work of Church ministry often includes missionary work where the pastor may occasionally be involved in pastoral leadership work outside the local church. Sometimes this mission work is

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[2] Stephen Sprinkle, *Ordination: Celebrating the Gift of Ministry* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 98.

[3] Edmund Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation: Eastern Orthodoxy and Classical Pentecostalism on Becoming More Like Christ* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 205-206.

[4] Skye Jethani, "What Good Shepherds Don't Do," *Leadership Journal* 33, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 1-2, http://www.christianitytoday.com.

carried out beyond the country of the local ministry and is conducted in partnership with the host country's leadership through a non-profit, faith-based organization. I have been fortunate to function in such mission work, and the cross-cultural nature of that work has provoked my need to further improve my sensitivity to how other cultures function, thereby giving an additional impetus to this research.

In addition to the equipping role mentioned in relation to teaching, the work of the pastoral leader includes pastoral care. This care includes a range of duties from counselling, visiting the sick, officiating at baby dedications, adult baptisms, weddings, and funerals. As a result of the personal nature of this kind of ministry, the pastor forges deep relationships with the people of his/her congregation. In turn this relationship is developed and grows over time so that the pastoral leader becomes part of the experiences of the life of each family. A pastor's relationship with the congregation is not static but extremely dynamic and intensely personal. There is an expectation by the congregation that the pastor will lead with integrity and dedication.

Unlike other professions the pastor's leadership role is a fully integrated role and entails many aspects of the life of the congregation. This role demands wisdom, insight, resilience, and spiritual fortitude. All of the pastor's responsibilities amount to a variety of potentially complex leadership situations. There is also the tension between the pastor's need to be *spiritual but not too spiritual, human but not too human* (personal conversation with a Christian psychologist).[5] In smaller churches pastors are also expected to administrate and take care of financial matters. Given the wide range of duties associated with the office of the pastor, it is not surprising that some research

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[5] January 2015.

shows a high level of burnout among clergy.[6] David Runcorn says the burden of expectation upon leaders is huge.[7]

Additionally, we live in a society in which the church is viewed with extreme scepticism. This is particularly the case in recent times. Scandals have rocked the church in the same way they have rocked the halls of power in the corporate world and in government.[8] Failed leadership seems more common than ever across the societal spectrum, and such failures can do near irreparable harm in the church and in the local communities where the church is situated.[9] Such failures result from a lack of internal self-awareness and external accountability. Through self-awareness and accountability, we increase our credibility with others thereby challenging this scepticism.

Donald Schön called practitioners to reflective practice, because he saw "the professions having suffered a crisis of legitimacy, rooted in their perceived incapacity to help society achieve its objectives and solve its problems."[10] He linked the visible failures of professional practices directly to the impact it has on society. Thus, as representatives of God's work among the people of the world (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28; Gal. 1:1; 2:8;

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[6] William Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2002); William Grosch and David Olsen, "Clergy Burnout: An Integrative Approach," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 56, no. 5 (June 2000): 619-32; Benjamin Doolittle, "Burnout and Coping Among Parish Based Clergy," *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 10, no.1 (January 2007): 31-38.

[7] David Runcorn, *Fear and Trust: God-centered Leadership* (London: SPCK Publishers, 2011), 2.

[8] Mark Higgins, "Mars Hill: The Rise and Fall of a Seattle Church and Its Charismatic Leader," *The Seattle Times*, September 13, 2014, https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/special-reports/mars-hill-the-rise-and-fall-of-a-seattle-church-and-its-charismatic-leader/; Joel Connelly, "Ex-members, In Suit, Charge Mark Driscoll with 'Pattern of Racketeering' at Mars Hill Church," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 1, 2016, http://www.seattlepi.com/local/politics/article/Ex-members-in-suit-charge-pattern-of-6861173.php.

[9] Howard Gardner believes that leaders who have used their power and their pulpit to turn individuals against one another have wrought incalculable damage. Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[10] Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (United States: Basic Books, 1983), 39.

Rom. 1:1 NIV), it is necessary for pastors to ensure that they continue to monitor their practices to establish that their practices are good and that they contribute positively to the people they serve.

The relationship pastoral leaders have with their congregants and their community is spiritual, emotional, and social. Therefore, pastoral leaders must pay particular attention to their leadership practices. William Willimon describes what it means to be a spiritual leader,

> The clergy are not patrician upper crust set over plebeian laity. The essence of the priesthood is primarily relational (whom it serves) and functional (what it does) more than ontological (what it is). Clergy arose because of the church's need for leaders. The difference between a pastor who visits, preaches and baptizes, and any other skilled layperson who performs these same functions is in the pastor's officialness. The pastor functions at the authorization of the whole church. The pastor's acts are read by the whole church in a way that the individual Christian's are not.[11]

The above summary provides a glimpse at the unique pressures and responsibilities associated with the pastoral profession that I have faced, and which have stimulated my desire to do this research. The pastoral role is an important one, because it can either positively or negatively impact the lives of individuals and communities. Peter the Apostle admonishes Pastors to "be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve" (1 Peter 5:2 NIV).

Even though we have clear instructions from Peter (1 Peter 5:2) that serves as a guide for the pastoral leader's actions, evidence shows that people are leaving the

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[11] Willimon, *Pastor*, 18.

church.[12] Barbara Orlowski already mentioned reports that of four questions asked respondents in a survey she conducted, concerning why they left the church, fifty-four per cent said that it was due to controlling and abusive behaviour by church leaders.[13] The findings of Overstreet, also mentioned appear to be consistent with the findings of Orlowski concerning controlling and abusive leadership behaviours.[14] Overstreet's survey provides ample evidence to support the claim that some leaders in fact often abuse power. During this research I found myself at times being one such leader who unconsciously abused my power. Eugene Petersen remarks:

> The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper's concerns – how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from competitors down the street, how to package the goods so the customers will lay out more money.[15]

Unfortunately, self-study Action Research has not been used extensively within church leadership contexts to address concerns such as those Petersen writes about. One exception is West's study of local non-stipendiary ministry within the Church of England.[16] Thus self-study Action Research appears rarely in congregational contexts.[17] What is better represented however is theological reflection. Even so Bruce Martin states,

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[12] Alan Jamison, *A Churchless Faith* (London: PCK Publishing, 2002).

[13] Orlowski, *Spiritual Abuse Recovery*, 187.

[14] Overstreet, "We Have A Problem!"

[15] Eugene Petersen, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 2.

[16] Michael West, "Second-class Priests with Second-class Training?: A Study of Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry within the Church of England," *Educational Action Research* 1, no. 3 (1993): 361-373.

[17] Bruce Martin, "Transforming a Local Church Through Action Research," *Educational Action Research* 9, no. 2 (2001): 261-278.

"a concept of pastor as researcher or pastor as reflective practitioner is absent from pastoral education programmes and literature on pastoral practice."[18]

Consequently, I take on the role of researcher by undertaking an action research self-study. This enables me to engage with the thinking of others to understand the changing dynamic of my church and the role of the Church in society and to discover the changes I need to make in order to improve the quality of my impact in these areas.[19]

*God*

The length of this dissertation precludes me from offering a more extensive treatment on the subject of God than I would like. I will therefore restrict my remarks to include only, that debates about deity are hardly new to human history but have intensified with the development of modernity with its focus on scientific rationalism as a foundation of all knowledge.[20] For many people, God is indeed the lens through which they view the world and their place in it, and that gives their lives meaning and order.[21] To speak about God at all is no small thing. It is a sacred undertaking, one that requires an acknowledgement of reverence in probing the eternal deity and divine mystery that is God. Ultimately I state that I have always believed in God, first as a Catholic growing up in a home where Catholicism was a heritage more than a personal lived experience, and later as a Charismatic in the early days of the Charismatic movement in South Africa

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[18] Ibid., 261.

[19] Altagracia Perez, "Living into Multicultural Inclusive Ministry," *Anglican Theological Review* 93, no. 4 (2011): 659-667.

[20] Paul Froese, Christopher Bader, and Robert Blumenfeld, *America's Four Gods* (New York: University Press, 2010), 22.

[21] Froese, Bader, and Blumenfeld, *America's Four Gods*, 8.

circa 1978. As such, one of the presuppositions I bring to my research is the knowledge I have of God as my *Father* and belief that He is the creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1-6 NIV) who has invited humankind into a supernatural relationship with Him through the work of His son Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross and through the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Keith Warrington sums up the relationship Pentecostals have with God as father stating,

> Traditionally, they have balanced a clear awareness of the awesome nature of the sovereign God with the recognition of the warm relationship that he intends to have with believers, as best defined by his being defined as Father. For them, God is not immutable but interactive, not impassable but permeating their lives, not immoveable but capable of being moved by those he has created.[22]

Therefore, for Pentecostal Christians, God is not some distant entity to be revered or feared but rather the Father who is in relationship with his children. As such I "hold, that God has revealed Himself definitively in the Bible and that Jesus Christ is the unique incarnation of God, the only Lord and Savior" and that scripture is a living text, in which the Holy Spirit is always active.[23] Even though this presupposition serves as the point of reference for how I live my life and conduct my ministry I am fully aware that there are many even in the Christian community who do not hold this view.

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[22] Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T and T Clark, 2008), 33.

[23] Harold Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1991).

*The Holy Spirit*

Kenneth Kovacs regards the Holy Spirit as intimately connected to the person and work of Christ.[24] In his view, the Holy Spirit "takes up and extends the work begun in the incarnation by *enfleshing* the presence of Christ in the life of an individual in ways that are *transformationally Christomorphic*."[25] The Holy Spirit is the representation of Christ in the lives of those who receive Him as the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49 NIV).[26] The Spirit can be summarized in the words of Rev. G. F. Taylor who remarks,

> The Spirit does not refer to a vapor or influence as many suppose, but a real Person going forth from the Father and Son, and serving in their behalf. He is God Himself imparted to work in His children the pleasure of His will, making His grace available to them, helping them in their infirmities, witnessing to their salvation, and carrying into effect all the divine administrations of the kingdom of grace.[27]

It is currently unfortunate that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as "decisive for the doctrine of God, of Christ, of the church, of the Word of God, and with the encounters of Christianity with the world, remains the most elusive topic in modern theological

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[24] Kenneth Kovacs, *The Relational Theology of James. E. Loder* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 1.

[25] Ibid.

[26] "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

[27] Rev. G. F.Taylor, "The Spirit and the Bride: A Scriptural Presentation of the Operations, Manifestation, Gifts and Fruit of the Holy Spirit in His Relation to the Bride with Special Reference to the 'Latter Rain' Revival," Principal of Falcon Holiness School, n.d., 14, http://pctii.org/arc/taylor_bk.html.

thought."[28] As a Pentecostal Christian, I view the Holy Spirit as the "dynamic *sine qua non* of the Christian life in this and every age."[29]

It is Chan's view that, "Holy Spirit baptism is far richer in the Pentecostal *experience* than it is in Pentecostal *explanation*."[30] With respect to the baptism of the Holy Spirit he quotes Peter Hocken a Catholic priest as saying, "it is nothing less than the revelation of a triune God, a theophany of the God of History and the eschaton."[31] He sees the need for Spirit Christology to be re-enacted as it has in his opinion been marginalized in the theological perspective.

Stephen Land calls for a re-envisioning of Pentecostal spirituality, which he views as having veered off script. Land believes that Pentecostalism needs to return to the "reflective prayerful business of working at the interrelationships of orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy, or beliefs, actions and affections."[32] He sees this as necessary to counter what he views as the overly rationalistic fundamentalist liberalism view rooted in human reason or experiences, which he sees as not decisively shaped by scripture.

Furthermore, disputes about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit have divided evangelicals and Pentecostals with Pentecostals seeing indwelling as a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit grounded in a Lukian and Johanian theology and evangelicals seeing it as the work of the Spirit in salvation. This indwelling is more fully described by Jesus in

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[28] James E. Loder and W. Jim Neidhart, *The Knights Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992), 20.

[29] Ibid., 21.

[30] Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 10.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 183.

the gospel of John (John 14:15-17; 16:13: I John 2:27 NIV). Here Jesus outlines the purpose of this indwelling. Pentecostals believe that they are empowered by the Holy Spirit as a result of this indwelling to be agents through whom the Spirit works to represent and manifest Christ in character and deed. Therefore, in reflecting Christ, Christians are to depend on the Holy Spirit's indwelling and not solely on autonomous human reason or the arm of the flesh as described by the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17:5 NIV).

John Stott further affirms that the wisdom that emanates from the Holy Spirit is not the same as human wisdom. Stott reminds us that the apostle Paul, quoting from Isaiah (64:4 NIV) declared, "no eye has seen nor ear has heard and no mind has conceived this wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:9 NIV). Stott views this wisdom as "altogether beyond the reach of human eyes, ears and minds" and "cannot be grasped either by scientific investigation or by poetic imagination."[33] What I think Stott is attempting to say here is that the work of the Holy Spirit is not of the intellect or emotions.

From a hermeneutical standpoint a Spirit Christology in the Lukian sense is more appropriate for my own research. The reason being its association with a self-understanding of the activity of the Spirit of God in my life as exemplified by Jesus who proclaimed: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19 NIV). The next section on Pentecostalism will further

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[33] John Stott, *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 66.

establish the work of the Holy Spirit as it is related to the theological position I hold in the research.

*Pentecostalism*

The literature on Pentecostalism, which seeks to describe the history, theology, and identifying characteristics of this Christian religious tradition, is vast and well outlined in numerous scholarly works including that of Simon Chan, Keith Warrington, Steven Land and Frank Macchia.[34] Pentecostal Christianity as discussed by these authors not only provides a historical overview of this tradition of Christianity but also provides insights into the identifying characteristics, distinctives, and doctrinal tenants. All these have implications for my research especially with regard to my understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostalism in America is traditionally traced back to the 1906 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California. Harvey Cox writes that it was the presence of William Seymour in the city of Los Angeles that began an epochal turning point in the religious history of the world through this revival.[35] Research shows that Pentecostalism is the fastest growing movement in the world today with adherent's numbering over 643 million in 2015 and it is set to reach one billion by 2050.[36] Pentecostalism has become

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[34] Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*; Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*; Frank Macchia, "Sighs Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1, no. 1, (1992).

[35] Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge, MA: DeCapo Press, 2009).

[36] Todd M. Johnson, Gina A. Zurlo, Albert W. Hickman, and Peter F. Crossing, "Christianity 2015: Religious Diversity and Personal Contact," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 1 (January 2015): 28-29.

"increasingly multicultural," mainly represented by people from the Majority world.[37] Many see the growth of Pentecostalism as related to eschatology. This eschatological view although shared with Fundamentalist movements, is unique in that Pentecostals view the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a fulfilment of end-time prophecy. Therefore, a sense of urgency related to this view of eschatology has been an important motivation for missionary endeavours and evangelism within the Pentecostal movement.[38]

Pentecostalism is an enacting Christianity, not just in the sense of liturgical experiences related to expressions of praise, worship, prophetic words, etc., nor in the *going* of missionary work but also in the exploration of right Christian living and fruitful service. This right living as a manifestation of sanctification and holiness is sought for and pursued by leaders who desire to do right and act right. Allan Anderson comments that Pentecostals who seek to embody a theology deeply committed to the life of the Spirit cannot neglect aspects of experience in Christ, that lie outside the limits of rational discourse.[39]

Therefore it could be said that a distinctive common feature of Pentecostalism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit or charismata of the Holy Spirit. These charismata are not only for the "edification of the body of Christ as described in I Corinthians 14:3, they also function as proof of the divine

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[37] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 13.

[38] David Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 21; Grant McClung, "Missiology," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 607.

[39] Allan Anderson, "The Origins of Pentecostalism and Its Global Spread in the Early Twentieth Century," *Transformations* 22, no.3 (July 2005): 175.

presence."[40] Pentecostals refer broadly to these within the Christian tradition to "affirm that the phenomenon described in Acts 2 NIV is repeatable in contemporary times."[41] One of the abiding beliefs related to charismata is the expectation by Pentecostals "that at any moment the Spirit can lead or direct a person into a situation, through a situation or out of a situation in a way that is not possible in the natural."[42] Not only are charismata highly valued in Pentecostalism but so is the Bible, which Pentecostals view as foundational to their beliefs, practices, and experiences, thereby, their very existence as a group.[43]

Therefore, the Pentecostal's belief in the authority of scripture is not determined by cognitive constructs alone. Rather it is determined by the Pentecostals' direct experience with God in and through the text.[44] Pentecostals believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. They understand God not as one but three. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This means they believe in the deity of Christ and that the Holy Spirit is the divine third person of the Trinity and co-equal with God and Jesus. Thus, Pentecostalism is associated with Pneumatological Theology.

At the heart of the Pentecostal worldview is the transforming experience with God. An expression of this experience is the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit becomes the normative epistemological framework thus shifting the

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[40] Paul W. Lewis, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit as Paradigm Shift," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 13, no. 2 (2010): 313.

[41] Stephen Eugene Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Towards a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 13.

[42] Lewis, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit," 313.

[43] Ibid., 321.

[44] Ibid.

structures by which the individual interprets the world. Pentecostals have an experientially God-centred view. They also have a holistic and systemic view of the world seeing God as present in all things, believing that He holds all things together (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:7 NIV). Epistimelogically, Pentecostals have a transrational view. They see knowledge as relational and not limited to the realm of reason. They view the spectrum of knowledge as including cognition, affections, emotions, and spiritual discernment.[45] Jackie David Johns describes this Pentecostal worldview as one that "embraces a different type of knowledge, one that transcends theory to demand faithful response to that which is known."[46] All that is knowledge is grounded in God and God is known in this world-view through encounter.[47]

## Thematic Observations

Pentecostal spirituality can be thought of as a lived experience in relationship with the person of the Holy Spirit. This lived experience consists of entering into the presence of God through rituals of physical expression, including the singing of songs, the raising and clapping of hands, dancing, and oftentimes jumping as expressions of joy and delight at being at one with God in worship.[48] Other expressions include antiphonal participation in the sermon by the congregation, oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness, visions,

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[45] Lewis, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit," 75.

[46] Jackie David Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit: The Dynamics of a Pentecostal Model of Praxis," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus and Douglas Peterson (Carlisle, CA: Regnum Books, 1999), 74.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Daniel E. Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Ecumenical Potential and Challenge," *Cyber Journal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, July 1997, www.pctill.org/cyberj/cyberj2/albrecht.html.

dreams, and healing through prayer.[49] There are also spiritual expressions related to this lived experience, which include the deep intimacy that comes through communing with God through scripture meditation and prayer. This lived experience reflects a theology that is more praxis oriented as opposed to one of doctrinal confession.[50]

Another of Pentecostalism's distinctive is the primacy of the relationship Pentecostals have with Jesus. In this way Pentecostals are evangelical in affirming the actual virgin birth of Jesus and his physical resurrection. They believe in a divinely inspired Bible and that salvation requires one to accept Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Saviour. Thus, Christology in some Pentecostal denominations such as the Foursquare denomination has been emphasized by a focus on the work of Jesus as Savior, Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, Healer, and soon-coming-King. Jesus as Sanctifier is a fifth distinctive added by the *Holiness Movement*.

Pentecostals know how to hold the tension of the mystery of God with an awareness that God's engagement in the world is through His Son Jesus who Himself was God. John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1 NIV) *and* "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NIV).

Pentecostals also understand that the ascension of Jesus after his resurrection marked a new era in Christianity, one in which Christians would have the ability to receive and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit who would empower them to accomplish God's

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[49] Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 18-19.

[50] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*.

will and purpose for the world (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:17-18; Acts 2:3 NIV). In Pentecostal circles the Holy Spirit is considered the promise of Jesus to his disciples; that they would not be left comfortless after His ascension, but that they would be sent another comforter—the Holy Spirit who would remain with them forever (John 14:16 NIV). Pentecostalism and its associated culture have indelibly shaped my understanding of God and my pursuit of the Holy Spirit as the revealer of truth. Consequently, Pentecostalism is the significant contextual factor for this self-study research.

Associated with the distinctive of the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit is glossolalia or speaking in tongues. For Pentecostals this linguistic experience represents a heightened awareness of God's presence rather than merely an emotional act. Simon Tugwell likes to think about the sacredness of glossolalia.[51] As a former practicing Catholic, I am not as opposed to this idea of the association of sacredness with tongues as some in Pentecostalism who want to associate this notion only with institutionalized religion. William Samarin, bridges this gap beautifully when he says: "As a linguistic symbol of the sacred, tongues says God is here in the same way a Gothic cathedral says *God is majestic*."[52] Glossolalia for Samarin shifts the attention away from the language or the person speaking to the divine presence. He further defines this symbolic function of tongues as *sacramental*, that is, as the turning of human utterances into a manifestation of the divine presence.[53] Dayton disagrees that glossolalia alone can serve to define

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[51] Simon Tugwell, "The Speech-Giving Spirit: A Dialogue with Tongues," in *New Heaven? New Earth? An Encounter with Pentecostalism,* ed. Simon Tugwell (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1976), 151.

[52] William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels: The Religious Language of Pentecostalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 166.

[53] William J. Samarin, "Tongues of Men and Angels*,"* in "Sighs Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theolgoy of Glossolalia," ed. Frank Macchia, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1, no. 1 (January 1992): 53.

Pentecostalism or to distinguish it fully from other Christian and religious movements.[54] George Williams and Edith Waldvogel note that there are other religious movements where glossolalia, occurred before the Pentecostal movement such as the Shakers and Mormons.[55]

My personal experience with glossolalia in the early years of the Catholic charismatic movement in South Africa had implications for my research. These were related to the inevitableness of the Holy Spirit influence on my inquiries. Other implications included my ability to prayer in the spirit when seeking clarification and discernment, particularly when the limitations of my natural language precluded me from accurately presenting what I needed from God. Praying in tongues (or praying in the spirit) ensured that I was praying the perfect will of God in the situation, which was another way in which I was able to stay faithful (Jude 1:20 NIV) to the purposes of God.[56] When I pray in the Spirit I feel empowered spiritually to more fully accomplish God's work. Praying in the Spirit is the platform I often use to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to me. It is a deliberate act purposefully undertaken. When I pray in the Spirit my mind is unfruitful (I Corinthians 14:14 NIV). Furthermore, it has been my experience that speaking in tongues serves as a precursor to Holy Spirit led and inspired knowledge. Glossolalia continues to be a relevant part of my personal devotional life and public ministry. Praying in the spirit personalizes my relationship with God.

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[54] Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1987), 16.

[55] George Williams and Edith Waldvogel, "A History of Speaking in Tongues and Related Gifts," in *The Charismatic Movement*, ed. Michael Hamilton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 81-89.

[56] Romans 8:26 NIV, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans."

The constellation of themes that distinguishes the Pentecostal movement worldwide includes: conversion, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, divine healing and Jesus coming soon.[57]Another deeply held view of Pentecostals is that "God breaks into human knowing apart from rationality."[58]Pentecostals see this as enabling one to more effectively witness to the saving grace of Christ, because God is clearly recognizable and discernable in acts of knowing that are beyond human reason. Therefore, in the Pentecostal worldview, rational reflection alone is not a true representation of the ways in which knowledge can be generated.[59]Pentecostals believe that God still speaks today and that the Holy Spirit is an active presence in their lives, speaking to them personally even in mystical ways.[60]

There appear to be several ways in which scholars speak of ways of knowing that are related to spiritual experiences. Some use the term *non-rational,* others, *transrational,* and still others, *otherworldly*. Non-rational and transrational are used interchangeably in this dissertation. When speaking of *knowing* as it relates to the work of the Holy Spirit, it is important to use terminology that differentiates this from human knowing. Therefore, when I describe the experiences I have had as a consequence of my journey in this world, I might use categorizations of what is rational or irrational but it is also important that I find language that describes the non-rational. Scholars have used the word transrational

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[57] Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 20.

[58] Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 176.

[59] Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 176.

[60] Cecil Robeck, "Launching a Global Movement: The Role of Azusa Street in Pentecostalism Growth Expansion," in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism*, ed. Donald Miller, Kimon Sergeant, and Richard Flory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

to describe non-rational experiences.[61] This terminology is useful to express ideas about alternative ways of knowing.[62] According to Kelly Besecke if we do not have words to talk about an idea, the idea remains culturally invisible.[63] Transrational therefore seems appropriate to describe what is neither pre-rational (opinion about something) nor rational (logical reasoning about it).

The relationship between spiritual reflection and transrational ways of knowing is the epistemological worldview that sees knowledge as not limited to the realm of reason or sensory experience.[64] This pneumatological Pentecostal worldview is one that is "experientially centered with its followers in a dynamic and personal relationship with a deity who is both immanent and transcendent." and can therefore impart knowledge that is transrational.[65] In this worldview the believer sees God at work in all and through all events making "all space sacred space and all time sacred time."[66]

This section on Pentecostalism has highlighted ways of knowing that are not of the mind but of the Spirit and has shown how this alternate way of knowing is referenced as non-rational, transrational or otherworldy in scholarship.

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[61] Margaret Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003); Parker, *Led By the Spirit*; Kelly Besecke, *You Can't Put God in a Box: Thoughtful Spirituality in a Rational Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 79-80.

[62] Note the apostle Peter's response to the question Jesus asked in Matthew's gospel (16:13-20 NIV).

[63] Besecke, *You Can't Put God in a Box*.

[64] Margaret Poloma, *Main Street Mystics*, 23.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 75.

*Values*

Action research begins with values and is value driven. Values in action research serve as criteria for the standards by which I judge my practices and hold myself accountable.[67] The extensive interdisciplinary nature of scholarship on this topic requires that I restrict my remarks to my understanding of values as they relate to my theological grounding and to my research aim.

Prior to my research I had never considered the importance of declaring my values.[68] Once it became clear to me that this was an essential step in the process of action research, I set out to articulate my values and found the process frustrating and discouraging. I discovered that it took effort to locate, define, clarify, and articulate my values. I found it even harder to consistently practice them.[69] Simply knowing what my values were did not guarantee that I regularly lived by them.

Making explicit our values creates a means by which our habitual actions can be judged, and when necessary realigned enabling us to live more faithfully in the direction of our stated values. Thus holding to a set of values and making them public is one way to hold ourselves accountable to living them in practice. By declaring my values, I take them out of a state of fluidity—which otherwise would keep them open to interpretation within my own thinking. This way I become more mindful about whether or not I am living them in practice.

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[67] Jean McNiff, "Action Research for Professional Development: Concise Advice for New Action Researchers," (2002), 18, https://www.jeanmcniff.com.

[68] Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff, *All You Need to Know About Action Resarch* (London: Sage, 2006); D. Jean Clandinin, *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007).

[69] David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (London: Sage, 2005).

*The Importance of Values*

Values are important, because all leadership actions are informed by values.[70] All values have cognitive, affective, and directional aspects.[71] They act as "criteria for selection in action and when most explicit and fully conceptualized values become criteria for judgement, preference and choice."[72] "When implicit and unreflective, values, nevertheless, perform *as if* they constituted grounds for decisions in behavior."[73] Having clearly articulated values facilitates a change response, because it enables me to recognize when my declared values are or are not enacted in my daily decisions and behaviours.[74]

For example when I reflected on my history, it surfaced that my actions were in fact not being informed by my Judeo-Christian values but rather by my family of origin. As such I was a *living contradiction,* essentially denying my Christian values in practice.[75] Had I not been alerted to the need to pay attention to my values and what informed them, I would have failed to address the ethical, moral, and spiritual dimensions of my leadership.

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[70] Adrianna Kezar and Rozana Carducci, "Cultivating Revolutionary Educational Leaders: Translating Emerging Theories Into Action," *Journal of Resarch on Leadership Education* 2, no. 1 (2007): 6-34.

[71] Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 16.

[72] Robin Williams, Jr., "The Concept of Values," in *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), 15, 283.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Kezar and Carducci, "Revolutionary Educational Leaders," 34.

[75] Jack Whitehead, "How Do I Improve My Practice: Creating a Discipline of Education Through Educational Enquiry" (doctoral thesis, University of Bath, 1999), 23, http://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/4898/.

The values that act as the criteria for the standards by which I judge my practices are grounded in Christian principles of the great commandment. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it: love your neighbour as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-39 NIV). From these scriptures emerge my unchanging values of justice, freedom, goodness, and right action. These are my personal values and act as the filter through which I judge my actions. Having articulated these values I can now ask, “Are my actions just? Do they release people from bondage and bring them freedom? Are my actions righteous in terms of the standards of loving others as myself?”

These questions are answered in the affirmative when my leadership demonstrates emancipatory, liberating, participatory, inclusionary, and mutual ways of being in the world with others. When my practices are liberating and empowering, they encourage the release of human potential in others and bring into view ideologies and power structures that may be a hindrance to this.

Therefore, in relation to my desire to live my values of justice, freedom, goodness, and right action, I seek ways in which I can enact a more just and democratic way of leading. This democratic way of leading is important because it represents a different and more equitable way of practicing leadership.[76] Organizational culture has traditionally been structured to reinforce hierarchy, social control, and concentration of power within positional leaders.

Living values of shared power however is not easy, particularly when habitual patterns of leading include telling others what to do and how to do it exemplifying

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[105] Elizabeth Groppe, “The Contribution of Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit,” *Theological Studies* 62, (2001), 466-468.

directive leadership. This was my leadership until reflection called into question my assumption that I knew best. Having formerly functioned under hierarchical structures both historically and as evidenced in my own unexamined leadership practices, I was able to realign my practices in a way that reflected my value of leadership as participation with people rather than power over people. Declared values enabled me to aim my leadership more directly towards those values thereby exhibiting a more democratic way of leading. The outward behavioural evidence associated with this way of leading is participatory, inclusionary, and mutual ways of being together with others. When values guide pastoral leadership practices the implication is that our consideration of the other will increase and God will be magnified. This change in my leadership stemmed from awareness that my way of leading was inconsistent with what I valued. The democratic way of leading I now embrace reflects the contribution of action research to improving my leadership practice.

## Summary

The result of reflecting on and making explicit my values has been my understanding that democratic leadership is a preferable way to lead. This is based on my personal rejection of hierarchy as it represents authoritarian leadership. Having lived under it historically and seeing it enacted in many institutional and other leadership contexts has made me mindful that my values call for a more just and equitable way to lead.

I view this new way of leading as calling for a shared power approach to leadership, which reflects mutuality that respects and treats the thoughts and judgements

of others as worthy of serious consideration.[77] Furthermore this value regarding mutual respect includes the recognition that both *knowers* (those in official institutions) and non-knowers (those in workplaces) are knowledge bearers even though they generate knowledge and theories of a different kind.[78] My value of knowing collectively allows me to honour the contributions of others without discounting what I know. Understanding my values and vision for my leadership practices helps me align myself with my worldview as a Christian. Ultimately this chapter makes known the theology that informs my presuppositions about pastoral leadership, God, the Holy Spirit, and Pentecostalism.

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[77] Barbara Crosby and John Bryson, *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-Power World*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005); Craig Pearce and Jay Conger, *Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003).

[78] Jean McNiff, "It Takes a Township," *South African Journal of Higher Education* 25, no.7 (2011), 1253-1273.

# CHAPTER 2:

# LEADERSHIP

*Introduction*

This chapter provides a theoretical basis for leadership as it relates to my research. As such I have chosen to focus on particular aspects of leadership I see as associated with the leadership improvement I am seeking through this inquiry. In particular then, is the discussion about the tension between leadership and power, as this surfaced as significant in the interrogation of my own practices. Other significance aspects include character; leadership blind spots and the dark side of leadership, as it is my view that these all hinder the ability to lead effectively.

First, I will provide some personal background to set the stage for the history associated with my interest in and curiosity about leadership. This is to show how the process of action research, facilitated knowing about the influence of my family of origin, socio-cultural and political background on my leadership practices. Therefore, the stories I tell reveal how my learning contributed to my awareness of my use of power in leadership and how this awareness contributed to the improved way in which I now practice leadership.

My interest in leadership is historically linked to my pastoral and educational work in Apartheid South Africa. The recalled stories I share in this regard are responses to my reflective questions about my use of power in leadership. This use of power surfaced as a recurring theme in the analysis of my data, revealing inconsistencies in how I practiced leadership. At times I lived my values in practice and on other occasions I also

"experienced the denial of those values, making me a living contradiction."[1] Reflecting on these past events enabled me to understand better the different ways in which I used power in the past, how this knowing contributed to answers about the origins of my power behaviors and how it pointed to envisioning new ways of practicing leadership.

*Firstly I Introduce My Stories*

In relation to the sociopolitical aspect of my history, one of my first direct encounters with authoritarian leadership rule was in apartheid South Africa. The year was 1985; our church was one of three area churches in the country at the time that decided to offer integrated, Christian-based education to children of all races. This meant that all children, irrespective of race, would be allowed to attend our school. The reason for this move was two-fold: firstly, the multi-cultural nature of our church congregation and secondly the poor quality of government-controlled education in public schools. Thus, it was no surprise to us when the South African government threatened to shut down our schools and imprison us, if we moved forward with our plans to provide quality multi-racial education for all school children. At that point education had been segregated for thirty-seven years in South Africa and we soon realized that the government was not going to allow a few Christian ministers to challenge the status quo. It was only as a result of reviewing the history of my years in South Africa, that I fully comprehended the social and political implications of the decision we made back then. At the time we viewed it as the *right thing* to do. I now see it as *defining hope*.[2] For us integrated

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[1] Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff, *Action Research: Living Theory* (London: Sage, 2006), 32.

[2] McNiff, "It Takes a Township," 1253-1273.

education was not an option; it was a necessity. It was our belief that, if our children could worship together, they could also learn together.

Ultimately the collective leadership of the three churches refused to allow the threat of imprisonment to intimidate us into reversing our decision. The choice we made then resulted in the establishment of the first three multiracial Christian schools in South Africa all of which still exist today. I view the decision we made as leaders as an example of what it means to live our values in practice. We challenged a political system and won. What I came to realize from my reflections was that by resisting the pressure to close down our school or be imprisoned, we tipped the scales towards a more just society. Our actions demonstrated our value of justice. Subsequent spiritual reflection reminded me of the words of the prophet Micah: "What does the law require of you but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before thy God" (Micah 6:8, NIV). "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions."[3] John Rawls, states that laws and institutions, no matter how efficient or well arranged, must be reformed or abolished if unjust. Furthermore, "a just society is one in which the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled."[4] Vlad Glăveanu whose work concerning hegemony is discussed in more detail below provided the language I needed to articulate how the hegemony exerted by the South African government existed as a dyad with its counterpart, our resistance.[5] As stated by Glăveanu, "social change and innovation are possible exactly because there is always room for

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[3] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 3-4.

[4] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 16.

[5] Vlad Glăveanu, "What Differences Make A Difference?: A Discussion of Hegemony, Resistence and Representation," Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, October 2011, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39033.

novel points of view coming to complement or even contradict the taken for granted."[6] In our case, this had important consequences. It is my fundamental belief that, in taking these actions we provided a more equitable and just form of education for the children of our community, and this ultimately benefited that society.

Reflecting on this history reinforced my desire to ensure that I consistently lived my values in practice. Telling my story enabled me to more deeply reflect upon those times and to heighten my awareness of how power structures influence our lives.

I believe that one of the ways that leaders achieve effectiveness is through their stories, not only by communicating them but also by embodying them. My second story is related to a recalled interaction with a leader from the squatter settlement where I undertook humanitarian work while working in South Africa. This story shows how a combination of reflection and scholarship contributes to the interpretation of the analysis undertaken. Therefore, the story highlights the value of both theory and practice in learning.

The story unfolds in what at the time was one of the largest squatter settlements on the outskirts of Johannesburg, South Africa. Weekly, I would travel to the settlement for humanitarian and ministry work among the settlers. To offer some context, the settlement was located adjacent to one of the many hostels, housing mine workers who came from other parts of South Africa to work on the reef's gold mines. Different tribes were housed in different hostels due to traditional hostilities between the tribes. The location of the squatter settlement exposed the settlers to the violence, which erupted on a weekly basis spilling over to the squatter settlement. This was especially ferocious over

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[6] Glăveanu, "What Differences Make A Difference?"

the weekend when alcohol consumption fueled the bitter rivalries between the miners. Furthermore, there was little to no infrastructure in these settlements. No electricity and only one water access point for 42,000 people. This meant that the settlers waited in long lines for hours to access water for their daily needs. It was at the water meeting point that I first began my ministry. At first, I provided food, clothing, and toys. Later, I partnered with a Catholic nun who ran the only clinic in the settlement out of a small used shipping container. She did this with few resources and no volunteer help outside of a doctor who would consult once a month to assist with critical health issues. My work entailed mobilizing large groups of volunteers to help and proactively canvasing drug companies for essential medical supplies. Ultimately in response to a request from the settler's for church services, we began a Sunday service out of a 4x4 utility vehicle on which we loaded musical instruments and sound equipment to conduct weekly church services. From this a ministry training center was later established for the purpose of training locals to minister to the spiritual needs of the settlement population.

The following data sourced from my data archive shows how recalling my history of work in the squatter settlements reminded me of an incident with a squatter settlement leader that provides some context for my power behaviors back then. The incident is captured as data related to my recall of the tension between us associated with my feelings regarding the hardship and suffering of the woman and children in the settlement. This was associated with the weekend violence and my perception of the settlement leaders' inability to do something about it. The analysis and interpretation of my data outlined in the points below show the learning that emerges from my critically reflective observations.

- I paid little attention to the complexities associated with the root issues of the violence problem.
- I lacked the needed perception to understand how my *colonial* prejudices fueled my behavior towards him. I have since learned that from my Western perspective, "our own society serves as the standard by which, the inferiority of the [*less developed*] other is identified."[7]
- I realize that prejudices are not just espoused theories.[8] Instead, "prejudices are subconscious and tacit, merged with or submerged in our practices and routines, in our acquired experiences and in the gradual, constitutional formation of our knower, subjectivities stored in deep layers of emotional and habitual reactive-perceptive patterns."[9]
- The awareness that I carry prejudices enables me to pay attention to assumptions that lead to judgments. Consequently, this relates to how I perceive others and, therefore, interact with them; in this case; the settlement leader.
- I judged the settlement leader's actions as inept in the situation. I made this judgment through the lens of the mental models associated with my historical and cultural understanding of how leadership ought to be practiced.

In sum, I learn that leadership models are implicit mental models. I see how my mental models are related to my history with leadership; namely, my father's leadership

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[7] Aram Ziai, "Some Reflections on the Concept of 'Development,'" ZEF Working Paper Series, Bonn, Zentrum fur entwicklungsforschung, Abteilung für politischen und kulturellen wandel, 2011: 5.

[8] Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, *Theory in Practice*: *Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974).

[9] Olav Eikeland, "The Validity of Action Research," in *Action and Interactive Research: Beyond Theory and Practice,* ed. Lennart Svensson and Kurt Aagaard Nielsen (Maastricht, Nederland: Shaker Publishers, 2006), 205.

example and my cultural and educational influence. Prior to my inquiries, I had never given much thought to my leadership style. I had never questioned whether it was appropriate. Now as I reflect, I realize that I adopted my father's leadership style because I admired him as a leader. Specifically, his values, which included a high level of integrity, loyalty, work ethic, work accomplishments, and love for family. I admired that he seemed to know his own mind. He was a Second World War survivor, having escaped from the Germans on two occasions. After the war he left Europe to create a better life for his family in South Africa. He used his knowledge and skills to learn how to speak English and established his own successful business. Although I often mentally and verbally resisted his autocratic rule and dominance over our family, I never connected my leadership style with how I viewed him.

Reviewing the work of significant academics such as Burns, Kohlberg, and Piaget enabled me to link the formation of my leadership style with my history.[10] In chapter four of his Pulitzer Prize winning work on *Leadership*, Burns briefly reviews the histories of leaders like Gandhi, Hitler, and Lenin. He goes on to relate the styles of these leaders with their early history, and, in particular, their family of origin. Of particular note are his and Kohlberg's observations of the influence of the father in shaping the lives of these leaders. By linking practice (what I observe as my behaviors in situations) with theory in this way, I was able to associate the influence of my family of origin, and in particular my father, with the way in which I viewed and, therefore, practiced leadership.

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[10] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Lawrence Kolberg, "Moral Development and Identification," in *Child Psychology,* ed. Harold William Stevenson (University of Chicago: Chicago Press, 1963): 11-33; Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).

Furthermore, Burns' work on the social sources of leadership helped me to realize the effect of political systems on a child's formative years. There is no doubt in my mind that the *dominance factor* of white South Africans in shaping the history of South Africa had an influence on my leadership style. Burns believes that, at the very least, the life of American president Woodrow Wilson demonstrates to the student of leadership, that we cannot unravel the mysteries of the rise and fall of a great man unless we analyze not only the psychological and social influences operating in him in his early years, but the political forces that he both encounters and generates in the middle and later life.[11] Reflecting critically on the situation with the settlement leader helps me realize how much the political situation in South Africa, together with my own Eurocentric upbringing influenced my own leadership behavior then.

## Power and Leadership

Power dynamics are of interest to the study of leadership, however an extensive treatment of the topic here would exceed the scope of the research. I will however briefly review a few of the literature sources from which I have drawn to aid in my own understanding of power and how I may be using it. Thus, these sources have had an influence on my thinking about the relationship between leadership and power.

On some level, every individual uses power whether it is nuanced or overt. The use of power can be as innocuous as a child's pout or as sinister as the decision to use weapons of mass destruction. Power in some fashion affects all of our lives. Looking at power is perhaps just a different way of studying leadership.

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[11] Burns, *Leadership,* 104.

This topic of power has been of interest to scholars, all of who have established theories of power.[12] James McGregor Burns sees leadership as understanding the essence of power, because leadership is a special form of power.[13] He views power as relationship, suggesting that power is not one sided; a dimension that belongs to one person but rather he has a collective view of power. What this means is that the power broker has leverage due to a number of associating factors: "the motives and resources of power holders; the motives and resources of power recipients; and the relationship among all these."[14]

John French and Betram Raven see the processes of power as pervasive, complex, and often disguised in our society. Their research attempts to differentiate different types of power in order to account for the differing level of influence associated with each type of power. Their model highlights five characteristics of interpersonal sources of power and how each type of power exerts influence.[15]

- Legitimate Power – related to the position a person holds
- Reward Power – based on the ability to reward others for compliance
- Coercive Power – the power to punish (opposite of reward)
- Expert Power – possessing special knowledge or skill that is highly valued

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[12] John French and Betram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power" in *Sudies of Social Power*, ed. Dowin Cartwright (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, 1959); Gary Yukl and Cecilia M. Falbe, "Importance of Different Power Source in Downward and Lateral Relations," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 76, no. 3 (1991): 416-423; Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership, Psychology and Organizational Behavior* (New York: Harper, 1960); Burns, *Leadership*.

[13] Burns, *Leadership*, 12.

[14] Ibid., 13.

[15] French and Raven, "Social Power," 50-167.

- Referent Power – based on the desire of followers to identify with and be accepted by the leader (could be viewed as charismatic power)

A raised awareness of these sources of power enables us to more appropriately understand which source may be at work in our leadership practices. Of relevance for my self-study is how I view these power sources as implicated in my own leadership actions. As a pastor I now have an increased consciousness of referent power as an influence in the oneness others may feel with me. This has implications for the association of identification with identity. In Pentecostal traditions, a pastor's power may have less to do with their position and more to do with the pastor's sensitivity to the leading of the Spirit, evidence of which in this tradition's thought, is associated with having the *anointing* and operating in the spiritual gifts.

Another power source of note for me as a pastor is that of *expert power* where I might give the impression of being a *knowledge holder* without consideration that others have their own knowledge and that no one person or group of people are bearers of all knowledge. In terms of coercive power, the awareness that my position often determines whether I can get things done is just another sobering reminder that leadership and power are inextricably linked. For me, this calls for a duty of care in the way in which I utilize these sources of power. Inquiry is one of the significant ways in which Christian leaders can ensure that they are using their power ethically and well.

Gary Yukl and Cecilia Falbe note that influence over followers is the essence of leadership and explain their understanding of power as a way of exercising influence over

others. They expand the sources of power already identified to include more nuanced characteristics of power.[16] They are:

- Rational Persuasion – The person uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade that a proposal or request is viable.
- Inspirational Appeals – The person makes a request or appeal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to the values, ideals or emotions of the person.
- Consultation – The person seeks participation in planning or goal achievement. The person is willing to modify a proposal to gain the buy in of others.
- Ingratiation – The person butters you up so that you think favorably of them before they ask you to do something.
- Exchange – Quit pro quo—exchange of favors.
- Personal Appeal – The persona appeals to your feeling of loyalty, friendship etc.
- Coalition – The person seeks the aid of others to persuade.
- Legitimating – The person claims the right to make the request.
- Pressure – The person uses demands, threats or persistent reminders.

Some of these tactics alert us to the taken for granted ways of functioning in our society without questioning, until we begin to view these tactics as ways of exercising power. Although these tactics may be seen as normal in terms of the way things are done in life and in business, as a Christian leader I need an awareness of how I may be using these tactics to achieve my own ends.

If influence as these authors contend, is the essence of leadership, *and* if powerful leaders can exert their influence in a multiplicity of ways to exact what they need from

[16] Gary Yukl and Cecilia M. Falbe, "Influence Tactics in Upward, Downward, and Lateral Influence Attempts," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75 , no. 2 (1990), 133.

their followers without reflecting on the ethics of their influential tactics, *then* leadership becomes merely a manipulating factor for self-advantage rather than a force for good. Therefore, the primary issue is not whether leaders use their power, but whether they will use it wisely and well.[17]

History has shown us how power in the hands of leaders can be used to achieve great things. Nelson Mandela for instance saved the nation of South Africa from civil war by using his influence coming from his good will to ease the racial tension that could so easily have swept the nation into civil war.

It should be noted that the leadership practices of the Mandela who was released from Robben Island, were radically different from the leadership practices that put him there after his 1964 trial in South Africa. In *Mandela: The Authorized Biography*, Anthony Sampson writes about how others experienced the changed Mandela:

> To old friends he seemed more at ease with himself than thirty years before, without defensiveness or arrogance. He looked softer and gentler, with a warm, humorous smile instead of the flashing grin. 'He's blossomed into a different personality, warm with everyone,' said Amina Cachalia. 'He knew exactly who he was,' said Ismail Meer, 'He has gone through this period of fire and purified himself and emerged as a person who can hope to bring about change in this country.'[18]

Sampson continues:

> Mandela's life sentence was a more serious test of his resilience than his two previous years in jail. He was now cut off from the world in his prime, at the age of forty-six, with no end in sight. He had never been an ascetic like Gandhi or Lenin: in his letters he would constantly hark back to the delights of Soweto or the Transkei; to the food, the landscape, the women, the music. Now all the bright scenery and characters would contract into the single bare stage of his cell and the communal courtyard. But there was a powerful consolation: he was not alone.

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[17] Al Gini, "Moral Leadership and Business Ethics," in *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership*, ed. Joanne B. Ciulla (Westport: Greenwood, 2004), 27-46.

[18] Anthony Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorized Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 201.

> With him were some of his closest friends, who could reinforce each other's morale and purpose, and develop a greater depth and self-awareness. At an age when most politicians tend to forget their earlier idealism in the pursuit of power, Mandela was compelled to think more deeply about his principles and ideas. In the microcosm of prison, stripped of all political trappings-platforms, megaphones, newspapers, crowds, well-tailored suits—and confined with his colleagues every day, he was able, as he put it, to stand back from himself, to see himself as others saw him. He learned to control his temper and strong will, to empathize and persuade, and to extend his influence and authority, not just over the other prisoners, but over the warders.[19]

Mandela's leadership at a precarious time in South African history was the result of the immense transformation he experienced during his time on Robben Island. In my view it was there that he learned what it meant to use his power in a different way. The liberated Mandela embraced the opportunity to use his power to add value and resource others' whenever he was given the chance.

In his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom,* he tells the story of his time at Pollsmoor Prison (after his release from Robben Island).[20] There he cultivated a garden, which supplied vegetables to the prison kitchen, so that they could cook a special meal on a Sunday for the common-law prisoners. He gave quite a lot of his harvest to the wardens who would bring satchels to take away their fresh vegetables. Furthermore, Mandela used his expertise as a lawyer to assist the wardens with legal problems. Though incarcerated Mandela used every opportunity to do good to others when he had the power to do so.

Mandela is an example of how deep self-reflection can change the power behaviors of leaders. I have considered him a role model in my own journey to understanding my power behaviors. Mandela understood how to use the influence tactic of *coalitions* to achieve his dream of a united South Africa. He learned how to align

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[19] Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (New York: Farrar Staus and Giroux, 1994).

[20] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 516.

himself with others in order to strengthen his power position. He understood power as a give-and-take approach to leadership. Mandela did not reject power as such but used it to benefit others.

On the flip side, history has provided us with numerous examples of how leaders have used the power of their office to cause immeasurable destruction. An extreme example of this is leaders who have used weapons of mass destruction, because they had the power to do so. One such example occurred in Iraq under Saddam Hussein as reported on the United States Department of State website.[21] More recently it happened again with Syria's Bashar al-Assad, who *The Washington Post* reported as having used chemical weapons on his people.

Howard Gardner comments on the power that religious leaders have, stating that religious leaders who use their power and their pulpit to turn individuals against one another have wrought incalculable damage.[22] The pulpit is a powerful platform. Religious leaders are given this platform by God and ought to have a healthy awareness of the moral and ethical implications of the statements they make from this platform.

Burns establishes some criteria by which we can judge how leaders are using power. He writes: "Summoned before the bar of history, Adolf Hitler would argue that he spoke the true values of the German people, summoned them to a higher destiny, evoked the noblest sacrifice for them."[23] In using Adolf Hitler as an example, Burns points out

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[21] Bureau of Public Affairs, *Saddam's Chemical Weapons: Halabja, March 16, 1988*, Washington DC, 2003, https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/18714.htm.

[22] Gardner, *Leading Minds.*

[23] Burns, *Leadership*, 426.

that the most "crass, favor-swapping politician can point to the followers he helps or satisfies."[24]

Burns offers three criteria to evaluate the claims of transformational leaders. They must be tested by modal values of honor and integrity and by the extent to which they advance or thwart fundamental standards of good conduct in humankind. They would have to be judged by the end values of equality and justice. And finally, in the context of free communication and open criticism and evaluation, they would be judged in the balance sheet of history by their impact on the well-being of the persons of whose lives they touched.[25]

There is little doubt that the way leaders use power impacts society. The ineffectual use of power is evident everywhere in society. The abuse of power is not merely a secular affair remaining within the realms of secular leadership. Ineffective leadership related to the ethical and moral abuse of power is found in all sectors of society, and this continues to be the case, thus raising the question of whether leaders learn from the failures of other leaders or their own failures.

These were some of the questions that inspired my own desire to understand better my own leadership and subsequently when the issue of power came up in my data, I was moved to ensure that my use of power was judged through the ethical standards of my articulated values related to my Christian worldview. These values are justice, goodness, freedom, and right action.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Burns, *Leadership*, 426.

In the literature I am aware of other forms of power, some of which may seem innocuous and mainstream, such as the nature of reciprocity or *quid pro quo*. Others are nuanced, because I had not been aware that they are an exercise of power, I tended to overlook their significance.

*Hegemony*

Another insidious source of power, often unexamined is hegemony. I will limit my discussion of the term to denote its influence in larger social systems. In this context the term is used for the image of people oppressed by a social system, incapable of fighting against societal norms and beliefs that limit their agency and position them as inferior, powerless, exploitable.[26] These are people, who are regulated by a "massive otherness."[27] As a consequence of my research I noted how I had been unaware of my own participation in this power influence until such time as I reflected on the recalled incident with the squatter settlement leader in South Africa.

Antonio Gramsci who introduced the notion of cultural hegemony saw it as another *power* concept that can be used to subvert the masses.[28] Gramsci believed that cultural institutions, in order to maintain control, developed what he called a hegemonic

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[26] Glăveanu, "What Differences Makes a Difference?" According to Glăveanu, *Hegemony* traditionally signifies the domination exerted by a group over individuals or other groups. One should not confuse this with coercion and domination by force. In fact, as Antonio Gramsci notes, hegemony must be seen as a process of mutual exchange between culture, politics and economy, a dynamic network of influence, a form of ideological rather than military domination. Hegemonic relations are always a mixture of force and consent and describe a situation in which the ruling class has no viable competition in imposing its own view of reality. Arthur K. Spears, "Race and Ideology: An Introduction," in *Race and Ideology: Language, Symbolism, and Popular Culture*, ed. Arthur K. Spears (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 11-58.

[27] Glăveanu, "What Differences Make A Difference?," 8.

[28] Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

culture, using ideology rather than violence to maintain power. He saw cultural hegemony as propagating its own values and norms so that they become the commonsense values of all and thus maintain the status quo.

Gramsci's theory regarding cultural hegemony with its ideological underpinnings, served to broaden my own understanding of the sociopolitical situation in South Africa. The theory of cultural hegemony became the lens through which I could now view the apartheid system. A system initiated by the White Afrikaner to propagate the common-sense idea that blacks were inferior to whites and therefore needed to be segregated, used as a way of maintaining dominance over a predominantly black population. The unfortunate truth is that although Apartheid has been dismantled in South Africa its ideological underpinnings continue to have deep roots in a culture that continues to struggle with "representations of otherness."[29]

This theoretical knowledge became the lens though which I could more reflectively view and interpret the data being generated from my research cycles. I like to think that as a result of my learning I now exercise power with others rather than over others. Therefore, my understanding of power is the direct result of knowing that there are different elements at play in the exercise of power such as:

- The motives of myself as a power holder
- The motives and resources of the power recipient and the relationship among all of these.[30] Until I became aware of my own self-interested use of power, I remained oblivious to the effects I was having on those I led. Through my

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[29] Jason Hickel, "Xenophobia in South Africa: Order, Chaos, and the Moral Economy of Witchcraft," *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (February 2014): 103-127.

[30] Burns, *Leadership,* 14-15.

inquiries I came to understand the distinction between *power over* people and *power with* people, thereby exercising power in a different way.

*A Theology of Power*

The traditional picture of power as centered on wielding power over others may need to be tempered. Rather than viewing power as a terminal value, it could be considered an intermediate one associated with getting people to realize loftier goals such as status, prestige, glory etc. James McGregor Burns offers more of a diffused view of power when he points out that power should be viewed in terms of what the power wielder wants done. This view takes into account a broader understanding then just the Machiavelli, Hitler, Pol Pot portraits.[31] Burns concludes that power can be "fully analysed and measured only by viewing it in the context of multiple human interactions and broad causal relationships."[32]

Lynn Buzzard who sought to look at a theology of power as it relates to the law, has undertaken some helpful preliminary work on a theology of power. His research cites many biblical examples that make evident how God calls us to trust in His power rather than our power. Zechariah 4:6 (NIV) encourages Christians not to trust in chariots, swords or clever alliances as a representation of might but rather in the Spirit of God. Buzzard suggests that a theology of power be marked by a submission to and trust in, the power of God rather than that of humankind. He concludes that power is not something from which Christians should flee, as God has given power to humanity and validates its flow in achieving His purposes. Rather, the key essential is the discussion of the role of

[31] Burns, *Leadership*, 14.

[32] Burns, *Leadership*, 17.

power as viewed through an ethic of established Godly precepts that offer guidelines for how power ought to be exercised within the prescribed parameters of Gods law.[33]

## Character in Leadership

*Integrity and Credibility*

A New York Times/CBS News Poll conducted in 1985 revealed that 55 percent of the American public believe the vast majority of corporate executives are dishonest and 59 percent think that executive white collar crime occurs on a regular basis.[34] In terms of ethical standards a recent Gallup Poll showed eight professions ranking higher than pastors in terms of the public's perception of their ethical standards. Only 2 out of every 5 Americans believe Clergy are honest.[35]

Leadership always comes down to a question of character.[36] Character plays an important role in leadership. Johnson points to several leaders in business that he says have cast shadows due to greed, arrogance, dishonesty, ruthlessness, and other character failings.[37] At the heart of integrity is being consistent, honest, moral, and trustworthy.

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[33] Lynn R. Buzzard, "A Biblical Theology of Power, I," *Journal of Christian Jurispriudence 123*, (1980): 123-161.

[34] Gini, "Moral Leadership," 27-28.

[35] Megan Brenan, "Nurses Keep Healthy Lead as Most Honest, Ethical Profession," *Gallup*, December 26, 2017, https://news.gallup.com/poll/224639/nurses-keep-healthy-lead-honest-ethical-profession.aspx.

[36] Warren G. Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1997), 158.

[37] Andrew P. Johnson, *A Short Guide to Action Research*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2005), 66.

Leaders with integrity show consistency in their words and actions and are unfailing in the face of adversity and with who they are and what they stand for.[38]

Patrick Sweeny and Louis Fry respond to how to develop character in leadership by offering a definition of leader character. This is based on their reviews of leadership and psychological literature. They view character as being manifested through consistent moral and ethical behavior across all situations. They state that consistency of behavior, regardless of context, suggest that enduring cognitive structures such as leaders self-schema or self-identity and heritable temperament play a significant role in the formation of character.[39] They define leader character as: "Consistent moral and ethical actions for the purposes of maintaining congruence with one's own and the organization's values and beliefs and to serve the greater good of the community."[40] These authors see inner-life practices such as self-reflection, as critical to the development of the core values and self-identity necessary for character. They highlight reflections on personal experiences, feedback from others and observation of role models as providing insights into our identities.[41]

Sweeney and Fry believe that self-awareness is crucial for character development. They see an understanding of self as necessary to envision future desired end states (improved leadership) to assess the gap between present state and end states and to create

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[38] Michael E. Palanski and Francis J. Yammarino, "Integrity and Leadership: Clearing the Conceptual Confusion," *European Management Journal* 25, no. 3 (June 2007): 171-184.

[39] Patrick Sweeney and Louis Fry, "Character Development Through Spiritual Leadership," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 64, no. 2 (June 2012): 89-107.

[40] Ibid., 91.

[41] Ibid., 99.

feasible developmental plans to achieve desired goals.[42] It has been my experience that understanding self is a process of reflective inquiry. It is through reflection that the present state can be identified and through a thoughtful declaration of values that the desired state can be envisioned. Besides which fostering character is a lifelong process requiring sustained emotional, mental, and even physical effort.[43]

Leaders with integrity act with authenticity and honesty by speaking the truth, presenting themselves in a genuine way with sincerity, showing no pretense, and taking responsibility for their own feelings and actions.[44] One of my goals through this research has been to increase the level of my integrity in my leadership. Reflective practice, and especially spiritual reflection, has made an important contribution to achieving this goal, which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four.

I recognize that there are scholars such as Jay Conger and George Hollenbeck who are doubtful that such an idealized view of character defined as authentic, honest, sincere, and without pretense exists.[45] In fact, they have asked, "Where can we find such remarkable individuals?"[46] These authors doubt that such hypothetical models of leadership can withstand the test of reality.[47] They call for a more realistic model of

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Johnson, *Action Research*, 66.

[44] Christopher Peterson and Martin Selligman, *Character, Strength and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (Oxford: American Psychological Association, 2004).

[45] Jay Conger and George P. Hollenbeck, "What is the Character of Research on Leadership Character?," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 62, no. 4 (2010): 311-316, http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0022358.

[46] Ibid., 312.

[47] Referring to leadership scholarship that has integrated character as an additional dimension of transformational leadership theory.

character that takes into account the limits of human leaders. They find it conceivable that leaders can be burdened with too much *character*.[48]

A leader is a "person who by word and personal example, markedly influences behaviors, thoughts and/or feelings of a significant number of fellow human beings."[49] From this definition it is not difficult to conclude that leaders can significantly influence the way in which people live their lives, even if they have not as yet attained what Conger and Hollenbeck see as the idealized view of character.[50]

I draw my understanding of what it means to be a godly leader from the Bible. The Biblical interpretation of such a model is that of Jesus. We are told in Acts (10:38 NIV) that Jesus "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil." Throughout the Bible we have examples of Jesus liberating others from the oppression of the enemy, the devil. It further makes it clear that Jesus was able to do this good because God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power. Evidence of a good leader could be seen as contributing to the well-being and flourishing of others.

Christian leadership transformation is a redeeming act. It is the outcome of allowing the Holy Spirit to have full control of our lives, because we have arrived at the place of surrender. In this instance we are protected from thinking that our leadership is satisfactory, because we feel we have ample power for ministry. Seeking transformation as a Christian leader is important, because our interior life is the very basis of our

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[48] Conger and Hollenbeck, "Character of Research," 312.

[49] Gardner, *Leading Minds*, 8.

[50] Conger and Hollenbeck, "Character of Research," 312.

ministry.[51] Pentecostal Christian leaders in particular need to seek transformation as an antidote to the notion that our *spiritual giftedness* qualifies us to manipulate others for our own purposes.

Credibility is the result of integrity. Over time leaders who act with integrity develop credibility. Leaders who inspire others by walking in integrity have a track record of credibility. This subject of *credibility* is central to conversations about leadership and leader practices. John Gardner, author of the *Anti-leadership Vaccine* had an interesting perspective on why credibility is so important in leadership.[52] He believed that leaders contribute to defining and articulating the values of a functioning society through their moral leadership.[53] He suggest that when leaders lose their credibility or moral authority, the society begins to disintegrate.[54] Thus ethics and morality; deciding what is significant and what is right and worthwhile is associated with leadership credibility.[55]

Individuals that have integrity and thus credibility build trust in their relations with others; they become valued as friends, colleagues, mentors, and supervisors. They are respected and counted on to do what is right. They are able to balance respect and responsibility, and they are able to share their values with others.[56] Generally people do

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[51] Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving Others* (Nashville: Abigndon Press, 2010).

[52] John Gardner, "The Antileadership Vaccine," in *Contemporary Issues in Leadership*, 2nd ed., ed. William E. Rosenbach (New York: Rougledge, 2015).

[53] Gardner, "The Antileadership Vaccine."

[54] Ibid.

[55] Patrick A. Duignan and Reginald J. Macpherson, *Education Leadership: A Practical Theory for New Administrators and Managers* (London: Falmer Press, 1992), 1.

[56] Ibid.

not just trust leaders, because they ask to be trusted. Trust is earned through a lifestyle of integrity.

In the course of my research I discovered that acting in a more, participatory, inclusive and democratic way, increases my leadership credibility. This style of leadership fosters a sense of agency among my colleagues and congregants. In this new way of leading I see them as partners rather than followers in our work and life journey. Although not always easy, living by these values contributes to their sense of worth and well-being.

As I considered the literature on leadership integrity and credibility I was reminded of when I was first appointed to a supervisory position in the religious denomination under which I serve. There was a great deal of skepticism about my appointment; mostly coming from the pastors I was appointed to supervise. Reasons for this included the fact that I was an unknown entity and a woman. It took a great deal of work and effort on my part to earn the trust of these pastors. I was not trusted solely on the merits of my title or position. Building relationships, being consistent and present and ensuring that I never played the gender card was the best way I knew how to earn their acceptance and respect. I did not want them to feel obligated to respond to me because of my position or because I was a woman, but because they respected me as their peer. Ten years later, with fifteen instead of eight churches in the division I supervised, I had gained and still have the trust and respect of my colleagues. Their trust and respect were not given, related to my position; they were something I had to earn. The following email communication is sourced from my data archive and is provided as evidence to show how

leadership gave me the opportunity to invest in others in ways that were meaningful.[57] It is from one of the pastoral couples I supervised. It shows their appreciation for the relationship we had come to enjoy during my tenure as their divisional superintendent. They wrote:

> Our thoughts, especially hearing from you and the relationship we have shared over the years, were…1st, how thankful I/We are to have had you in our lives. Three years ago I would have absolutely been the pastor's wife whose identity relied on the acceptance of our church, community, reputation, etc. Amazing things happen when the rug gets pulled out from under you. I could resonate with your words…and I truly believe you have been the angel in our lives in so many ways…you will never know.

Over the period of my tenure I attempted to walk in integrity. Every leader has a story, however, if the leader contradicts the story through hypocrisy, the story will not remain convincing over the long term.[58] I realized that my credibility would have been called into question if my life in any way had contradicted how I presented myself to them.

In the event that my example appears pious, I make known throughout this dissertation how my research enabled me to confront my own hypocrisy, which was preventing me from fully actualizing my potential as a leader. Reflective practice has enabled me to better align all of my leadership practices with my core values.

Aristotle believed that we make our appeal to our hearers through *logos*, meaning reason, logic, and rational argument; through *pathos,* meaning through emotion which appeals to sentiment and feeling; and through *ethos,* meaning through the character of the

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[57] Data archive August, 2010.

[58] Gardner, *Leading* Minds, 293.

speaker and the audience's respect for the speaker.[59] In my role as divisional superintendent, I knew that my appeal to these pastors would have to be through *ethos.* Winning them over would not be through logical argument. Neither would I win them over through an emotional appeal related to my gender. I knew instinctively that the only way to win them over would be to allow them to get to know me. I chose to go about doing this by investing my time building relationships with them. I went out of my way to engage with them individually. I not only did so with those who chose to attend our monthly meetings; I did so with some who chose not to attend. I set up one on one meetings with them to get to know them and their concerns. I knew that I would need credibility with them before they would be willing to listen to what I had to say. Ultimately credibility speaks of character, and character is shaped by our life histories and our ability, willingness, and openness to learn about others and ourselves.[60]

I have benefited from the increased self-awareness I personally developed as a result of my inquiries, and I further sought to develop this self-awareness through reflection and introspection. These are essential to understand our experiences, self-author and to integrate our core values and belief systems with our self-identities and to self-regulate behavior.[61]

Besides reflection and introspection, being open to constructive feedback is another crucial part of developing character. Our relationship with others plays an important role in the development of our character. Soliciting feedback from other trusted individuals such as a critical friend group, in a safe space can assist leaders to become

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[59] Willimon, *Pastor.*

[60] Sweeney and Fry, "Character Development."

[61] Ibid., 94.

aware of their blind spots. Being open to feedback allows us to consider our leadership from the perspective of others. For me the desire to know how my leadership impacted others was a precursor to developing integrity and consequently credibility. However, it was not always easy to receive feedback. As Christian leaders we know that the truth can set us free; hearing the truth is not always easy because often the truth is painful.

*Blind Spots*

Blind spots can also be viewed in the same category as the shadow side or dark side of leadership.[62] Blind spots are not just failure to view ourselves accurately but can also be failure to view people and situations outside ourselves accurately. In relation to personal leadership, top-level executives appear to have a blind spot when it comes to understanding their own integrity and may also be out of touch with how they are perceived. Blind spots are an issue for leaders. Blind spots are weaknesses which when recognized can be corrected.[63] In his *blind spot matrix* and *questions for feedback,* Robert Shaw provides valuable resources for the leader seeking increased self-awareness.[64]

In his research Shaw produces a blind spot matrix that identifies four quadrants that can help leaders focus their attention as they seek to expand an awareness of their

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[62] Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, "Organizations on the Couch: A Clinical Perspective on Organizational Dynamics," *European Management Journal* 22, no. 2 (2004): 183-200; Gary Gemmil and Judith Oakley, "Leadership: An Alienating Social Myth?," *Human Relations* 45, no. 2 (1992): 113-129.

[63] Robert Bruce Shaw, *Leadership Blindspots: How Successful Leaders Identify and Overcome the Weaknesses that Matter* (San Francisco: Jossey-Blass, 2014).

[64] Ibid., 32.

blind spots. Each quadrant in effect asks a core question.[65] When explored it reveals key insights about our leadership and ourselves. The four quadrants are:

- Known weaknesses: When you know what you do not know
- Known strengths: When you know what you know
- Blind spots: When you do not know what you do not know
- Unknown Strengths: When you do not know what you know

Furthermore, Shaw cites three levels of awareness: lack of awareness, where the leader is unaware of vulnerability and how much risk it represents; faulty assessment, where the leader is aware of vulnerability but not of potential impact and lastly failure to act, where the leader is aware of vulnerability but does not have skill to address it.[66] These levels of awareness or lack thereof are more in keeping with Shaw's view that a blind spot can be related to the failure to view situations outside ourselves accurately. Ultimately Shaw is not of the opinion that blind spots are all bad. He points out examples of large company executives who remark that their lack of knowledge of the challenges they faced was key to their success.[67] Shaw cautions that being aware of our blind spots does not necessarily mean that we have fixed them, necessitating that we surround ourselves with people who can help us manage our blind spots or in this case weaknesses.

Otto Scharmer on the other hand believes that the blind spot in current leaders' thought is that they know all about what leaders do and how they do it. What they do not know is the "source level, that is, the inner place or the state of awareness from which

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[65] Ibid., 18.

[66] Shaw, *Leadership Blindspots*, 84.

[67] Ibid.

leaders and social systems operate."[68] Scharmer sees *presencing* as being able to facilitate this self-knowledge. He describes *presencing* as a blend of sensing and presence, which he views as the meeting point between two different selves in us: one self is the person we have become as a result of a journey that took place in the past. The other self is the person we can become as we journey into the future. "When these two selves talk to each other, we experience the essence of presencing."[69] In effect *presencing* can be viewed as the outcome of inquiry where an understanding of our back-story informs what we envision as our future story.

*Reflecting in Community and Blind Spots*

Here I make available some of the data related to our reflective community group discussions as evidence of how reflecting in community with others contributes to identifying our blind spots.[70] In one of our group meetings a participant was articulating how through our conversations she had become aware of the anger she felt towards her husband stating, "I am discovering that I am so angry with him." She goes on, "this underlying feeling…I try to function and live and do life with him, but underneath I have so much anger."[71] As she continued to share about the way in which she spoke to her husband regarding his apparent consistent inability to monitor her daughter's homework among other things, our group members were able to point-out how condescending she

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[68] C. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Learning From the Future as It Emerges* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009), 27.

[69] Scharmer, *Theory U*, 41.

[70] The Reflective Community Group mentioned is a group of critical friends convened for the purpose of feedback and further exploration related to establishing the validity of my claim that holistic reflection contributes to leadership transformation.

[71] From Transcript of Reflective Community Group Discussions from Data Arhive 2012.

sounded. We described it for her as follows, "you sound like you are talking to a teenager."[72] She replied that she was unaware that her deep-seated anger had blinded her to the fact that her communication with her husband was condescending, something, she only began to see when we challenged her about how she would have communicated had she been talking to us.

Another group member did not stop at challenging the condescending tone she was using with her husband but further suggested that perhaps there was an underlying issue related to it that had not been considered. She went on to state, "it doesn't sound like the two of you are partners: it sounds like you just dealt with him and now you were back in control."[73] Laughter ensued, easing the tension of what could easily have sounded like overt criticism. Because of our frank discussions the woman acknowledged, "that is the truth actually!"[74]

The point here is that we are often blind to how we sound when we speak to others and how the tone of our conversations may be overlaid by motives to which we are blind. A different group member asked the woman one final question concerning her interactions with her husband. "So how do you continue partnering with him, rather than adopting the attitude of, Ok you are the babysitter?"[75] This question left her with the challenge of thinking about how she could improve her interactions with her husband going forward. Such honest but loving and constructive feedback is not easy to give or to

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[72] Ibid.

[73] From Transcript of Reflective Community Group Discussions from Data Arhive 2012.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

receive. However, when it is received it helps to shape our self-awareness and subsequent behavior.

Continuing our conversation along the lines of blind spots, we in the group asked ourselves, "how do we gain awareness of these blind spots?" Is it through inquiry? By becoming more reflective? A group member observed, "I think it is reflection, but for me it is also feedback from other people, because we all have blind spots and, if they are blind, they are blind."[76] She reminded me of a question I had asked when we first began to meet as a group. My question was, "what do you know about me that I do not know about myself?" She continued,

> well there are certain things we cannot know about ourselves, because they are unconscious, at least for myself. I need other people to tell me what those are and then I can reflect on them— there are certain things I can reflect on for example scripture or my relationship with God. However I also think it includes being willing to get feedback. I have this poster in my office, it is called hidden depths; it is this iceberg, and you just see this tiny piece on the top, and then there is this humongous thing underwater. To me what is underwater represents our unconscious—other people can see it but it needs somebody to point to it.

I responded by saying the picture was a visual representation of the idiom known as *the tip of the iceberg*. As a pastor I have come to understand that what we see is often just the tip of the iceberg; what is unseen is often far more significant. Our conversation was relevant to the blind spot matrix as described by Shaw. It appeared to us as a group that our discussions made evident the relationship between our willingness to receive feedback and our ability to identify our blind spots. Having blind spots can hinder our ability to lead effectively.

Reflecting in community in this manner establishes a basis for testing the validity of what we say we have learned through the process of action research. This is

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[76] Ibid.

particularly useful in self-studies where the subjectivity of findings may be questioned. My reflective community group helped to broaden my perspective regarding the role of reflection in learning. It further solidified my understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in a more holistic representation of reflection. Establishing a critical friend group as a mechanism for feedback is fundamental to ensuring that we are made aware of our failures in ethics or low levels of integrity before it is too late. Critical friends also help us challenge our paradigmatic assumptions. These assumptions are not normally questioned, because some leaders tend to keep away from people who do not support their opinions and whose theories are not consistent with their own.[77] Stephen Brookfield makes the observation that no one likes to have what they find comfortable and familiar undercut.[78]

Through this inquiry I have learned the importance of having a critical friends network, not the least of which to help me identify my blind spots but more so to ensure that I have a group of trusted people who can serve to dispute my theories if necessary. Leaders often look for information and points of view that confirm what they believe. This is known as confirmation bias. Therefore, in convening a critical friends group I opened myself up to disconfirming data about the role of reflection in facilitating knowing about our my practices and myself. Critical friends can offer a platform for the feedback leaders need in relation to making them aware of their blind spots.

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[77] Stephen D. Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking: Tools and Techniques to Help Students Question Their Assumptions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

[78] Ibid.

*The Dark Side of Leadership*

In recent times our view of leadership has been tainted by scandals at all levels of society revealing that leaders have a dark side. What is not evident to the public, and remains largely unexplored by leaders themselves, is the inner psychological conflicts and tensions experienced by leaders that contributes to irrational behavior. Leaders who do not know themselves or others create dysfunctional organizations. According to Manfred De Vries "the darker side of leadership grows out of personality traits such as self-aggrandizement and entitlement and it thrives on narcissism, self-deceit, and the abuse of power."[79] It is this authors opinion that the underlying dysfunction related to the dark side of leadership resides in parenting styles. Therefore, it is deep rooted requiring substantial intervention, related to an inward journey. However, as De Vries points out many leaders are unwilling to look inside themselves and to acknowledge their weaknesses. He believes that enough disruption can perhaps be the impetus leaders need to consider change. He suggests that arriving at an awareness of our behaviors requires the help of others. Undertaking the process of self-exploration can contribute to improving our emotional intelligence, help us become cognizant of our motivations and move us to change. Change in his estimation, however, takes time and effort. DeVries suggests that there are dysfunctional patterns that will always be a part of our identity. In the psychological sense, this leaves little hope for transformational change. This is unless we seek change on an identity level. As already noted in the previous section on blind

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[79] Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, *Reflections on Character and Leadership: On the Couch with Manfred Kets de Vries* (Sussex, England: John Wiley and Sons, 2009), 183.

spots, critical friends offer a platform for the feedback leaders need in relation to both their blind spots and their dark side.

De Vries' research on the shadow side of leadership or the blind spot of leadership which he associates with our back-stories indicates the importance of knowing what these stories are and understanding how they are implicated in the way we practice leadership. Leaders who lack understanding of their back-story, although being "dressed, as adults will nevertheless repeat behavior patterns first learned in childhood."[80] In this research I am suggesting that the process of action research can facilitate knowing about our back-stories. In this chapter I have provided stories as evidence, sourced from an analysis of data from my data archive about how my engagement with the process of action research generated knowing about my back-story and how this impacted the way I now view and practice leadership.

Facing our dark side is not only daunting but it also strips away the façade under which reside many of our weaknesses. One of these weaknesses is over-idealizing leadership.[81] Gary Gemmill and Judith Oakley have contributed some interesting ideas as it relates to this topic. They suggest that leadership idealization is rooted in what they view as the myth of leadership and related this myth to reification; a social process that converts abstract ideas or mental constructs into supposed reality. They call for a questioning of this ideology of leadership in light of the dysfunctional and alienating consequences it perpetrates. They view the dynamics of leadership when viewed as a social process as quite different from the idea of a "leadership elite, where acceptance of

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[80] Kets de Vries, *Reflections on Character and Leadership*, 1.

[81] Gemmill and Oakley, "Leadership."

a leader requires abdicating authority to a power outside the self."[82] This is a phenomenon whereby people deskill themselves from their own critical thinking, visions, and inspirations.[83] This hinders them from reaching their maximum potential, because this idealized notion of leadership "engenders a sense of alienation and helplessness that leads to dependence on the leader."[84] This leads to leaders believing their own press.

Leadership theories that espouse traits or great man explanations reinforce the notion that only a few are good enough to exercise initiative.[85] Gemmill and Oakley suggest that the idea that leaders are unquestionably necessary for the functioning of an organization is a deeply ingrained cultural assumption that is largely unquestioned. This perpetuates the myth of the necessity of leaders representing an unrecognized ideology, which chiefly takes its power from an undiscussable aspect of reality based upon epistemological and ontological beliefs outside of conscious awareness.[86]

These scholars call for a research methodology that investigates unconscious behavior associated with leadership. I see my research as responding to this call; providing a leadership change process that enables leaders to question their beliefs about leadership with the opportunity to conform their practices to their articulated values. As a result of the change process identified in this dissertation my own leadership practices have moved away from hierarchical practices associated with deskilling and alienation, to facilitative, inclusionary participatory and collective practices as a way of leading that

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[82] Gemmill and Oakley, "Leadership," 124.

[83] Ibid., 279.

[84] Richard Bolden, "The Shadow Side of Leadership," *Effective Executive* 9, no. 2 (February 2007): 42-43.

[85] Gemmill and Oakley, "Leadership," 122.

[86] Ibid., 113.

contributes to reskilling. Gemmill and Oakley's work on leadership as a social myth further increased my own understanding of the value of democratic ways of leading in order to facilitate the reskilling of persons, who in my view hold enormous potential for creative solutions to society's problems.[87]

*Summary*

In this chapter I have sought to cover some important characteristics that speak to leadership effectiveness. I have shown how the research on leadership and power in particular has informed my practices, challenged my view of myself as a leader and strengthened my commitment to transformation. I provided an example of my reflections, related to the understanding of my use of power. Appendix A provides another example also sourced from my data archive that outlines the internal processes and the outward behavioral evidence associated with learning in action research. Ultimately this chapter more closely examined the theoretical scholarship that underpins my understanding of what it means to practice good leadership.

[87] Gemmil and Oakley, "Leadership."

# CHAPTER 3:

# SHAPING HOLISTIC REFLECTION

In this chapter I offer a bibliographic overview of action research and methods associated with it, that I have used to facilitate my inquiry. This chapter is especially significant given that my research question asks. "In what ways action research methodology with its inherent reflective methods contributes to pastoral leadership transformation?" Included in this chapter is scholarship related to learning theories to provide a link between action research, reflection, and learning. Lastly, I include an overview of spiritual reflection associated with a more holistic framework of reflection.

Action Research as a methodological approach has become immensely popular in a variety of fields but most especially in education and medicine with a great many scholars contributing widely to this research approach.[88] Associated with action research are similar approaches in other disciplines such as: action science, action learning, action inquiry, and appreciative inquiry. Some have argued that Action Research has Marxist roots.[89] Others associate it with liberation theology in the Freirian sense.[90] From all accounts Action Research is considered to have an underlying emancipatory, liberationist philosophy.

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[88] Jean McNiff, *Principles and Practice*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013); Stephen Kemmis and B. Conlan, "Towards a New Definition of Critical Participatory Action Research" (paper presented at the Collaborative Action Researach Network Conference, University of Nottingham, 2006).

[89] The Action Research of Karl Marx (circa 1840's) was one of critical theory and was related to questioning assumptions associated with oppression and oppressive regimes. It is therefore said that Karl Marx's form of Action Research is characterized as emancipatory Action Research. This type of Action Research has a strong focus on emancipation and the overcoming of power imbalances hence its connotation with liberation and freedom as the basis of this form of research.

[90] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970); Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

Over the years there have been different ways in which practitioners have engaged in Action Research for the purpose of generating knowledge to improve what they are doing. There are those who have used an iterative cyclical process and others a spiral process to investigate their practices. Whatever the process action research brings inquiry and action together in everyday life and sees inquiry as a way of life.[91]

Using action research I have been able to forge a more direct link between intellectual knowledge and now spiritual knowledge with *moment-to-moment* personal and social action.[92] The learning that ensues emerges from a day-by-day, integrated discipline practiced on the job, a journey of exploration that corrects its course as it proceeds.[93] Action research allows practitioners to "deliberately involve themselves in messy but crucially important problems and when asked to describe the methods of inquiry, they speak of experience, trial and error, intuition, and muddling through."[94]

The "main difference between Action Research and other forms of research is that it is carried out by people directly concerned with the social situation that is being researched."[95] Therefore it is useful to practitioners or communities of practitioners, in problem solving, problem posing or practice improvement.

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[91] Peter Reason and Kate McArdle, "Brief Notes on the Theory and Practice of Action Research," in *Understanding Research Methods for Social Policy and Practice*, ed. Saul Becker and Alan Bryman (London: The Polity Press, 2004), http://www.peterreason.eu/Papers/Brief_Notes_on_AR.pdf.

[92] Peter Reason and William R. Torbert, "The Action Turn: Toward a Transformational Social Science," *Journal of Concepts and Transformation* 6, no. 1 (January 2001): 5-6.

[93] Peter Vaill, *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water* (San Francisco: Jossy-Bass, 1996), chap. 1.

[94] Schön, *Reflective Practioner*, 43.

[95] Bridget Somekh, "The Contribution of Action Research to Development in Social Endeavors: A Position Paper on Action Research Methodology," *British Educational Research Journal* 21, no. 3 (June 1995): 340.

Peter Reason and Hillary Bradbury describe Action Research in the following way:

> Action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.[96]

Given the definition offered by Bradbury and Reason, I viewed Action Research as a viable alternative option to social science research which seeks objectivity, neutrality, replicability, and generalizability, and that is value free rather than value laden. Furthermore, since the researcher is part of what is being researched the approach is subjective. As such values play a significant role in the interpretation of results.[97]

## Self-study

Self-study is a close relative of Action Research and is also known in the Action Research community as first-person research or self-reflective inquiry. Although self-study, like reflective practice has now become a dedicated methodological orientation it continues to be a key part of the literature of action research.[98]

Self-studies often incorporate methods such as personal history, narrative inquiry, reflective portfolios, memory work, and arts-based methods.[99] Self-study researchers use

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[96] Peter Reason and Hillary Bradbury, *Handbook of Action Research: Participativee Inquiry and Practice* (London: Sage, 2001), 1.

[97] Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis, and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students*, 8th ed. (Essex, England: Pearson Education, 2009).

[98] Jean McNiff, *You and Your Action Research Project*, 4th ed. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 50.

[99] John Loughran, Mary Lynn Hamilton, Vicky Kubler La Boskey, and Tom Russell, ed., *Handbook of Self Study of Teaching and Teacher Educational Practices* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands:

biographical forms of inquiry. Self-study inquiry is also historical, cultural, and political. It takes a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known, and ideas considered.[100]

Action research self-study as a personal learning process contributes to self-awareness and self-knowledge and is thereby suited to better understand my practices and myself. This approach allows me to undertake a systematic reflective study of my actions and the effects of these actions in my church context. For example, inquiring into my actions reveals my propensity for impatience. I might have been inclined to say to myself some people are so slow, incompetent, and fail to provide timely service, or they lack work ethic. These thoughts are directly related to my actions. Rather than assertions, my learning from this way of inquiring triggers questions like, "how can I facilitate, rather than judge in order to increase the effectiveness of others and how can I model a work ethic for others?" The outward behavioural evidence of this is my response to the recent late arrival of an employee. Rather than my former frustration I now focused on my concern for her well-being. This makes my relationship with others better. Because my frustration level is reduced, they no longer feel judged and scrutinized as they once did.

Even though it is possible to have actions without research and research without actions, together they are a powerful and synthetic way of generating new ideas about action. Action research allows me to explore what is happening in real time contexts with real people, including all the contingencies and defects of any human process.[101]

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Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 817-869.

[100] Mary Lynn Hamilton and Stefinee Pinnegar, "The Value and Promise of Self Study," in *Reconceptualizing Teaching Practice*, ed. Mary Lynn Hamilton (London: Farmer Press, 1998), 236.

[101] Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 113.

Ultimately action research facilitates an intervention and response to my leadership actions.

*The Action Research Process*

The action research process I use is premised on David Kolb's experiential learning cycle.[102] It comprises the following steps: data gathering related to significant incidents, reflection, observation, and analyses, interpretation, ideas about future action, and testing of those ideas in practice. A diagrammatical representation of the cyclical process, including the steps in the process is shown below (Figure 1).[103] The entry point of the process is a practice experience or significant incident.

[102] David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, vol. 1 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984).

[103] Recording these incidents provides qualitative data that helps me understand better how I experience the world and how those around me experience it as a result of my leadership.

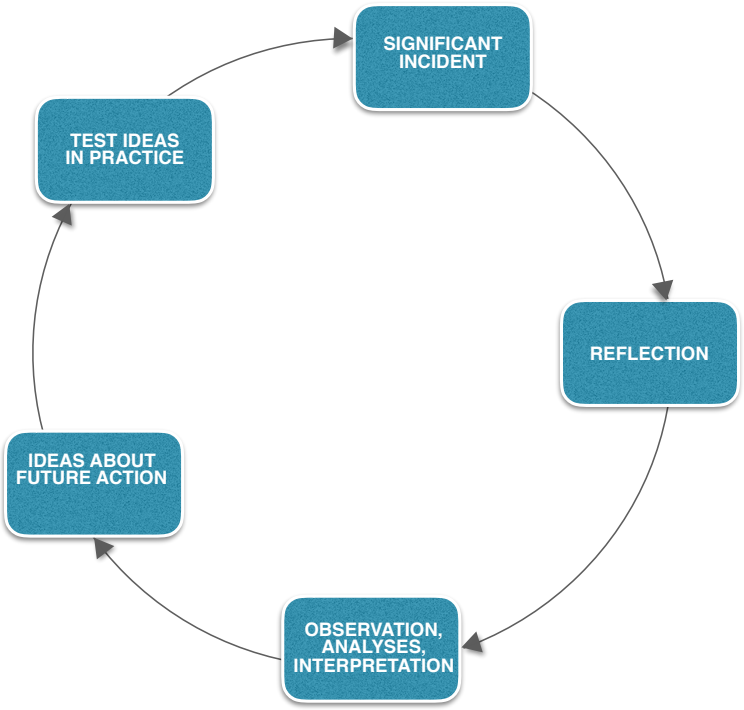


***Figure 1: Cyclical Process in Action Research***

As can be noted the initial process conceived included a general method of reflection. Only later in the research does the reflection step identify three distinct methods of reflection, finally representing a more holistic reflective approach. Furthermore, a final step is added to the process to capture data related to outcomes such as new information that challenges information and interpretation from an earlier cycle. Below is a diagrammatical representation of the evolution of the methodology process.

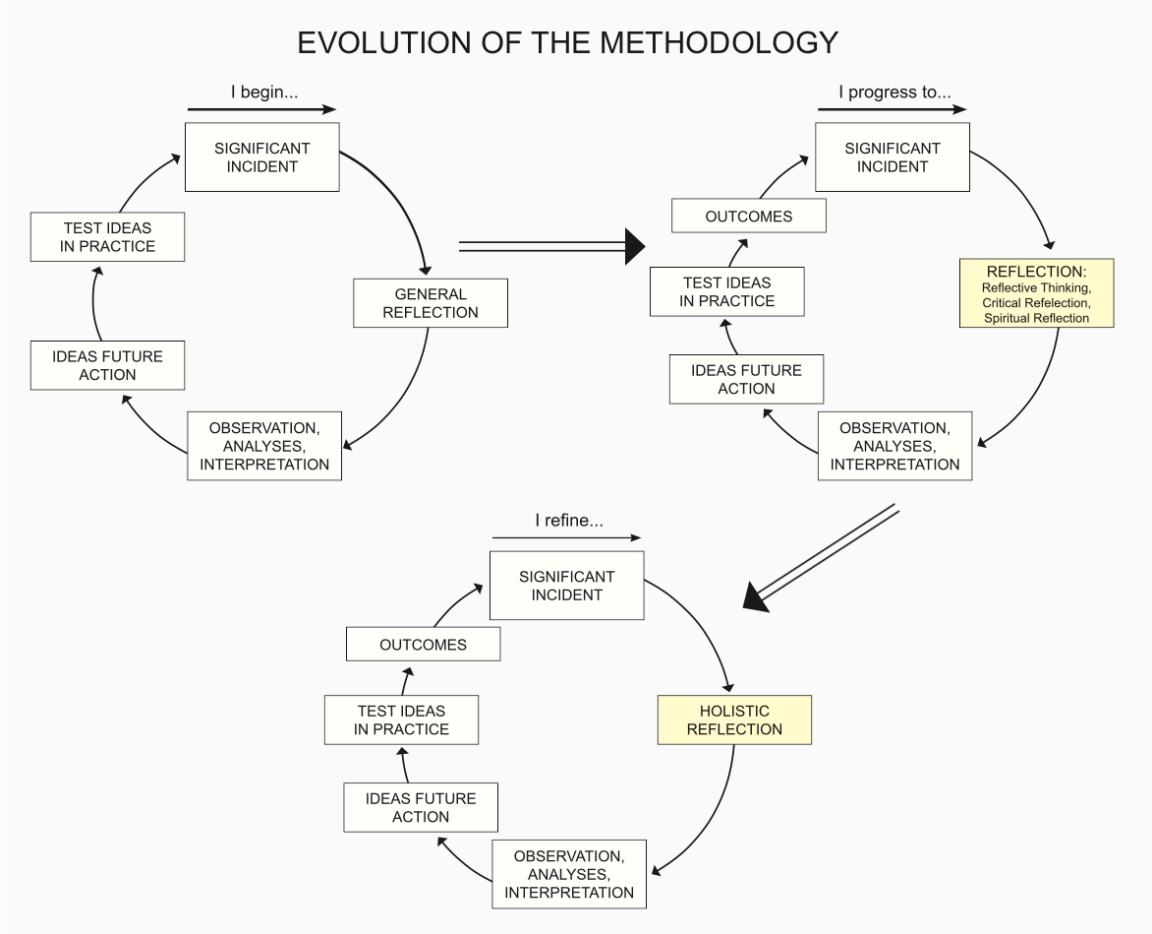


***Figure 2: Evolution of the Methodology***

This sequence of steps undertaken with each cycle produces data that is consistent with the steps. After each cycle, data from the cycle is analyzed. This includes data related to reflection, data that forms part of the scholarship reviewed to make sense of my learning and data related to my observations, and interpretation. From this process ideas for future actions emerge or new questioned are triggered. The ideas are tested in practice and evaluated in the next cycle or the next cycle begins with new questions that have arisen from the previous cycle. All of this generates data. Pernille Schiellerup is uncomfortable with the phrase data analyses. It is his view that analyses are more akin to a creative process of constructing and attributing meaning to phenomena that enters a

person's experience in the course of a structured social process referred to as *research*. Therefore, *sense making* seems to be a more satisfactory label.[104]

Robert Dick observes that we should let data decide what determines the next cycle.[105] In other words what emerges from the data enables me to decide, what the next research cycle will be. Analysis of the data helps me determine if there are themes and patterns to be found in the data. David Kolb views learning from this process occurring in two ways: firstly, from data produced by observing and reflecting on the experience, and then by further reflection that generates data related to imagining new ways of acting.[106]

The validity of these theorized actions is determined by further reflection on the outcomes of these actions. Therefore, testing the actions in practice creates new data for reflection. The consistent process of capturing data, reflecting on data, analyzing data, interpreting data, and recording learning from this process, thus demonstrates the rigorousness of the research. This is not a linear or smooth process where immediate learning contributes to the next research cycle. Rather the rigorousness is established by the consistency of data collection, reflection, and analyses. I discovered that my learning occurred not only as a consequence of the process whereby Kolb suggests knowledge is

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[104] Pernille Schiellerup, "Stop Making Sense: The Trials and Tribulations of Qualitative Data Analysis," *JSTOR* 40, no. 2 (2008), 164.

[105] Robert Dick, "You Want to Do an Action Research Thesis? How to Conduct and Report Action Research," Chapel Hill, Quneesland: Interchange, 1993, www.scu.edu/schools/gcm/ar/arp/arthesis.html.

[106] David Kolb., Richard Boyatzis., and Charalampos Mainemelis, "Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions," in *The Educational Psychology Series: Perspectives on Thinking, Learning, and Cognitive Styles*, ed. Robert Sternberg and Li-fang Zhang (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2001), 227-247.

created through the transformation of experience but also as a result of engaging with the literature.[107]

Robert Dick sees learning from the process as the ability to enter the process with expectation, to be deliberate, and to act with intent.[108] Action implies intervention. Keeping the end goal in mind drives the quality of the data collected. Therefore, the process of Action Research can be viewed as an interventionist strategy.

*Data*

Keeping the end goal of the improvement of my leadership practices in mind I will now very briefly discuss the various aspects of data collection as it relates to action research. These aspects include what data was gathered, the criteria for the data gathered, how it was gathered and later interpreted. I also provide an example of the evidence that emerges from analyses of the data that shows where I began my inquiries i.e. what my practices were like then and what they are like now.

Data gathering is central to inquiry as data drives the inquiry. The real time leadership events I capture in my journal are significant due to their nature and context and because I am telling the story as one fully immersed in the experience. Keeping records of the how, what, and why was significant, because memories tend to reconstruct with the passing of time and the adding of evolving knowledge. Recording actions, thoughts, reflections, and learning in real time helps me to monitor my learning, gauge my progress, and show how I experience movement related to change. When I recorded incidents, I attempted to describe what I saw, heard, and experienced.

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[107] Kolb, *Experiential Learning*, 51.

[108] Dick, "Action Research Thesis."

Action is about what I do. In recording my reflections, I note my intentions, reactions, and interactions, together with my assumptions. Reflection is about the meaning of what I do. Recording incidents in this way helps me find themes and patterns of behaviour related to my leadership practices. Observing, analysing, and interpreting data fosters ideas about future actions. Further data is generated when future action is tested in practice.

Another significant aspect of data collection was recalling my history. This idea was fueled by the questions I was asking related to the pattern of power behaviors that had emerged from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected in my fourth research cycle. I recalled stories to think about my history. I then analyzed these to deepen my understanding of how my history impacted my beliefs about how leadership ought to be practiced. Bringing my practices under scrutiny in this way enabled me to identify that my practices were not aligned with my values enabling me to envisage the way I wanted to practice leadership in the future. Recalling history through story is a rich source of data for reflection that results in insight, understanding, and consideration for future actions. The data related to the recalling of my history served as a reference point for where my understanding of leadership originated. All this data is collected in varying ways including, journaling, memo's to self, notes taken after conversations with staff members or colleagues, emails related to correspondence or feedback about events under investigation, audio recordings, and transcripts of meetings with critical friends and visuals that demonstrate reflective learning. An example of data collected is reflected in Appendix C. This includes a table that shows how I record the contrast between my

former and my current leadership behaviors related to a practice experience. I will now move on to criteria for data collection.

*Criteria for Data Collection*

The research aim also determines the criteria for collecting data. As such aspects of the criteria focus on troublesome or problematic leadership incidents, challenging behaviours, situations where cultural difference surfaced as significant, value incongruence, and convictional experiences. Ultimately the point of collecting data is to examine, monitor, and interrogate my practices more fully. It is also to reflect on my learning and to gauge whether my learning is impacting my leadership practices in a positive way. The importance of gathering data over the period of the inquiry was related to the way reflection continued to yield relevant information.

This kind of data collection is differentiated for instance from collecting data from interviews or surveys. This is because there is no set time or place when data is collected. For example, I carry a notebook in my car and have one beside my bed so that when thoughts, ideas or questions related to my inquiry come to me they are not lost. Unlike surveys or interviews, I never know when I will be triggered by a significant incident. Neither do I know what reflection will reveal about the incidents ahead of time.

The method of spiritual reflection I have developed to compliment the rational methods associated with action research, does not necessarily immediately yield the information I need to confirm, disconfirm or add to what may have emerged from reflective thinking and critical reflection. Furthermore, the insight from this method of reflection can come in different ways. One example is a dream that provided insight into the questions I was asking related to what had emerged from my analysis of data related

to previous cycles. Although I had prayed for insight, I did not know that it would occur through a dream; neither did I have an expected timeframe for the answer. The dream is an example of how insight can occur during the pauses between cycles of reflection, when questions triggered from previous cycles are held in abeyance until the moment of insight occurs. Of consequence, here is the different ways in which knowledge related to reflection can be generated. My dream provided me with the insight I needed to help me understand how my power behaviours impacted others, triggering questions about the origin of these behaviours. To explain more fully how dreams are considered useful in knowledge generation, would entail moving into a different area of research, I will therefore only note that the subject of dreams and how they contribute to knowledge generation is well documented in research, particularly as it relates to scientific discoveries. I only mention it here to highlight the messy aspect of action research, where the knowledge generated can often appear as out of nowhere.

Action research is not a tidy, buttoned down process. The random nature of the knowing that surfaces from this process of inquiry requires the establishment of criteria that can serve as a filter for judging what data might be relevant and what might not. Therefore criteria for data collection in action research, contributes to much wiser judgements about my practice experiences, because it forces me make explicit what is often tacit and implicit in terms of the knowing that emerges from this action reflection process.

*Interpreting the Data*

It is an unfortunate but inescapable fact that it takes more time to organize, write, and present material well than it does to gather it.[109] In the previous section I provided an account of the data collected and the criteria used for the data collected. I now explain how I made sense of the data.

Data analysis and interpretation are critical stages in the Action Research process, because they require the researcher to know and to understand the data. Data analysis also has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names. New iterations produce new data relevant to the research. This includes data related to feedback from participants, friends, colleagues, supervisors, and critical friends.

Using three different methods of reflection is particularly useful in helping me interpret the data because no one frame can pull out the significance of the contradictions and commonalities across incidents. It is important to use different frames to do this. One of the frames—reflective thinking aided by questions about the who, why, and what—is useful because it allows me to capture the details and pay much closer attention to what just happened. This method of reflection also pays attention to feelings. Critical reflection, another frame calls for the questioning of the assumptions I am making about the situation and whether these assumptions are related to facts. The third frame spiritual reflection calls on the Holy Spirit for divine insight, wisdom, revelation, discernment, and direction related to what I may feel is still missing from the knowledge that has been generated by the first two frames.

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[109] Schiellerup, "Stop Making Sense."

Epistemologically speaking, this holistic approach (which will be discussed more fully in the last section of this chapter) to reflection generates data that is more representative of the different dimensions of being. The data therefore reflects rational, affective, and spiritual epistemologies. This systematic process of data collection, analyses observation, and interpretation advances knowing, learning, and reframing. It not only helps me see more but also to see differently. It forges an association between responses, action, interventions, and outcomes. The table below more clearly represent the different frames related to each method of reflection in what is constituted as a holistic framework of reflection.

| QUESTIONS AND PROCESSES THAT AID THE REFLECTIVE PROCESS | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Reflective Thinking** | **Critical Reflection** | **Spiritual Reflection** |
| Context:<br>• What is the context?<br>• How do contextual factors influence the situation?<br><br>Players:<br>• Who are the players?<br>• What is their relationship to each other and to the situation?<br><br>Relationship:<br>• What is my relationship with the players?<br>• How is my presence significant in this context with these players?<br><br>My observable behaviour:<br>• What framework do I bring to the conversation?<br>• What is the quality of my behaviour?<br>• Is it appropriate to the situation?<br>• Does it increase the quality of the conversation?<br>• Is my behaviour congruent with my purpose?<br><br>Latent behaviour:<br>• Am I aware of what is happening in me and in the world around me?<br>• What am I experiencing?<br><br>Positive Aspects<br>• What are the positive aspects of this situation?<br><br>Negative Aspects<br>• What are the negative aspects of this situation?<br><br>Personal Perspective resulting from reflection<br>• What filter(s)/lens (es) did I use to make sense out of this situation?<br>• What have I discovered from my reflection? | • What assumptions am I making?<br><br>• Are my assumptions valid or skewed by an unwavering frame of reference?<br><br>• Do my assumptions address the issue of contextual awareness?<br><br>• What are the belief systems that fuel my assumptions?<br><br>• What power issues are related to the situation?<br><br>• Is it personal or institutional power that has influenced the situation? | Asks what is my spirit telling me about the situation.<br>Does the biblical text have any direction about the issue?<br>What am I hearing from the Holy Spirit as a result of prayer?<br><br>This method of reflection uses the spiritual disciplines of:<br>• Scripture meditation,<br>• Prayer,<br>• Meaning making, and<br>• Listening to receive insight, wisdom, revelation, direction or discernment.<br><br>This method of reflection triangulates with reflective thinking and critical reflection – it looks for congruence or dissonance. |
| **What do I need to change?** | **What do I need to change?** | **What do I need to change?** |
| Ideas about future actions<br><br>• What can I do differently in the future to create even better outcomes?<br><br>• What specific contexts or situations are likely to evoke this different behaviour, and how can I prepare to live out the new behaviour? | Ideas about future actions<br><br>• What can I do differently in the future to create even better outcomes?<br><br>• What specific contexts or situations are likely to evoke this different behaviour, and how can I prepare to live out the new behaviour? | Ideas about future actions<br><br>• What can I do differently in the future to create even better outcomes?<br><br>• What specific contexts or situations are likely to evoke this different behaviour, and how can I prepare to live out the new behaviour? |

**Table 1. Reflective Frames**

As can be noted the purpose of reflective thinking is to think more deeply about what I am doing. Having a set of questions that aids this method of reflection produces data from which themes and patterns can be drawn to make sense of the practice experience. The purpose of questioning assumptions in critical reflection is to identify the belief systems, mental model and paradigms associated with my thoughts and actions. It is also to make value judgments by assessing the validity of these assumptions. And, finally it is to use newly formed knowledge to transform these assumptions and as such inform my future leadership actions.[110] The purpose of spiritual reflection is to consider what alternative ways of knowing such as divine insight, wisdom, revelation, discernment, and direction might be generated through the process of engaging with spiritual disciplines.

Using a consistent set of questions with each incident interrogated, contributes to the pool of knowledge from which I can draw to identify repetitive themes and patterns of behaviour. The questioning of assumptions in critical reflection contributes to more critical analyses of what is occurring in the situation under investigation. Of note is the fact that once skill and proficiency are mastered in reflective practice, the practitioner has the capacity to formulate questions more appropriate to the context of each situation as it is addressed in practice.[111] Ultimately not all data about incidents or experiences is

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[110] Stephen Brookfield, "Using Critical Incidents to Explore Learners' Assumptions," in *Fostering Critical Reflections in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*, ed. Jack Mezirow (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990), 177-193.

[111] Schön, *Reflective Practitioner*.

recorded in its entirety, because of the difficulty of recording everything I think and sense from my daily life experiences.[112]

Graham Martin makes an important distinction between knowledge that can be put into words and knowledge that cannot necessarily be verbally articulated. He contends that we can only give a brief summary description of any phenomenal object, indicating that any such description always leaves more to say.[113] There are things that I understand and know that are difficult to express in words. I can know more than I can tell.[114]

An example of a consistent theme or pattern is the issue of frustration that emerges from an analysis of the data. Becoming aware of this frustration was useful, because it revealed a disturbing trend related to my perceptions of the performance of others. Therefore structured data gathering contributes to the rigour of the research because it reveals themes and patterns in the data from which assumptions can be drawn, questioned and submitted to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit for insight towards the evaluation, monitoring, and interrogation of practices with the aim of improvement.

*Summary*

A review of the data collected over the course of the inquiry shows the evolution of the methodological process. An evolving methodological process is not unusual in action research. The psychologist Nigel Mellor explains how over his six-year inquiry he

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[112] Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, "Writing a Method of Inquiry," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 3rd ed., ed. Norman K. Denizen and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 959-978.

[113] Graham Martin, *Living on Purpose: Meaning Intention and Vallue* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2008).

[114] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

made many errors. He decided to be honest about them by writing about them, which he later identified, as a project strength. He states: "for most of my practitioner based PhD there was no research question and no clear method."[115]

As a methodological approach, action research is an emergent process that scholars have referred to as messy.[116] Our perceptions of what good research should look like are generally associated with assumptions of clarity, specificity, and the definitive.[117] According to Jean McNiff these methodologies can appear haphazard until at some point order begins to emerge out of the chaos.[118]

For example, I began by conceiving that reflection was an adequate elicitation tool and ended up recognizing the limitations of using this method of reflection without some theoretical understanding of the values that underpin it. I later understood the need for a more critical stance to reflection where I would question my assumptions and later still in analyzing my data I began to see themes and patterns of a third method of reflection emerge, which I identified as spiritual reflection. Ultimately action research methodology entails a more complex set of relationships than is at first realized, such as the relationship between action research and reflection, the relationship between reflection and learning, the relationship between theory and action, etc.

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[115] Nigel Mellor, "Messy Method: The Unfolding Story," *Educational Action Research* 9, no. 3 (2001): 465.

[116] Tina Cook, "The Purpose of Mess in Action Research: Building Rigour Through a Messy Turn," *Educational Action Research* 17, no. 2 (July 2009): 277-291.

[117] John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[118] McNiff, *Your and Your Action Research Project*.

The final step in the process is when evidence is drawn from this data for the purpose of identifying what changes have occurred and what external behavioral evidence exists that substantiates these changes. Action Research is therefore a process of building towards greater understanding of my practices based on new information, developed thinking, learning, theorizing about and implementing new ideas, fact finding about the outcome of those ideas, and feedback from participants and others about the outcomes. This is all with the aim of evaluating the effectiveness of the action research process to bring about change and transformed leadership practices.

I will now discuss the reflective methods that generate data in action research as a process of learning. Finally, I will discuss how holistic reflection is shaped by the addition of spiritual reflection, which emerged from an analysis of my data. As already shown in the table presented the addition of this method of reflection represents a more holistic approach to reflection. Thus, holistic reflection calls for a consideration of bringing all of our faculties to bear in the reflective endeavor. Thus, the knowledge generated from this holistic representation of reflection is of a cognitive, affective, and spiritual kind. Although scholars have called for a more holistic representation of reflection, few view *holistic* as considering how the human spirit might be implicated in the reflective endeavor. The method of spiritual reflection I will introduce in the latter part of this chapter and then more fully in Chapter Four constitutes a method of reflection that is set within a pneumatological Pentecostal theological context.

## Reflection as a Process of Learning

Donald Schön is the scholar most noted for building the bridge between what is learned in the academy and how this knowledge can be implemented in practice through

a process of reflection.[119] He spent his career watching professionals work. His book, *The Reflective Practitioner,* raises awareness of the necessity of reflection for effective professional practice. He calls for professionals to reflect *in* action as a form of *artistry*. He views this artistry as the ability that a leader develops as a result of reflection, enabling them to generally apply their expert technical-rational knowledge gained in the academy, in practice, and doing it in such a way that it contributes to effective action.[120]

Schön outlines the discrepancy between what is taught in the classroom and what is learned in real world practice. It is his opinion that professional practitioners learn more profoundly when they think about what they do *while* doing it. His view is that professionals are not as accomplished at what they do as they could be, because they do not have the skills to apply their technical-rational expertise learned in the academy *artistically*. He sees professionals applying generalized solutions to problem solving, rather than reflecting to discover the source of the problem before solving it. He describes reflective practice as stopping to think about what you are doing and consciously analyzing your decision-making, while drawing on theories (the expert knowledge you have and that of others) to do what you do in practice.

This capacity to reflect *on* action is the capacity to engage in continuous learning. Reflection *on* action means thinking about the practice undertaken after the event and turning that information into knowledge. Reflecting *in* action on the other hand, is the ability of a practitioner to *think on their feet* resulting from the practice of reflecting *on*

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[119] Schön, *Reflective Practitioner*.

[120] Ibid., 35.

action.[121] Reflection *in* action means to think about or reflect while carrying out an activity. When faced with an issue, a reflective practitioner is able to connect with their emotions and prior experiences to attend to the situation directly. When the practitioner reflects *on* action, they analyze their reaction to the situation and explore reasons related to this action and around the resulting consequences.

Therefore, the implication of reflecting *in* action is that it enables the professional to go beyond just looking back *on* action. Rather it conceptualizes how to respond to problem situations, problem framing, and problem solving as well as the significance of practical knowledge over abstract theory. Schön further believed that the only learning that significantly influences behavior is self-discovered and self-appropriated learning.[122] He sees learning as belonging to the learner, although he does not discount that we could learn from *masters*. He believes however that to learn from *masters* they must make their thinking transparent to the learner.

Schön reinforced the possibility that, through reflection both *on* my experience and then *in* real time, I could transform my leadership practices. He brought clarity to the practices of reflective thinking and critical reflection so crucial to my research in seeking development. While I found both these methods of reflection important, they still did not fully satisfy nor provide the full transformation I knew had to be possible. Schön's work does provide a link between learning and effective professional practice, but it is the work of scholars such as John Dewey, Jack Mezirow and Stephen Brookfield, which

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[121] Reflection *in* action means to think about or reflect while carrying out an activity.

[122] Schön, *Reflective Practicioner,* 89.

more clearly articulates and defines the learning that results from reflective thinking and critical reflection.[123]

I will therefore now focus on these authors for a brief look at their theories of reflection in order to explore more fully how these theories are related to learning. These authors provide numerous insights as to how reflection is implicated in the way leaders learn and thereby improve what they are doing in their professions.

Dewey regarded as one of the most prominent educational reformers of the first half of the twentieth century, was one of the first to talk about the way we think. His basic assumption separated thinking, which he viewed as a taken for granted human faculty, from thinking well. According to Dewey reflective thinking is a better way of thinking since most thinking is automatic and unregulated. Dewey saw reflective thought as a chain involving a consequence and leading to an outcome. He therefore believed that there needed to be a basis or origin for thinking. He defined reflection as "active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends."[124] According to Dewey reflection is simply being aware of our own process of thinking. This kind of thinking perceives the operation of our own mind within us and also attends to the grounds of our feelings and beliefs.[125]

For Dewey reflection was rational problem solving and theorizing about different ways of acting and knowing what we are about when we act so that we can convert

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[123] John Dewey, *How We Think* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1910,1933); Jack Mezirow, *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1990); Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking*.

[124] Dewey, *How We Think,* 118.

[125] Dewey, *How We Think,* 6.

impulsive action into intelligent action.[126] He believed that it was necessary to validate our theories of action in dialogue with others. From Dewey's work on thinking reflectively I discover a pattern of thought that can be aligned with the process used in action research, whereby this pattern of thinking reflectively involves a consecutive ordering in such a way that,

> each determines the next as its proper outcome while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. The successive portions of the reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. Each phase is a step from something to something—technically speaking it is a term of thought. Each term leaves a deposit, which is utilized in the next term. The stream or flow becomes a train, chain, or thread.[127]

This pattern associated with thinking reflectively can be related to the action research cycle where each new cycle is triggered by questions or concerns or thoughts about new ways doing things that is related to the learning experienced in the previous cycle. Evidence related to the outcomes of these actions is then explored further through evaluation or by triggering new questions.

What is of consequence and should be noted here is that Dewey disputed the generation of knowledge that is non rational. He discounted the intuitive thought or imaginative vision as knowledge. The pneumatic imagination therefore as it is conceived of in the literature of Amos Yong and others and as it is associated with my own ontological grounding in the work of the Holy Spirit in knowledge generation, would not be considered as a ground for knowing by Dewey, unless of course it was possible to

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[126] Ibid., 113, 125.

[127] Ibid., 3.

establish a basis of evidence for this claim. From Dewey we learn that one of the first elements of reflective thinking is actually thinking *about something.*[128]

Richard Paul makes this distinction when differentiating between routine thinking and reflective thinking stating:

> The unphilosophical mind thinks without a clear understanding of the foundation of its own thought, of the most basic concepts, aims, assumptions, and values that define and direct it. The unphilosophical mind is at its best when routine methods, rules, or procedures function well and there is no need to critically reconceptualise them in the light of a broad understanding of ones' framework of thinking. If one lacks philosophical insight into the underlying logic of those routines, rules, or procedures, one lacks the ability to mentally step outside of them and conceive of alternatives. As a result, the unphilosophical mind tends toward conformity to system without grasping clearly how the system came to be what it is or how it might have been otherwise.[129]

I learn that in order to think reflectively, I need to pay attention in a more focused and direct way. When I think reflectively this concretely means I pay close attention to what I am doing as a leader. Therefore reflective thinking is thinking at a deeper level.

There are several ways in which thinking at a deeper level can be facilitated. In my inquiries I used journaling and a predetermined set of questions to stimulate reflective thinking. This aided in the capturing of consistent data related to certain aspects of my actions so that later in the analysis phase, themes and patterns could be identified. Journaling about significant incidents enabled me to pay attention to these experiences. In fact writing itself is a form of reflective thinking.

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[128] Dewey, *How We Think*.

[129] Richard Paul, "Critical and Reflective Thinking: A Philosophical Perspective," in *Dimensions of Thinking and Cognitive Instruction*, ed. Beau Fly Jones and Lorna Idol (Hillsdale: Lawrene Erlbaum and Associates, 1990), 447-448.

The difference between thinking and reflective thinking is when we not only look at things on the *face of it* but when we think beyond what is immediately before us.[130] Dewey saw this kind of thinking as moving people away from routine thinking/actions. When we master reflective thinking, we come to appreciate the detail and nuances in events. Reflective thinking can then be thought of as the art of *noticing*. When I think reflectively, I focus on my actions for the purpose of understanding my intentions. I make mental notes of my interactions with others, particularly the difficult, troublesome or surprising ones. I do this routinely so I can think more reflectively about what transpired and how I can better understand my reactions. Therefore, in this sense reflective thinking is a deliberate thoughtfulness to my engagement with others.

When thinking I focus my attention on capturing details of an event for further consideration. Paying focused attention in this way helps me notice difference and disconfirming data. Unfocused attention sees no need to take a closer look at the event. Thinking reflectively engenders attentive and mindful practices. When I think reflectively, I am taking notice of what is transpiring within me and around me. This method of reflection helps me identify my feelings and emotions as they are related to the experience.

The learning experienced through reflective thinking contributes to mindful practice. I see mindful practice as the ability to engage with others by paying attention in conversations in an undistracted way. External behavioral evidence of this is my commitment to keep my electronic devices off, during group meetings or when meeting with people individually. The outcome of this is that people have remarked that I have a

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[130] Dewey, *How We Think.*

good memory, because I can recall particular aspects of their lives even many years later. Rather than a good memory, I associate this with my ability to pay attention. This is made easier when we have an interest in people.

Otto Scharmer and William Torbert are two scholars that see the ability to pay attention and take notice in this way as having social implications.[131] Scharmer sees it as contributing to moving past habits of what we already know to notice what is different (in other words disconfirming data). He believes this ability to be at the source of all great leadership. Daniel Goleman, a well-known psychologist and science journalist who has written prolifically on emotional intelligence, views reflecting in this way as contributing to self-awareness.[132] John Dewey sees it as central to learning, because he believes that learning improves to the degree that it arises out of the process of reflection.[133] Paul does not see people using this kind of reflection routinely.[134] Rather he believes that it arises when there is an interruption in the normal course of events, such as needing to solve a problem or overcome an obstacle. This is congruent with Jack Mizerow's assertion that the process of learning often begins with a disorienting dilemma.[135]

Theories about this method of thinking are based on cognition and are concerned with the mental events of the learner. Reflective thinking brings the attentive qualities of focus and purpose to the act of reflection. An example of this could be the way we notice

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[131] Scharmer, *Theory U*; William Torbert, *Action Inquiry: The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett and Koehler, 2004).

[132] Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1998).

[133] Dewey, *How We Think*.

[134] Paul, "Critical and Reflective Thinking."

[135] Jack Mezirow and Edward Taylor, *Transformative Learning in Practice* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 19-20.

how a person behaves, i.e., the tone of their speech, the sound of their voice, their ability to make eye contact, and their mannerisms or gestures that may or may not be congruent with what they are saying. This is what Scharmer refers to as habits of attention.[136]

When we do these things, we are practicing reflection. This practice of reflection features the individual and his or her experiences leading to a new conceptual perspective or understanding. This perspective includes the element of learning as well as involvement of the self to define reflective practice as a "forum of response of the learner to experience."[137] Reflective practice is seen as an activity that is central to developing practice. In fact, Daudelin's studies suggest that just one hour spent reflecting about a challenging situation can significantly enhance the manager's learning from that situation.[138]

Therefore reflection represents a process of learning from experience, which is later applied in practice.[139] It is "the deliberate and purposeful act of thinking which centers on ways of responding to problem situations."[140] An understanding of the purpose of reflective practice can be gained by considering some of the definitions provided in the literature such as,

> Reflective practice is something more than thoughtful practice. It is that form of practice that seeks to problematize many situations of professional performance

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[136] Scharmer, *Theory U,* 11-12.

[137] David Boud, "Promoting Reflection in Learning," in *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*, ed. David Boud, Rosemary Keogh, and David Walker (London: Kogan, 1985), 18.

[138] Marylin W. Daudelin, "Learning from Experience Through Reflection," *Organizational Dynamics* 24, no. 3 (1996): 36-48.

[139] Ruth Leitch and Christopher Day, "Action Research and Reflective Practice: Towards a Holistic View," *Educational Action Research* 8, no.1 (2000), 180.

[140] J. John Loughran, *Developing Reflective Practice: Learning About Teaching and Learning Through Modelling* (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 14.

> so that they can become potential learning situations and so the practitioners can continue to learn, grow and develop in and through practice.[141]

Christopher Johns views reflection as a window through which the practitioner can view and focus on self within the context of their own lived experience in ways that enable them to confront, understand, and work towards resolving contradictions within their practice; between what is desirable and actual practice.[142]

*Critical Reflection*

Mezirow, saw Dewey as making a seminal analysis of reflection and builds on that analysis.[143] He views reflection as the central dynamic in intentional learning, problem solving and validity testing through rational discourse.[144] He further believes that there has been an egregious disregard for the function of reflection, which makes enlightened action and re-interpretation possible.[145]

Mezirow identifies two types of transformation in meaning perspective: epochal and incremental.[146] Epochal refers to a deep insight experienced suddenly over minutes or even days. The shift in meaning perspective comes quickly, and the difference is immediate and obvious. When this transformation is experienced, it is experienced directly. This is comparable to deep insight as a conscious experience of knowing—

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[141] Peter Jarvis, "Reflective Practice and Nursing," *Nurse Education* 12, no. 3 (June 1992): 180.

[142] Cristopher Johns, *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner: A Reflective and Holistic Approach to Clinical Nursing, Practice Developent and Clinical Supervision*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 34.

[143] Jack Mezirow, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspective on a Theory in Progression* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 100.

[144] Mezirow, *Learning as Transformation*, 99.

[145] Mezirow, *Fostering Critical Reflection*, 100.

[146] Mezirow and Taylor, *Transformative Learning in Practice*, 23.

moving from one state of knowing to another state of knowing. While he emphasizes that this can come from critical reflection, I found that I needed to engage spiritual reflection in order to fully explore these epochal events.

On the other hand, incremental transformation is related to small shifts in meaning schema over time when there is recognition of change. From his research Mezirow developed a number of steps in the transformational learning process. Each is a metaphorical description of praxis. He sees praxis as interplay between action and understanding. The steps are: disorienting dilemma, self-examination of feelings, critical examination of assumptions, recognition that the disorienting dilemma is not unique to the person experiencing it, exploring options for new actions, planning a course of action, acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan, testing action in practice, building confidence and re-integrating into our life on the basis of conditions dictated by our new perspective.[147] Mezirow saw transformation occurring when individuals changed their meaning perspectives or schemata through reflection.[148] This process is not dissimilar to the process I have engaged in to facilitate learning.

Stephen Brookfield, as an adult education scholar steers the conversation towards thinking more critically. He does so by outlining how reflection can be more critical when we understand the categories of our assumptions.[149] In *Teaching for Critical Thinking* he identifies these categories as causal, prescriptive, and paradigmatic.[150] He sees *causal* assumptions as being the cause and effect assumptions we make, e.g. if we

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[147] Mezirow and Taylor, *Transformative Learning in Practice*.

[148] Ibid., 19-20.

[149] Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking*.

[150] Ibid., Chapter 1.

arrange seating in a certain way during a seminar, it will contribute to better dialogue among the participants. *Prescriptive* assumptions on the other hand are the conceptions we have about what it means to be a good teacher, doctor, parent or leader. *Paradigmatic* assumptions are framing and structuring assumptions that constitute the entire way we look at something, i.e. our worldview.

Brookfield views critical theory as one of the most common traditions related to critical thinking.[151] This has implications for transformational leadership as it is related to the heightened awareness of political consciousness. In this tradition the person is alert to the way in which power moves in society and to potential ideological manipulation. A *critically reflective* person should not just stop at questioning personal assumptions but should seek to question what the social and cultural basis of these assumptions are and how they have been developed.

Critical reflection together with my added method of spiritual reflection, have been instrumental for me in uncovering my own previously unconscious use of power. This has been detailed more extensively in an earlier chapter on leadership and power. In that chapter I shared recalled stories from my data archive to show how critical reflection together with spiritual insight heightened my awareness of the power issues related to my leadership and how this affected my self-perspective, with the application of a heightened sense of leadership responsibility for the larger community of people I serve.

Learning from the literature of the importance of questioning assumptions helped me reflect more critically on my leadership practices stimulating questions about how I used power in my leadership. As a result I began to associate some of my leadership

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[151] Ibid.

behaviours with power. This led to my curiosity about the origin and roots of my beliefs about leadership. Ultimately it was a combination of critical thinking, spiritual insight, and existing literature related to hegemony that enabled me to answer these questions.

Part of understanding hegemony required the questioning of my assumptions related to these representations of power in my own world of leadership.[152] Approaching critical reflection with an underlying theoretical base allowed me to question my assumptions about power. This included the many ways in which power operates and, in particular, the role of personal power and its relation to "social and structural contexts and constraints."[153] This knowledge raised my awareness of how my admiration and respect for my father influenced how I practiced leadership. My father's model of leadership was undoubtedly influenced by hegemonic representations related to his Eurocentric upbringing that were essentially hierarchical, i.e. he made the rules, enforced them and the three of us (my mother, sister, and myself) obeyed them. I also recognize that hegemony was not only practiced in our home, but it was also present in the political structures and educational institutions in which I grew up in South Africa. The result was that I assimilated leadership that resembled dominant, autocratic, top—down practices consistent with my antecedents.

As such I realized that my assumptions about leadership included being solution oriented. This involved being directive and authoritarian—and therefore judgemental and prescriptive. Critical reflection makes me aware of the social and political implications of

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[152] Daniel M. Jekins and Amanda B. Cutchens, "Leading Critically: A Grounded Theory of Applied Critical Thinking in Leadership Studies," *Journal of Leadership Education* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 1-21.

[153] Janet Fook and Gurid Aga Askeland, "Challenges of Critical Reflection: Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained," *Social Work Education, The Internation Journal* 26, no. 5 (2007), Our Model of Critical Reflection.

this style of leadership. This awareness makes me more mindful to seek to live in the direction of my values by practicing a more democratic and participatory way of leading. Therefore, reflection became critical for me when it addressed the power issues that underpinned, framed, and distorted my leadership practices. Furthermore, in conjunction with spiritual reflection it enabled me to identify the root of these power behaviours and to understand the implications of this way of leading on others.

Without an understanding of the significance of the theories that underpin both reflective thinking and critical reflection, I would have had little awareness of discriminating structures. Neither would I have known if I was unknowingly discriminating against others. I now recognize that it is possible to discriminate when we categorize others in our own thinking and actions. This recognition helps me pay close attention to how I refer to others. I now use my educational influence to guide those I lead to recognize when they may be objectifying others in speech or actions.

Critical reflection therefore is a mental process that takes place at a deeper level of consciousness than reflective thinking. It seeks to know about situations with the purpose of initiating changed actions when and where appropriate. Critical reflection happens when we analyse and challenge the validity of our assumptions and assess the appropriateness of our knowledge, understanding, and beliefs related to our present context.[154] This results in the uncovering of the sources of our knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs that contribute to what we know about our prevailing ways of thinking.

As a result, I define critical reflection as, "a determined, disciplined, action-activated, predetermined *decision*, to use good questioning to gain access to the deeper

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[154] Mezirow, *Fostering Critical Reflection.*

issues related to what is being reflected upon."[155] Essentially critical reflection involves a critique of practice, including a critique of the values, which are implicit in practice. This method of reflection asks questions about the personal, social, institutional, and broad policy contexts in which practice takes place as well as the implications of these for improved practices.[156]

Jack Mezirow suggests it takes a great deal of reframing to understand the need to question some of the structures on which we base our beliefs about how and why things should be done in a certain way. Critical reflection therefore questions prejudices and their impact on judgement and action, it also facilitates knowing about our own prejudices. Therefore critical reflection provides a platform for self-critique and self-evaluation. In critical reflection I ask how my thinking has changed in light of the knowledge and understanding that emerges from my engagement with this method of reflection and how might I do differently next time? When I reflect critically, I understand myself in the context of desirable action. Critical reflection is therefore my way of establishing a consistent method of engagement with the data to test my core assumptions and to gain a better understanding of the nature of critical engagement with the incidents I am examining to evaluate my practices.

Although my understanding and use of critical reflection powerfully informed my leadership practices, I will now explain how from my data arose another consistent theme: that of seeking God in prayer in response to the limitations of these rational and affective sources of knowledge to fully inform my practices. Throughout this chapter I

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[155] Personal reflection, captured as a memo to self in my data archive.

[156] Christopher Day, "Professional Development and Reflective Practice: Purposes, Processes and Partnerships," *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 7, no. 2 (1999): 222.

have briefly alluded to spiritual reflection I will now show how the framework of holistic reflection I am proposing is built on my original reflective thinking and, later, critical reflection, implicit in the process of action research.

Critical reflection is a crucial part of learning and development, and is necessary if leaders are going to experience change leading to transformation. It is evident from these learning theories that the focus is on the cognitive and its association with logic and reason. As significant as these methods of reflection are to the transformational process, evidence from analyses of the data collected over the period of my research, shows the limitation of these rational methods of reflection in generating knowledge that is of a different kind. What I find is missing from the work of these scholars therefore is a consideration of the spiritual element of what it means to be human in the reflective endeavor. Although the subject of spirituality has been debated and contested extensively in academic circles, it has become popular in recent leadership literature and is considered as one of the values-based theories of leadership. Of note in the secularized leadership literature on spirituality, is the absence of the human spirit's work in praxis. As my research progressed, I realized that I was searching for a way to understand and apply my spiritual impulses in the process of transforming my leadership practices and as such altering the social formations in my world.

*Holistic Reflection: A Framework Developed In The Course Of My Inquiries*

As a result of my research I have developed a framework for a more holistic method of reflection. This holistic framework is based on the premise that knowing is not just a rational or affective process but also a spiritual one. Therefore holistic reflection as I have shaped it in this dissertation is defined as a whole person approach to reflection.

By reflecting holistically, I bring all facets of my being to bear on the evaluation of my practice.

The three methods of reflection that shape holistic reflection are: reflective thinking, critical reflection and spiritual reflection. These three methods of reflection facilitate knowing: *intellectually*, through thinking processes that are generally understood as rational, analytical, logical or empirical; *affectively* through an identification of feelings and emotions and the role they play in my practice experiences and *spiritually* by engaging with spiritual disciplines to understand better how my interaction with the Holy Spirit influences my leadership practices. These methods probe issues more deeply, question assumptions and evoke spiritual disciplines to activate non-rational ways of knowing.

## Theoretical Argument For Holistic Reflection

Scholars have called a more inclusive representation of reflection as including the affective dimensions of reflection.[157] This is because research literature on reflection has typically been limited to the intellectual or rational domains, which these authors have critiqued as having a limiting reflective stance. Robert Tremmel highlighted that too much emphasis has been placed on the mental aspects of reflection and has suggested an incorporation of Zen Buddhist notions of mindfulness and paying attention to a broader

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[157] Harvey Jackins, *The Human Side of Human Beings* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1965); Robert Tremmel, "Zen and the Art of Reflection Pracitice in Teacher Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 63, no. 4 (1993): 434-458; Alan Bleakley, "Writing with Invisible Ink: Narrative Confessionalism and Reflective Practice," *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (2000): 11-24; Leitch and Day, "Action Research," 179-193.

concept of reflection.[158] Alan Bleakley has criticized normative modes of reflection by calling for reflection that is an aesthetic and ethical act of participation in the world.[159] He views this as holistic reflexivity that is the "inclusive, ecological or caring act of reflection as well as an appreciative gesture, with an explicit concern for otherness and difference."[160] Tremmel further states that, "without the affective dimension of reflection, rational analyses might be limited."[161] These scholars have therefore highlighted the limitations of employing only the cognitive dimension of reflection.

This inclusion of the affective dimension of reflection is for the purpose of taking into account how our feelings and emotions impact our practice experiences. Including the affective dimensions of reflection is suggestive of a way forward for exploring other dimensions of knowing in the reflective process. For a more holistic representation of reflection, Ruth Leitch and Christopher Day call for insights and understandings of human nature derived from other paradigms such as counselling, psychotherapy, human relationships, personal growth, and systems theory.[162] This is so that a more encompassing and heuristic model of reflection is developed. These authors see a need for the integration of reflection that is relevant to our understanding of human nature. They believe that more attention ought to be given to the importance of the role of emotion in developing capacities for reflection.

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[158] Tremmel, "Zen and the Art," 446.

[159] Bleakley, "Writing with Invisible Ink," 328.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Tremmel, "Zen and the Art," 446.

[162] Leitch and Day, "Action Research," 187.

Harvey Jackins calls for the use of artistic mediums in reflection, seeing this as enabling us to release our feelings and emotions and thereby deepening our understanding of the situations we are interrogating in order to learn from them.[163] These artistic mediums can include aesthetic representational modes of reflection such as poetry, metaphor, and imagery. Employing these mediums in reflection has contributed to a deeper understanding of my own feelings and emotions related to a deeply personal situation with a family member's mental illness. My reflections related to the interrogation of my leadership concerning the situation include the use of poetry and metaphor as an expressive form of reflection to deepen my understanding of the situation and particularly my role as a leader. Through these artistic mediums I was able to process my own pain and frustration related to the situation. This illustrates how alternative forms of writing, specifically metaphor and poetry, provided a vital and much-neglected link between my personal and often idiosyncratic world of theories and concepts *and* the personal world influencing my own leadership practices.[164] See an example of this in Appendix C.

Christopher Johns, who has written prolifically in the medical field about reflection, is another scholar who calls for a more holistic approach to reflection.[165] He views the rational approach to reflection as constituting a generally Western technological approach to learning that can be contrasted to more esoteric approaches

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[163] Jackins, *The Human Side*.

[164]Randee Lawrence, "Powerful Feelings: Exploring the Affective Domain of Informal and Arts Based Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 120, (Winter 2008): 65-77; Joellen Coryell and Robin Wright, "Exploring the Power of Poetry for Fostering Critical Reflection: Adult Poetry Readers and Self-Reflexivity," Adult Education Research Conference, 2010, http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2010/papers/17; Barrie Barrell, *Teaching English Today: Advocating Change in the Secondary Curriculum* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), 1.

[165] Johns, *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner.*

found in ancient wisdom traditions such as native American lore and Buddhism. John's views reflection as holistic when there is an integration of both left- and right-brain thinking.[166] He also distinguishes left-brain thinking as associated with reason, logic rationality and analyses, and right-brain thinking with creativity, imagination, perception, curiosity, intuition, spirit, and synthesis. Johns emphasizes the idea of reflection as spirit. He views reflection as essentially life giving, paying attention to our being, and acknowledgement that health care is at its core spiritual practice.[167]

Bringing the word spirit and spiritual practice into the conversation regarding a more holistic mode of reflection does not necessarily make reflection *spiritual* in the theological sense. It leaves me wondering how a concept can be regarded as spirit. Paul Dokecki and his colleagues see a danger in the very general and possibly overgenerous use of the words *spirit*, *spiritual,* and *spirituality*.[168] It is my view that there needs to be more clarity associated with these terms, if we are going to use them to describe methods of reflection that contribute to learning. It is not only Johns in the field of health care that has used these terms without clarity, these terms have also become popular in other fields of study such as organizational leadership, education, and psychology. The question may well be asked, "What do these terms mean?"

According to David Benner if properly understood, *spirituality* is a dimension of the life of all people and not merely those of a religious persuasion or particular

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[166] Ibid., 30-32.

[167] Johns, *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner*, 9.

[168] Paul Dokecki., J.Newbrough and Robert O'Gorman, "Towards a Community Oriented Action Research Framework for Spirituality: Community Psychological and Theological Perspectives," *Journal of Community Psychology* 29, no. 5 (2001): 497-518.

personality type.[169] James Fowler says people are spiritual when they seek guidance and resolution in matters of life using religious teachings and traditions.[170] Edward Canda and Leola Furman see people as calling on spirituality by its various names to help them thrive, to succeed at challenges and to infuse their resources and relationships with meaning beyond mere survival.[171]

Although Johns sees spirit as one of the right brain functions that constitute reflection, I have a different view of spirit and what it means in terms of what I see as a more holistic framework of reflection that includes spiritual reflection. What this constitutes is discussed more fully in the next chapter where I outline the method of spiritual reflection I have developed resulting from my inquiries.

When I refer to the spirit in terms of holistic reflection, I do so from a theological perspective, viewing spirit not merely as a metaphor for an immaterial entity. A discussion of the spirit of humankind in the next chapter outlines a more extended view of the Christian hermeneutic of spirit in scripture. For now, however, I will use Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) to show how God views humankind and the complexity associated with differentiating each facet that constitutes what it means to be human.

The writer of Hebrews states that it is only the word of God that can distinguish between these three facets of humankind. Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) reads: "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to

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[169] David Benner, *Soulful Spirituality: Becoming Fully Alive and Deeply Human* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2011), 24.

[170] James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

[171] Edward Canda and Leola Furman, *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Art of Helping* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

In terms of this text, God's word is the only entity that can penetrate and divide these facets of being. It is on this basis therefore that I see the need for spiritual reflection to constitute what it means to have a more holistic representation of reflection. As a consequence, this enables me to probe the depths of my being to examine the very thoughts, attitudes, and intensions of my heart. As can be seen in the diagrammatical representation below, the three methods of reflection that constitute my framework of holistic reflection, reflect how their use allows me to interpret what I am experiencing physically, feeling emotionally and discerning spiritually through my engagement with the person of the Holy Spirit. As noted in the diagram however, only spiritual reflection, including God's word, is able to influence knowing as it relates to the deeper reaches of being where the motives and intentions of actions dwell.

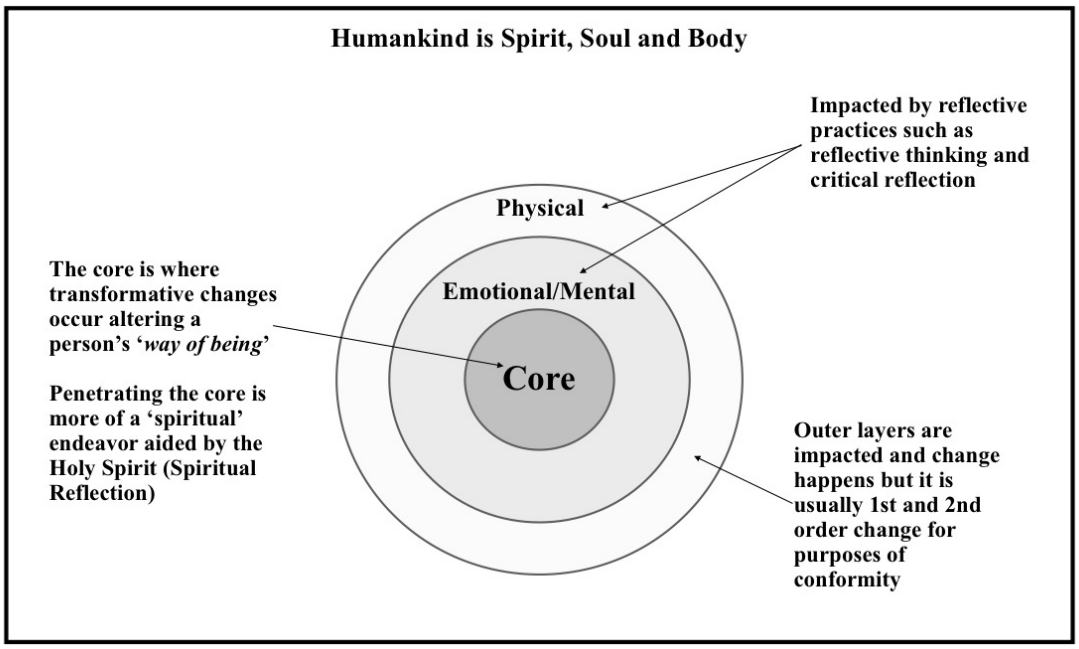


***Figure 3: Humankind is Spirit, Soul, and Body***

This diagram depicts the different ways in which holistic reflection facilitates knowing. The outer and middle circles represent what I know physically, mentally, and emotionally through reflective thinking and critical reflection. These two methods of reflection enable me to more fully examine my physical, emotional, and mental experiences as they are related to the practice experience under interrogation. However, what lies at the core (or heart) can only be accessed by God's word, hence the addition of spiritual reflection. For example, physical pain is immediately evident to us, whereas emotional pain is often more deeply buried and requires more skilled intervention for the feelings associated with this pain to surface.

The inner circle (the core) represents the heart and what lies at the heart is not always easily accessible. I have used spiritual reflection in my research by engaging with the Holy Spirit, initially in a random fashion and subsequently more intentionally using

spiritual disciplines to seek wisdom, insight, revelation, discernment, and direction from the Holy Spirit, as it constitutes what is going on at a heart level. We have seen in this chapter how scholars have seen holistic reflection as merely a rational, affective, and ethical practice. As I see it this limitation is unable to access what lies in the heart of humankind. In my view spiritual reflection gets to the heart of the matter.

Otto Scharmer suggests that our inability to change what we do and ourselves is related to a *spiritual divide*.[172] He believes that not only are we disconnected from others, but we are also disconnected from ourselves. His view is that the breakdown of our social systems is related to the disconnect between others and ourselves *and* the disconnect between self and self. He believes we can change the quality of our thinking and reach deep down to the creative source within us to shift from where we are today to envision where we can be tomorrow (present state; desired state). It is his understanding that our inability to do this leads to a loss of energy, creativity, and burnout.[173]

In my opinion this suggests that we have the ability to bring about our own transcendence.[174] This stands in stark contrast to the theological view that sees God as the transforming agent. I agree with Scharmer that the quality of my thinking can be honed and developed. However, I also require the humility to acknowledge that I am limited as a human being to think my way to transformation. This act of humility acknowledges the limitations of my rational and affective ways of knowing. God's way is the way of

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[172] Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer, *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economics* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2013), 39.

[173] Scharmer and Kaufer, *Leading from the Emerging Future*, 5.

[174] Ibid., 162.

humility. Humility acknowledges the limitations of one's own deductive reasoning. In my view this emphasizes the epistemological relevance of the Spirit.

Therefore, spiritual reflection intentionally acknowledges a process that seeks heart transformation first and mind renewal next so that the learning that emerges glorifies God and not the individual. According to Johns, the transformation of the knower has to occur before the knower can contribute to a righteous transformation of the world.[175]

Sadly, models and methods of reflection with a pneumatological emphasis are rare in the area of Christian pastoral leadership development. Therefore, it is often necessary to draw from other fields of study towards an understanding of the significance of the human spirit in reflection and particularly in respect of the human spirit as a cooperating entity in its relationship with the Holy Spirit. It is my belief that the method of spiritual reflection proposed here and outlined in more detail in the next chapter ameliorates the oversight of scholars who have seen holistic reflection as merely a rational, affective, and ethical practice.

Jackie David Johns believes that critical reflection is always with God, because God is known to be working in, with, and through all things. However he sees more significantly the necessity to bring our whole being to all situations with the willingness to be known by and to know God.[176] According to his wife Cheryl Bridges Johns this calls for praxis of the spirit that "unveils reality in a manner that incorporates but

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[175] Johns and Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 35.

[176] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 80-81.

supersedes human praxis."[177] Another scholar that highlights what Pentecostal Christianity can bring to the process of reflection is Karla Poewe professor of anthropology at the University of Calgary. She states that Charismatic Christianity is reversing the emphasis we have taken for granted, "the centrality of the rational, of calculated doing, of articulated verbal skills, of doctrine and of things Western."[178] She believes that Pentecostals do not deny the validity of these methods but rather approach them in a different way, e.g. moving from the non-rational to the rational.

James Loder is the scholar who I view as providing the most substantive insight into the transformational aspects of knowing by the spirit. His framework of transformation as explained by Dana Wright and Kevin White outlines how the developing person is spirit.[179] Loder's background allowed him to understand the human process. In the key steps to his transformational logic, he forges a link between the Holy Spirit and our own transforming experiences.

*Loder's Conflict Model*

Loder spent forty years developing an interdisciplinary methodology that identified patterns of correlation in the fields of psychology, educational theory, phenomenology, epistemology, and physics. He portrayed a compelling theological vision that centers on the person and work of the Holy Spirit encountering and

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[177] Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed* (Eugene, OR: Wifp and Stock Publishers, 2010), 62.

[178] Karla Poewe, *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 12.

[179] Dana Wright and Keith White, *The Logic of the Spirit in Human Thought and Experience: Exploring the Vision of James E. Loder* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

transforming human life.[180] Loder's transformational logic framework is more closely associated with human process and the work of the Holy Spirit in *knowing*.[181] It therefore provides a platform from which I can explain my own convictional knowing experiences related to my engagement with spiritual reflection. In the course of my inquiries I had two such convictional knowing experiences both of which answered questions related to my leadership inquiries.

Loder's transformational logic framework is also known as the logic of the human spirit. Loder notes that theology, which should be the language of conviction, has had trouble with such experiences due to their subjective nature.[182] He sees this as especially so for those preoccupied with the rigorous demands of theological thinking.[183] Even though at the time of Loder's writing, a survey of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. showed that 80 percent of their clergy and approximately half their lay constituency had had such experiences. Now over three decades later, Professor Tanya Marie Luhrmann, a psychological anthropologist and professor in the department of anthropology at Stanford University, confirms the following about such experiences.

> For the last 10 years, I have been doing anthropological and psychological research among experientially oriented evangelicals, the sort of people who seek a personal relationship with God and who expect that God will talk back. For most of them, most of the time, God talks back in a quiet voice they hear inside their minds, or through images that come to mind during prayer. But many of them also reported sensory experiences of God. They say God touched their shoulder, or that he spoke up from the back seat and said, in a way they heard with their ears,

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[180] Kovacs, *Relational Theology*, 1.

[181] James Loder, *The Transforming Moment* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

[182] James Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 1.

[183] Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 11.

> that he loved them. Indeed, in 1999, Gallup reported that 23% of all Americans had heard a voice or seen a vision in response to prayer.[184]

Therefore, being brought under the influence of a spiritual power beyond us is not as unusual as might often be thought on an academic level.[185] Loder notes that Paul's convictional experience on the road to Damascus convinced Paul that he was seen, known, and understood even in ways he had not been able to understand himself.[186] Loder remarks that there is no doubt that the transforming event must be felt like one's own for no one can know or comprehend the central meaning of a convicting experience from a standpoint outside it. That is, no one making observations from an objective viewpoint such as those who were with Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road could know what was really happening to him.[187]

In terms of the validation of these experiences Loder notes that, "human judgments may examine and falsify a claim, either that God has spoken or that one has sufficiently understood how one is being addressed by God."[188] "God does not ignore the need for validation", rather "the validation of a Word from God is uniformly established by God's initiative and not by generally recognized human procedures."[189] "In all accounts, Saul of Tarsus is described as having an experience that is not of *flesh and blood* and so it is not subject to the sort of verification that flesh and blood might

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[184] Tanya Marie Luhrmann, "My Take: If You Hear God Speak Audibly You (Usually) Aren't Crazy," opinion piece for CNN blog, December 29, 2012, http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2012/12/29/my-take-if-you-hear-god-speak-audibly-you-usually-arent-crazy/. The entire article can be accessed in the Appendices.

[185] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 8.

[186] Ibid., 15.

[187] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 14-15.

[188] Ibid., 16.

[189] Ibid.

invent."[190] In the end what most validates the claim is not the event or experience but the transformation that is stressed. I have little doubt that the transformational aspects of my dream experience (one of two convictional events in the course of my inquiries) are related to a new awareness of the *other* and how my behaviors as a leader determined another's experience of my leadership. I mention these experiences because I refuse to wall off my experiences from my public self for fear of being disbelieved as a result of an underlying cultural disinclination for publicly acknowledging certain highly subjective, highly personal experiences.[191]

Loder's articulation of the logic of transformation was a response to what he saw as the lack of "understanding, comprehension and adequate language for what takes place in these convicting moments of transformation."[192] His scholarship reveals his effort to develop his logic of transformation model to explain the importance and significance of what he calls convictional events in the *knowing* enterprise. In this scholarship, Loder emphasizes the Holy Spirit as the transforming agent (informing source) in transforming life experiences. Using his own convictional experience, Loder outlines how the knower when influenced by "snippets of insights from the human sciences exerts a powerful repressive force against such experiences."[193] Loder's work is significant because it provides an opening for a discussion of how these non-rational (transrational) experiences are implicated in our learning. Interestingly, even though research as noted,

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[190] Ibid., 25.

[191] Elizabeth Mayer, *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism and the Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind* (New York: Bantem Bell, 2007), 6, 25.

[192] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 12.

[193] Ibid., 8.

is confirming the relative frequency of such events, scholarship on theological reflection has yet to explicitly identify such experiences as relevant to the process of change and transformation.

Thus, Loder's approach to knowing is not that it is just a rational event of cognition, but a transforming event facilitated by the Holy Spirit. His logic of transformation model identifies a sequence of steps or processes by which the knower comes to discover a new way of knowing. These steps include conflict, interlude for scanning, constructive act of imagination, release of energy, and an opening and interpretation. Loder points out in his logic model of transformation how every event takes place in a situational context, a social and cultural world in which the event can be understood.[194] These events depend initially on assumptions about meaning. The relevance of the events (significant incidents) is contingent on the desire for a deeper understanding of the event as it relates to the question the inquiry is seeking to answer. Therefore, events that have significance for us may have no significance for others. Clearly defining the research aim prevents the interrogation of unrelated events. Criteria for data collection are established by clarifying the objectives of the research.

The first step in Loder's logic of transformation model is conflict. Conflict always appears in a situational context, a social and cultural world in which it can be understood. For Loder conflict occurs whenever there is a discontinuity in our lived world such as an adverse incident, illness, accident, loss of a loved one or even a sense of restlessness, which threatens the continuity or stability of our world. Loder further states: "the more

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[194] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 31.

one cares about the conflict the more powerful will be the knowing event."[195] It is his perception that, "one does not come to know what one does not care about."[196]

He sees it as the nature of humans presented with conflict to seek to resolve the conflict. His observation about the state of conflict we experience in disconfirming situations is because the *self* cannot live with this anxiety. A knower self is not comfortable with not knowing. This disruption upsets the equilibrium, and humans do not like to live with dissonance and therefore seek to resolve the conflict.

It is at this point that the second step of the model is initiated, which is the process of scanning for a solution. Loder acknowledges that when the scanning takes place the solution may appear suddenly. Loder believes that this process of scanning can last for moments or even years. Scanning is not only a search for answers outside the problem, it is also a holding of the problem or conflict that takes an investment of energy. This is that of "waiting, wondering, following hunches, and exhausting the possibilities."[197]

Kovacs explains Loder's complex understanding of what happens next in the scanning phase.[198] He states that in every Christian's life there are experiences of *metanoia*, moments of conviction, moments of transformation, even at times of revolutionary proportions, when new knowledge *comes upon us* arriving from beyond the limited confines of the knower such that knowing itself yields to a *higher intelligibility* as mediated by the Holy Spirit.[199]

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[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 32.

[198] Kovacs, *Relational Theology*, 1.

[199] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 216.

Loder calls the third step in the knowing event a constructive act of the imagination. He sees this as an "insight, intuition, or vision, which, appears on the border between the conscious and unconscious, usually with convincing force and conveys in a form readily available to consciousness, the essence of the resolution."[200] This third step constitutes the turning point of the knowing event. It is by this central act that the elements of the ruptured situation (where we began, e.g. conflict) are transformed and a new perception, perspective, or worldview is bestowed on the knower. The mediating force of this insight is the opposing force of discontinuity in this sequence.[201] According to Loder, the insightful resolution to conflict is always a gift that takes one's awareness by surprise. When resolution is given, self-transcendence springs into being.[202]

What Loder sees as a constructive act of the imagination, Amos Yong identifies as pneumatalogical imagination.[203] This constructive act of the imagination or pneumatological imagination is used to describe phenomena associated with a holistic encounter with the divine.[204] According to Daniel Albrecht, similar experiences are a part of the ritual of Pentecostal Charismatics who enter into a holistic involvement and engagement of the divine presence as a congregation in anticipation of receiving something transformative from a new work of the Holy Spirit.[205]

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[200] Ibid., 32.

[201] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 36.

[202] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 36.

[203] Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 161.

[204] Ibid., 168.

[205] Daniel Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Ecumenical Potential and Challenge," in *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*, ed. Amos Yong (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 164.

Once knowing is experienced, the fourth step is marked by a release of energy, which hitherto has been bound up in sustaining the conflict. There is an opening of the knower to him or herself and the contextual situation. Loder sees this as a "response of consciousness to being freed from an engrossing conflict and for a measure of self-transcendence."[206] Without these two situations it must be assumed that the conflict has not been sufficiently resolved and the unconscious mind will continue to search for solutions.

The fifth step is "interpretation."[207] Interpreting the imaginative solution is a matter of seeing it in relation to the original context. Loder sees this as working in two directions: backwards and forward. The inherent logic of the transformation would call for a working back through to the source of the resolution, recovery of the knowing experience if possible, and a grasp of what latent conflict has been resolved.[208] Because the knowing event transforms the situation, thus resolving the conflict, it is important that the transformed event is connected to the initial conflict and that the resolution is made public and therefore a matter of consensus.

I have been able to make meaning of my own convictional knowing experiences using Loder's logic of transformation. At the time of my experiences, I had no framework to process these experiences. I was at the inception stages of my research and was only just becoming aware of the contribution of spiritual reflection in generating knowledge. Discovering Loder's logic of transformation in the literatures highlighted the logical sequence of transformation that precedes a convictional knowing experience. It was

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[206] Loder, *Transforming Moment*, 33.

[207] Loder, *Transforming Moment,* 34.

[208] Ibid., 38.

Loder's framework that enabled me to explain the knowing that contributed to the resolution of my own internal conflict related to a crucial decision regarding the financial health of our organization during the 2008 worldwide economic collapse.

A word from the Holy Spirit on the way to work one morning resolved the conflict *instantly*, providing me with insight into how to move forward. I knew with *intuitive* force what decision to make. The knowing event not only resolved the conflict; it also resulted in one of the most effective outreach programs we have ever run as a humanitarian/education organization.

The programs held, over a two-year period, helped unemployed professionals re-invent themselves. This contributed to their ability to re-enter the marketplace in a particularly difficult economic environment in the U.S. Evidence of the outcome of this knowing event is the positive feedback received from participants who attended the program.

The process of transformation is a spiritual one on different levels. Firstly, it is at the *heart* level where God intervenes in our lives through faith. Then it is on the *experiential* level where God is encountered in love and mercy. Consequently, it is on the *relationship* level where obedient action flows from love for God and others to transformed practice. To embrace only reflective thinking and critical reflection for the purpose of generating knowledge would be to "employ a Greek epistemology rather than a Biblical one, thus negating the covenantal grounding of our theological knowledge which encompasses the total person."[209] Loder's example of the process of transformation articulates the significance of holistic reflection in the reflective endeavor.

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[209] Johns and Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 42.

In the next chapter I will highlight how the method of spiritual reflection works and what processes facilitate the knowing that is generated by this method of reflection.

*Summary*

In this chapter I have outlined, the background of action research self-study and how this approach to research works. I have also made explicit reflective methods inherent in action research and shown the evolution of the process as new information emerged from analyses of the data. This included identifying the addition of spiritual reflection to create a more holistic approach to reflection. Additionally, I provided an explanation of the theological underpinnings of this method of spiritual reflection to lay the groundwork for a more extensive explanation of how the method works and what disciplines are associated with it, in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 4:

# SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theological grounding for spiritual reflection and to reveal its value for Christian, pastoral leadership development. The chapter also outlines some distinctions between spiritual reflection and theological reflection and finally presents the disciplines associated with the method of reflection to show how the method works. Even though reflection and reflective practice have interdisciplinary roots, spiritual reflection as discussed in this chapter is framed in scholarship within the field of theology. It does however differ from theological reflection in that one is a rational process whereas the other is spiritual. The introduction of spiritual reflection in this dissertation therefore is the call for a broader consideration of its place in the theological reflection dialogue.

## Spiritual Reflection

Spiritual reflection is powerful for understanding what it means for humans to connect spiritually with a transcendent God. This method of spiritual reflection is built on the scholarly works of others who have explored how humankind's connection with God influences their lives and their practice.[1] Spiritual reflection grounded in a hermeneutic of

[1] Parker Palmer, *To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); Louis Fry, "Towards a Theory of Spiritual Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 14, no. 6 (2003): 693-727; Sweeny and Fry, "Character Development;" Loder, *Transforming Moment,* 89; Heuser and Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation*.

the Spirit, recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26 NIV) to influence, inform, and transform my pastoral leadership practices.

As a human, I recognize I do not have qualities of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. My human wisdom has limitations, whereas I believe the wisdom of God is limitless. Spiritual reflection is therefore an activity that seeks knowing from the Holy Spirit as a process of the human spirit's search for Godly guidance, wisdom, insight, discernment, direction, and revelation. When I engage in spiritual reflection, I stand "undefended and open-eyed" to what may or may not be revealed.[2]

In this sense I am open to drawing from a source other than myself to improve my personal life and my professional practices. This quality of thinking about how we can draw on sources other than ourselves to experience transformation is related to how we think about ourselves in relation to God. A further avenue for this is a reflective community group where a corporate engagement of the Spirit contributes to transformed thinking and actions. Even though such a group formed part of my research with outcomes that confirmed the view of the transforming aspects of spiritual reflection, the word count related to this dissertation precludes me from presenting this material. It is however available as part of my data archive.

Spiritual reflection, unlike theological reflection, which is situated within the same category as other rationalistic methods of reflection, generates knowledge that is of the Spirit, therefore differing from knowledge derived from a purely cognitive source. Jackie David Johns sees the distinction as follows: one source of knowledge is a product of the self, the other of the Holy Spirit. As such the insight, wisdom, revelation, direction,

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[2] Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 107.

and discernment that results from Holy Spirit generated knowledge is not grounded in the individual as in most praxis models, it is grounded in a pneumatological Pentecostal theology that sees knowledge and truth as arising from an experiential knowledge of God.[3]

Theological reflection can be seen as another way to theologize by taking into account the spirit and message of the gospel, the traditions of Christian people, the culture in which one is theologizing and social change in that culture.[4] Of the theologically reflective methods reviewed, I noticed that theological reflection within the fundamentalist tradition was still a decidedly rationalistic endeavour with the inclusion of the affective dimension of reflection. What was missing from these theological methods of reflection is how the work of the Holy Spirit contributed to knowledge generation towards development and transformation. In spiritual reflection there is an expectation of the person of the Holy Spirit. Even so there is still a close association between theological reflection and spiritual reflection. Both seek a connection between faith and practice *and* belief and practice. Both also seek to discover and translate into real life God's truth for us today in relation to our life and work experiences.

## Spiritual Reflection in The Sacred Text

In Romans Chapter Eight we find an explanation for why spiritual reflection differs from rational modes of reflection. In this chapter, the apostle Paul distinguishes between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit (Romans 8:6 NIV). Firstly, Paul

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[3] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 79.

[4] Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology, Faith and Culture Series* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 1.

points out that the mind of the flesh is hostile to God for it does not submit itself to God's law, indeed it cannot (Rom. 8:7 Amplified version). It cannot, according to Paul, because the mind of the flesh is concerned with temporal things, whereas the mind of the spirit is concerned with what is eternal. What is of note here is that Paul makes a distinction between the mind and the Spirit, stating that the mind thinks in one way and the Spirit in another. Paul then points out, "the Spirit Himself testifies together with our own spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16 NIV), thus certifying the spirit to Spirit relationship.

Paul identifies the need for a work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to establish that there is a relationship of participation between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. Spiritual reflection is therefore grounded in this participatory relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. Paul takes this thinking a step further in his letter to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 2:6-10 NIV). He points out that the divine plan of God was revealed to humankind through the Holy Spirit. He speaks of the Holy Spirit in verse ten of this second chapter as searching diligently, exploring and examining everything, even the bottomless things of God, meaning the divine counsels and things hidden beyond humankind's scrutiny.

Paul does not end with this explanation of the role of the Holy Spirit in examining all things. Further he explains that this saying is not the product of his human wisdom but the revelation of the Holy Spirit who works through him, enabling him to interpret and convey spiritual truths to those who possess the Holy Spirit. He then clarifies his statement by claiming that the nonspiritual person does not accept or welcome the revelations of the Spirit of God because these revelations are spiritually discerned. He

ends the chapter by reinforcing the notion that Christian believers have the ability through the spirit, to know the mind of Christ. Paul's revelation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is grounded in the words of Jesus in the book of John. There the apostle John reveals the Holy Spirit as the promise of the Father, stating that the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to dwell in those who believed in Him for the purpose of teaching them and reminding them of all the things that Jesus had taught (John 14:14-26 NIV).

The theoretical notion of spiritual reflection as presented in this dissertation focuses on the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of knowledge generation. From my reading this has generally not been represented in the literature related to what I am offering. The few exceptions are the work of James Loder, Jackie David Johns and Cheryl Bridges Johns.[5] What is fairly well represented is theological reflection.[6]

Spiritual reflection in this thesis is established in my relationship with the Holy Spirit. The knowledge that emerges from this relationship is a product of the interaction of my spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit. As such there is an awakening of my spirit to the reality of participation. It takes a leap of faith to override the censoring nature of the mind of the flesh towards an obedience of the spirit. Thus, there is a call in this method of spiritual reflection for a reawaking of our spirits that for too long have been subjected to the dictates of the mind in an increasingly rationalistic world. I see my relationship with the Holy Spirit as intrinsic to my work as a Pastor, where I am required

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[5] James Loder, *The Transforming Moment*; Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit;" Johns and Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit."

[6] James Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry Revised* (Oxford: Sheed and Ward, 1995); Abigail Johnson, *Reflecting with God: Connecting Faith and Small Groups* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2004); Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1994).

to respond effectively to complex, challenging, and changing situations in my work with others. Besides which, I have a personal need to know myself at a deeper level, to understand who I am in Christ more fully and to contribute to increasing my effectiveness as a pastoral leader.

In the previous chapter I showed how reflective thinking and critical reflection are essentially intellectual exercises that produce human wisdom and knowledge derived from my own cognitive processes. As it turns out these were valuable but not sufficient to meet the needs of my inquiry. Albert Einstein' astute observation about our intellect makes clear, "It cannot lead; it can only serve; he states that the intellect has powerful muscles but no personality."[7] Therefore, we should not make the intellect our God.

The learning I experience resulting from spiritual reflection is related to a dynamic, inter-subjective relationship with the person of the Holy Spirit. The centrality of the work and person of the Holy Spirit in spiritual reflection is best revealed by Wolfgang Vondey and Martin Mittelstadt in their review of Amos Yong's work in Pentecostal scholarship.[8] They state: "The Holy Spirit that upholds and penetrates this kind of methodology expands the Pentecostal emphasis to other fields of inquiry and thereby challenges the established structures, tasks and procedures of modern-day scholarship"[9] Cheryl Bridges Johns believes that Pentecostal scholarship acknowledges the "pretentiousness of the critical scientific mind."[10] Amos Yong states that "any adequate

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[7] Jim Green, ed., *Albert Einstein: Rebel Lives* (New York: Ocean Press, 2003), 64.

[8] Wolfgang Vondey and Martin Mittelstadt, *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 272.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Partners in Scandal: Wesleyan and Pentecostal Scholarship," *Pneuma* 21, no. 2 (1999): 191.

understanding of the Spirit cannot be reduced to the intellectual register" because the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned.[11]

In my view Pentecostals do not refute the arguments of science, rather they understand that God as the creator of all things is supreme over all, even science. For example, there has been much dispute even in the Christian community related to the Pentecostal belief that God still intervenes miraculously in the world today in response to faith. Evangelicals in particular who see the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement as a *hyper-faith* movement have debated extensively on this topic.[12] We need to reintegrate the profound question of the working of the Holy Spirit through faith in the task of theology. This is not necessarily easy as "the idea of intimacy with the Holy Spirit is a paradox too great for us to entertain, but it is just such intimacy that establishes the authority of the Holy Spirit for the self."[13]

I engaged with spiritual reflection because I came to recognize the limitations of rational and affective methods of reflection to provide God's wisdom. Although I valued the power of my mind, I recognized that unlike my mind, God's wisdom was "pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit as well as impartial and sincere" (James 3:17 NIV). Spiritual reflection enabled me to explore God's ways more intentionally. This method of reflection contributed non-rational ways of knowing to my inquiries. The need for an additional way of knowing emerged as a response to

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[11] Dale Coulter and Amos Yong, ed., *The Spirit, the Affections and the Christian Tradition* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 300.

[12] Dave Hunt and T. A McMahan, *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1985); D. R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988).

[13] Dale Coulter and Amos Yong, ed. *The Spirit, the Affections and the Christian Tradition* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 300.

what was missing from rational and affective ways of knowing. Spiritual reflection helped me to see more and to see differently.

Reflection and discovery are core elements of Christian leadership that are concerned with creedal and doctrinal truths in relation to the questions we ask about our Christian faith.[14] Spiritual reflection represents one of the best ways to explore the internal change process because it enables me to consider things, which can be rationally understood as well as those things, which appear to have no rational explanation.[15] Spiritual reflection is an avenue for pursuing alternative perspectives related to my inquiries. Stephen Brookfield concurs stating:

> One can think critically about one's own spiritual belief or religious commitments, or about the practice of religious tenets, but you can't think your way to enlightenment, Satori, rapture or salvation. Those states of being are realized through other means than the process of rational analysis.[16]

Spiritual reflection, unlike other methods of reflection used in leadership practices, seeks to further reveal and reflect the glory of God. This method of reflection contributes to understanding how my faith influences my leadership practices. The practice of leadership is complex and often chaotic requiring a method of reflection that is directed by the Spirit. The active influence of the Holy Spirit in spiritual reflection is related to what is known in Pentecostal Christianity as *indwelling*[17] The disciplines used as processes in spiritual reflection are empowered by the presence of and communication with the Holy Spirit. As such I am participating with the Holy Spirit in knowledge

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[14] Russell L. Huizing, "Bringing Christ to the Table of Leadership: Moving Towards a Theology of Leadership," *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 66.

[15] Robert Burke, "Leadership and Spirituality," *Foresight* 8, no. 6 (2006): 14-25.

[16] Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking*, 10.

[17] This hermeneutic of *indwelling* therefore is a significant factor in the claim I am making that in spiritual reflection. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 29.

generation that is not of the mind but of the spirit. My part in this process is meditating on the word of God, praying in the spirit, asking God to help me make meaning of my situation and waiting on, and listening to Him. I do this with the expectation of what Land refers to as a "radical inbreaking of God."[18] Spiritual reflection for me as a Pentecostal Christian is therefore a process of spirituality dependent on this *indwelling*.

The result of this process is the wisdom, insight, inspiration, revelation, direction, and discernment, which influence me to act in ways that are increasingly more faithful to the Gospel. I view the relationship between spiritual reflection and *indwelling* as contributing to problem resolution.[19] Land sees this process of seeking God in problem resolution through *indwelling* as eschatological praxis of the Spirit because it is the Holy Spirit that informs, forms, and transforms all things.[20]

It has been my experience however that the Holy Spirit uses whatever He needs to make His will known to us when we seek Him. In this dissertation I give an example of the way in which the Holy Spirit used my poetic imagination to bring wisdom, healing, and insight into a painful situation in which I had been emotionally engulfed related to a family members mental illness. Therefore, spiritual reflection as participation with the Holy Spirit is my spirit seeking the mind of God in scriptural meditation, prayer, meaning-making, and listening. The question is, "how does this praxis of the Spirit (Pentecostal action-reflection) differ from the praxis of the flesh understood as a cognitive praxis approach?" I differentiate the two by explaining that one is an action of

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[18] Ibid., 22, 95, 114.

[19] Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 195.

[20] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 119.

the mind and one is an action of the spirit. The action of the spirit relates to spiritual disciplines and how we engage with these disciplines as a spiritual event. Spiritual reflection as a dynamic integration of spiritual practice disciplines can be seen as an engagement in the living reality of God with me, in my life and work as a Christian.[21]

Scholars see spiritual reflection as essential to effective leadership practices, however little discussion is available about the processes or relationship with the Holy Spirit associated with this method of reflection. There are four spiritual disciplines that function as the primary processes I use in this method of spiritual reflection. They are meditation, prayer, meaning-making, and listening. These particular disciplines do not represent the entire list of disciplines associated with Christian spiritual practice. Foster in his well-known work, *Celebration of Discipline*, outlines other disciplines however I will only discuss those relevant to this dissertation.[22]

## Contemplative Practice

The disciplines used in spiritual reflection are drawn from a larger framework of disciplines associated with spiritual practice, which includes contemplative and centering forms of prayer, Pentecostal prayer in the Spirit, fasting, silence, worship, communion, and others.[23] Contemplative practice is another well-known spiritual discipline, celebrated as central to spiritual formation and development by scholars such as Richard

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[21] Stott, *Calling Christian Leaders*, 183, 220.

[22] Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Colins, 1988).

[23] Thomas Keating, *Reflections on the Unknowable* (Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books, 2014); Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012); Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*; Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

Rohr, Martin Laird, Thomas Keating, and others including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.[24] Williams views contemplative practice as the ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world we inhabit.[25] Although he sees contemplative practice as a revolutionary matter, only in point ten of his address to the Synod of Bishops does he mention the action of the Holy Spirit in this contemplative exercise. Neither for example do the other scholars mentioned, interpret the Holy Spirit as central to contemplative practice. Only Dallas Willard who in claiming that *God speaks* makes reference to our involvement in the process of hearing God suggesting, "it is through the action of the word of God upon us, throughout us and with us that we come to have the mind of Christ and thus to live fully in the kingdom of God."[26] Even so he ultimately draws on the work of Charles Spurgeon to acknowledge the relationship between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit in the process of hearing God's voice, quoting:

> By the sensitiveness of our spirit we are as much made conscious of the presence of the Spirit of God as we are made cognizant of the existence of souls, or as we are certified of the existence of the matter by its action upon our senses. We have been raised from the dull sphere of mere mind and matter into the heavenly radiance of the spirit-world; and now, as spiritual men, we discern spiritual things, we feel the forces which are paramount in the spirit-realm, and we know that there is a Holy Ghost for we feel him operating upon our spirits.[27]

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[24] Laird, *Into the Silent Land*; Keating, *Reflections on the Unknowable*; Richard Rohr, "Contemplative Prayer," *Daily Meditations* (blog), *Center for Action and Contemplation*, accessed May 2017, https://cac.org/richard-rohr/daily-meditations/daily-meditations-archive/.

[25] Rowan Williams, "To be Fully Human is to be Recreated in the Image of Christ's Humanity," Zenit Staff, Synod of Bishops, October 11, 2012, https://zenit.org/articles/archbishop-rowan-williams-address-to-the-synod-of-bishops/.

[26] Willard, *Hearing God*, 192.

[27] Charles Spurgeon, "Spurgeons Lectures to His Students," in *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*, ed. Dallas Willard (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 192.

It is my view that Romans (8:16 NIV), clarifies how it is the Spirit of God that illuminates the word of God, "testifying together with our own spirit that we are the children of God." It has been my experience at times that the Holy Spirit will illuminate a particular portion of scripture. In this instance the scripture comes alive with special meaning. I may know the words exist as part of the entire text and understand them logically in the sequence of the Scriptures, but when the Holy Spirit illuminates them, I know them with the full force and impact of my spirit giving me no other choice than to act.

Although the work of these contemplative practice scholars is grounded in theology and makes note of the association between this practice and transformation, there is no explicit process that links this practice with the generation of knowledge. Contemplative practice significantly contributes to the deepening and strengthening of our relationship with God and is relevant in facilitating inner change; however, it neglects to clearly outline and define the role of the Holy Spirit as change agent in this practice. The spiritual disciplines I use in my method of spiritual reflection are not just for the purposes of generating knowledge about my leadership; they are the key to a vital and growing relationship with God and His Spirit. Without spiritual disciplines, I have no engagement and no connection with God. When spiritual disciplines are undertaken merely as a duty, it undermines the intimacy that arises from conversation and communion with God. Meditating on God's word, praying, making meaning of my life and work, and listening for the voice of the Spirit are activities of faith and trust without which my understanding of God would be purely intellectual.

In outlining the spiritual disciplines associated with spiritual reflection, I make known how these disciplines facilitate knowledge of a different kind, thereby contributing to a more holistic framework of reflection within action research. Therefore the knowledge is not self-generated as it is when using the other methods of reflection but Holy Spirit generated.[28] The one source of knowledge is in what the self can generate; the other source of knowledge emanates from a transcendent all powerful, all knowing God who works with, in, and through all things. One source of knowledge is human and therefore contextual; the other is *divine* and relates to the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent nature of God.

## Spiritual Disciplines Associated with the Method of Spiritual Reflection

### *Scripture Meditation*

When I meditate on the text as a Pentecostal, I do so not in a historical—critical, methodological context but in a pneumatological, revelatory context.[29] As a Pentecostal, I view the text as a living text (2 Tim. 3:16 NIV). I also regard the word of God as authoritative (Sola Scriptura). Hence it is from the Biblical text that the principles in which my values are grounded arise to act as criteria for the standards I use to judge my leadership practices.

I meditate on scripture to see what God is saying. The biblical text provides a filter through which I can judge what emerges from my analysis of the data related to reflective thinking and critical reflection. Spiritual reflection is triggered when I intuit

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[28] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit."

[29] Anna Runesson, *Exegesis in the Making: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2011).

that something is still missing, activating my engagement with spiritual disciplines to resolve the contradiction. Hence the uncertainty triggers spiritual reflection.

Meditation on the text raises my awareness of missed cues about actions or reactions that may constitute a self-serving or self-interested attitude. I use the text as a lens through which I can challenge my prevailing assumptions. The text also serves to help me bring my actions into alignment with God's will and purposes for my ministry as a pastor. Therefore, I find the text provides a firm pathway for personal development and formation leading to leadership practices that are God cantered. Merton writes,

> He who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity for love, will not have anything to give others. He will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of his own obsessions, his aggressiveness, his ego-centered ambitions, his delusions about ends and means, his doctrinaire, prejudices and ideas. There is nothing more tragic in the modern world than the misuse of power and action.[30]

Therefore, meditating on the text not only influences my present state of doubt or confusion, as it relates to my inquiries, it also defines and realigns my life and ultimately my actions to be in conformity with Christ. Meditating on the text contributes to what I call meta transformation. Both transformation and meta transformation are the work of the Holy Spirit. I am transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit when I receive the free gift of salvation by faith through grace. Later, I experience meta transformation when my mind is renewed as a process of engagement with the word of God, facilitating a non-conforming attitude to the world. This meta transformative experience results in the knowledge of the good and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2 NIV). It is the Holy Spirit that informs and transforms all things.

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[30] Lawrence S. Cunningham, ed., *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master the Essential Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 375.

When I internalize and personalize the written Word of God, I acknowledge it as the living word and I allow it to speak on its own terms, not mine.[31] One of the ways in which scripture meditation influences knowledge generation is by shedding light on the *cracks and crevices* where the darkness of sin dwells.[32]

Meditation is a discipline mentioned throughout scripture. By meditating on God's word, I am more likely to stay in the faithful and obedient way and to walk in it (Isaiah 30:21 NIV). Scripture meditation is dwelling on the words of God; it is digesting and then recalling them akin to *chewing the cud*. This process of mastication allows for optimal assimilation of the cud. Having lived on a farm, I have observed how cows pick up straw with their mouths and then chew on it deliberately and purposefully in preparation for digestion before swallowing. It is an apt metaphor for meditation. The act of meditation allows me to contemplate and then digest God's word so that it can nourish my heart and mind and provide the wisdom, insight, direction, and discernment I need to move me forward toward improving my practices. Scripture reminds me of the importance of keeping God's word before me.

> You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:7-9 NIV).

When I meditate on the text, I am activating what I know about the works, ways, purposes, and promises of God.[33] J. Packer sees meditation as an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God,

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[31] Willimon, *Pastor*.

[32] Foster, *Celebration of Discipline,* 5.

[33] J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 23.

as a means of communion with God.[34] Meditating on God's word contributes to the internal process of change associated with movement towards improved leadership practices.

Scripture meditation holds a special place and function in the Pentecostal worldview. Johns states that "for Pentecostals, unlike Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, the Bible is a living book in which the Holy Spirit is always active so that to encounter the scripture is to encounter God."[35] When I engage with scripture meditation in spiritual reflection, scripture serves four purposes. It seeks to judge, negate, transform or enhance what emerges from my engagement with reflective thinking and critical reflection.[36] For example I might cognitively decide that I need to take certain actions in a situation. In my mind I justify these actions as being appropriate given my context as the Pastor. However, I might also have a distinct sense as a prompting from the Holy Spirit that these are not the right actions or that I need to hold off on taking any action. Whereas my cognitive response is related to my habitual ways of showing up as the solution; listening to the Holy Spirit is my spiritual response to the Biblical text that reminds me to, be still and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10 NIV) until I get more clarity on the type and timing of the action.

*Prayer*

Prayer is another one of the processes used in spiritual reflection. Sometimes I combine meditation and prayer. When I pray, I bring my concerns and questions to God,

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[34] Packer, *Knowing God*, 23.

[35] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 79.

[36] Ibid.

believing that God hears my prayers (1 Pet. 3:12 NIV). My focus is towards knowledge and action. For instance, I ask, "What does God know about my present situation that I do not? What am I missing? Is there something else I should know? Are the ideas I have about how to move forward right? Is what I conceive doing in the situation just? Is there a way to live in harmony in an acrimonious situation? Is the way I have chosen to respond to challenging situations the best way?" I also pray to understand my own patterns of behaviour – what I pay attention to and what I fail to pay attention to.[37]

When God responds to my questioning prayers it facilitates knowing of an alternative kind. This knowing comes in different ways, at times through something someone says, something I read, a sermon I hear or new information about the situation.

Prayer is an acknowledgement of my belief and trust in God. It is also recognition of the limitations and my humanness. In prayer, I seek meaning and understanding for the chaos in the world. I seek wisdom and insight for the troubling aspects of my work as a pastor. I pray because I need to: because there are no easy answers to the complex questions of life. I pray because I need God's wisdom, to know what to say when to say it and how to say it. I pray because I am aware of the implications associated with what I say from the pulpit, in sermons, and in counseling others. I pray as an act of obedience to the call to pray at all times without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17 NIV). When I pray, I am reaching out to God. I want to understand the transcendent and sacred qualities of what it means to be human and to live in community with others. Prayer helps me clarify my thinking and process my feelings, so that the intentions of my heart are made evident. All

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[37] Richard Rohr, *Daily Meditations*, *Center for Action and Contemplation*, accessed May 2017, https://cac.org/cateorgy/daily-meditations/.

of these benefits of prayer serve to move me towards my goal of aligning my actions with my core values.

When I pray, I keep in mind the relationship between faith and prayer. I remember the guidance and direction of Jesus ensuring that my prayers are faith filled prayers (Hebrews 11:6 NIV). I want my prayers to be effectual (James 5:16 NIV). I pray because I have an expectation that God will answer and when He answers I will know how to lead in a way that honors and glorifies Him.

As a pastor, I often face situations where it is difficult to know what to do and, as a consequence, how to pray. It is on these occasions that I trust the Spirit of God to come to my aid in prayer (Rom. 8:26 NIV). One such experience was when a member of my congregation asked me to pray that God would miraculously heal her husband who had suffered a stroke. The doctors had told her he had no brain activity. It was only the ventilator keeping him alive. Her need at that moment was to keep fighting in faith for his life. She needed my support and faith-filled prayers. I did not want to give her false hope, and neither did I want to limit anything God might want to do in the situation. Therefore, I needed God's wisdom and His guidance in this difficult situation.

I did the only thing I knew how to do in my state of not knowing; I prayed in the Spirit even as we are called to do in the scriptures that encourage us to pray with all manner of prayer at all times. I did so with the awareness that, when I pray in the Spirit, my mind is unfruitful (1 Cor. 14:13-15 NIV). I do not have to rely on my thinking to know what to say in prayer, as it is my Spirit that prays (Rom. 8:26-27 NIV). This is the extraordinary act of the Holy Spirit who aids us in our weaknesses and, as a result, enables us to think, feel, and act in ways that are consistent with God's purposes.

Praying in tongues is a form of prayer, which I use as part of my method of spiritual reflection. Although some might consider tongues controversial yet Frank Macchia states that the church has accepted poetry, song, dance, and silence as examples of in depth responses to God that transcend prayer as a rational and verbal communication. He includes glossolalia as one such response but acknowledges that this response has not been without controversy.[38] Praying in tongues gives me a fresh perspective and new insight.[39] I am aware that this is my interpretation of one form of prayer based on my Pentecostal experience and belief about prayer (Rom. 8:26).

When I pray in situations like these, I enter a different internal space. My focus is heavenward. I am connecting spiritually with the God of the universe, the Creator of heaven and earth. My prayer is worship, adoration, praise, and adulation. It is an exercise of my spirit. I pray with the understanding that something tremendous is going on, that God is at work on my behalf to bring revelation and spiritual discernment concerning the things that are beyond my understanding (Jam. 5:16 NIV). Spiritual reflection is thus a distinctive component of a more holistic framework of reflection that activates a response from God through an engagement in prayer by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is not only about petitioning God for things. It is about being able to process my thinking, concerns, fears, and vulnerabilities in a safe and trustworthy space. Through prayer, I seek peace to guide me in important decisions (Jam.4: 6-7 NIV). When I have peace regarding a particular decision, I know that my actions will align with my

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[38] Macchia, "Sighs Too Deep for Words," 47.

[39] Gerald Hovenden, *Speaking in Tongues: The New Testament Evidence in Context* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 141.

values. Increasing the extent to which I live my values, is a measure of the transformation of my leadership practices.

*Finding Meaning*

Another process I use in spiritual reflection is to *look for and find meaning* in order to influence my present State. In using this spiritual discipline as one of the processes in my method, I not only move myself toward my desired end state, but I also gain deep satisfaction in my work as a pastor. Psychologists see meaning making as central to well-being and connected to outcomes with respect to human flourishing. I define meaning making as a "search for significance in ways related to the sacred."[40] Spiritual reflection helps me process the complexities of life, particularly as they relate to human suffering through the prism of what is revealed in the word of God.

Another way I make meaning of my work is through love: the love of God. David Benner indicates,

> We can be as certain of what we know in or through love as we can of any other form of knowing. In fact, it will usually resonate with things deep in our soul in a way that will confirm the validity of the knowing that goes beyond what we can ever experience through intellectual knowing.[41]

I understand the meaning of love as action. When I bring my heart and not just my head to the reflective endeavour, I do so to make space for feelings and to make space for God's love, for God's life. Spiritual reflection is not just thinking about; it is not even just

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[40] Kenneth I. Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* (New York: Guilford Publications, 1997), 32.

[41] David Benner, "Being and Becoming: Learning from the Mystics," Pathos.com Book Club, accessed July 2013, http://www.thebrazosblog.com/2012/07/being-and-becoming-learning-from-the-mystics-by-david-g-benner/.

thinking about God. It is making space in my heart for the touch of a loving, living God and then allowing His touch to flow through me to the rest of the world.[42]

Meaning making as a process of spiritual reflection brings order to the turmoil associated with bewildering life and death experiences in congregational affairs. This is not order for order's sake, but it is for the confidence that my views and actions are in keeping with my Christian faith, grounded in the word of God. It is meaning making that allows me to express my theological understanding of the Christian message. Just as the eye perceives light and the ear sound, the heart is the organ for meaning.[43]

Meaning making can be seen as associated with seeing an event in a better, new or different light.[44] Meaning making can be understood as the process by which people interpret situations, events, objects, or discourses in light of their previous knowledge and experience. [45] Meaning making is the result of our human need for comprehension related to our deepest questions about existence.[46] Hence some have seen religion as the prime example of a system that provides ways to understand such things as suffering and loss. Undoubtedly religion for many people is an important *philosophical orientation* that contributes to their understanding of the world and that makes the reality of pain and

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[42] Benner, "Being and Becoming:Learning from the Mystics."

[43] David Steindl-Rast, *A Listening Heart: The Art of Contemplative Living* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1983).

[44] Chrystal Park, "Religion as a Meaning-Making Framework in Coping with Life Stress," *Journal of Social Sciences* 61, no. 4 (2005): 707-729.

[45] Tanya Zittoun and Svend Brinkmann, "Learning as Meaning Making," in *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning*, ed. Norbert Seel (Springer Science and Business Media, 2012): 1809-1811

[46]Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropolical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock, 1966), 1-46.

suffering bearable.[47] However, it is through relationship and not religion that I find meaning for life's most troubling questions and for the problems I encounter with no easy answers but which do require my leadership.

An example is my relationship with God that assured me that He is present and with me in the midst of my anxiety and turmoil related to a family member's mental illness. I find meaning in knowing that I am not alone. God has carried my sorrows and pain and encourages me to cast all my cares upon Him for He cares for me (Isaiah 53:4; 1 Peter 5:7 NIV). My state of anxiety related to my family situation was influenced not because the situation changed but because God made it known to me that the angst was not mine alone to bear. The foreboding inevitability of what the future held for my loved one was eased by my ability to pen the words and process the guilt, to know that through sharing my story someone else's burden may be lifted. As a result I have been able to enter into a *spirituality of the companion* of the daughter who *walks along-side, helping, sharing and sometimes just sitting*–most times, now, just sitting, *empty-handed* but not empty hearted and no longer wanting to fly away but to be present to remain.[48]

I discovered that participation in and not flight from was evidence of my reflective learning. The ability to use poetry as a reflective medium released me from the fear that had ruled.[49] As a result, rather than frustration and angst, I was able to use calm soothing tones and thoughtful words in the situation. Therefore, holistic reflection enabled me to make meaning of my situation moving me from enforcer to facilitator. I

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[47] Pargament, *Psychology of Religion and Coping.*

[48] Sheila Cassidy, *Sharing the Darkness: The Spirituality of Caring* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 6.

[49] The metaphor and poetry associated with my reflections from this cycle can be viewed in Appendix C.

could now mediate from a new position; one of compassion and understanding rather than judgment.

*Listening*

The way I use the process of listening to influence my present State is not by finding a quiet spot and waiting on God in utter silence. I personally could not do this for any extended period of time. Rather the way in which I listen is by paying attention and being mindful. Given the noisiness of our world, it takes focus to eliminate all voices except God's voice. I believe that He still speaks today and so I have to attune my ears to His voice (Heb.1:2 NIV). When I say that I understand that God speaks to me through the Biblical text, I am acknowledging that it is His Son speaking to me, for the Biblical text declares that God's son Jesus is the Word.[50] I am also acknowledging that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that I am reminded of and able to interpret what is being communicated (John 14:26 NIV).

Throughout the Scriptures we are admonished to listen. As a Christian, I know that God is speaking to me through His Word, but the way I hear God speak may be different than the way others hear Him speak. There are many ways in which I have heard God. Some of those are a persistent impression or a particular word or phrase in the bible that especially impresses me or stands out. At other times, I hear God through something someone says, perhaps during a teaching, sermon or just a conversation. At other times it is through a vision, dream or direct impression. Nonetheless it becomes clear to me that God is saying something.

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[50] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

When I do hear God speak, I recognize that I am changed. When I take the time to listen to Him in the context of my leadership, I know that I will be transformed by what I hear. It then is up to me to act in ways that are consistent with what I hear. When I do, my leadership practices are also transformed. For me listening is an action. It is the act of waiting on God, trusting that He will speak and not be silent, that He will impart the wisdom, guidance, direction, discernment or revelation needed to move me from my present state to my desired state. When I listen, I position myself to sense if anything occurs to me as a consequence of being quiet before Him.

When I listen, the act of waiting is pregnant with the expectation of a God intervention, of an *in breaking*, an *encounter* or of a *still small voice* (1 Kings 19:11-13 NIV). Because God speaks in many different ways (Heb. 1:1-2 NIV), listening is a present act of awareness of the ways in which God may speak (Heb.1:1 NIV). Listening is a ministry—a ministry committed to us by Him who is the great listener.[51] Mastering the act of listening contributes to the wisdom and insight we need for our practices.[52] It also increases our leadership effectiveness and performance.

The unique spirituality of leadership and ministry is founded on the giving of myself to prayer and the word (Acts 6:2-4 NIV). It is also premised on my ability to wait for and on God for the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in my life, even as it was for the disciples in that upper room.[53] At Pentecost, the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise of God, which was the coming of the Holy Spirit. The disciples

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[51] Diederich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954).

[52] Scharmer, *Theory U*.

[53] Heuser and Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation*.

changed the course of history by waiting and listening for God's guidance. So, I too can change the course of my leadership history by dedicating myself to this practice.

My inability to listen is often the result of a preoccupation with self. Listening requires focus and concentration. When I listen, I do so both with my ears and my heart, because I know that God often speaks to me in my heart. Hearing God requires a heart committed to understanding His message. Listening requires that I not only listen to God but also to myself. I am unlikely to hear the sounds of God unless I have practiced hearing the sounds of others—of the poor and the hurting, of the lonely and the oppressed. These are the sounds that enable me to discern what God is saying to me as I listen.

The ability to listen is a learned quality. Otto Scharmer in the organizational leadership field teaches what it means to listen by outlining four levels of listening.[54] He holds that in the first level we reconfirm old opinions. In the second level we notice what is different. In the third level we listen with empathy and an open heart; this is where we see the situation through the eyes of another, and the last level is generative listening, where we connect with who we are and who we want to be. It is this fourth level that the spiritual discipline of listening enables.

In Christianity, generative listening is not for the purpose of connecting self deeply with self, but of connecting self deeply with God. In the book of Samuel, we read of the priest's encouragement to the young boy Samuel to let the Lord know that he was listening. This was because Samuel failed to hear the voice of God, for it says he did not yet know God. When Eli realized it was the voice of God calling Samuel, he encouraged

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[54] Scharmer, *Theory U*.

the young boy to let God know that he was listening (I Sam.3:2-10 NIV). We need to let God know that He has our attention and that we are listening. Letting God know that we are listening is an important first step to preparing our hearts to hear.

Listening is a "wholly lived embodied process" which requires that we open ourselves and relinquish control in an inhospitable environment.[55] Listening is no passive affair. Inactivity and superficial silence do not necessarily mean that I am listening. "Listening is a conscious, willed action, requiring alertness and vigilance."[56] This act of listening, unlike in contemplative prayer, seeks to hear from God regarding the responsibilities for which he intended us.

I will end this section on spiritual disciplines with the words of Benner who states that, human beings may be hardwired for reason, but it is equally clear that they are also hardwired for many other forms of knowing and choosing. He believes it is a shame when we limit ourselves to the restrictive framework of reason.[57] Ultimately the spiritual disciplines outlined are the processes that facilitate non-rational ways of knowing as it relates to the method of spiritual reflection developed as a result of my inquiries. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, journaling is a part of gathering data related to my inquiries. This includes data related to hearing God during the act of listening. In summary spiritual disciplines as the processes that facilitate knowing in the method of spiritual reflection not only contribute to personal self-development and practice

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[55] Runcorn, *Fear and* Trust, 2.

[56] Mother Mary Clare, *Encountering the Depths* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981), 33.

[57] David Benner, "Head and Heart," in *Human Being and Becoming* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016), chap. 1, GoogleScholar.

improvement, they also increase spiritual sensitivity and attunement to conforming our lives more closely to the purposes and will of God.

*Implications of the Indwelling Presence of the Spirit on Spiritual Reflection*

The most significant implication of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in spiritual reflection is the non-rational knowing that is generated. I will use two examples, one from the sacred text and the other a personal example, to illustrate the implications of Spirit-knowing. In Matthew (16:13-17 NIV), the story begins with a question by Jesus to his disciples: "Who do people say that the son of man is"? The disciples reply, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus responds by asking yet another question, "But what about you, who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for *this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.*"

Evidence in this Biblical narrative suggests that *knowing* can be the result of something other than our own human logic and reason. What is amplified in the above scripture is the acknowledgement by Jesus that Peter's revelation concerning Him was divinely inspired and had nothing to do with Peter's cognitive insight. St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* reminds us that God has made many truths regarding Himself known through faith, truths that are beyond the reach of human understanding.[58]

A more personal example is related to the story of a young man in our congregation who was able to prevent his mother-in-law from committing suicide as a

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[58] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York: Benzinger Bros, 1948), xi.

result of divine revelation regarding her location. Pentecostals would use the phrase *divine encounter* to describe what happened. This young man tells of how while at work he received a call from his distraught wife. She let him know that her mother had called to say goodbye. The daughter was immediately alerted to the fact that her mother was experiencing some kind of breakdown. A frantic search by family members ensued as her mother had refused to reveal her location. Although the family searched in all the likely places, they could not find her. It was at this point of desperation that the young man said he heard God tell him where to look for his mother-in-law. As a result, they found her in time to prevent her possible death through attempted suicide. Examples of such unusual knowing experiences are well documented as already noted in this chapter.

*How Spiritual Reflection Informs My Leadership Practices*

Spiritual reflection helps me guard against using the "lens of self-assurance" and the thinking that my own "compass map and guide" are sufficient for objectiveness.[59] Spiritual reflection protects me from my human propensity towards self-will. When I reflect spiritually, I seek knowledge about a new view of life, one that is framed by God in the Holy Scriptures. This may entail putting my view aside in order to embrace what the Spirit of God is conveying about the situation through His word. This is a way of life and practice that is directed by God. This way of life does not seek its own way; it seeks God's way. This way was modeled by Jesus who said: "Nevertheless not my will but thy will be done" (Matt. 26:39 NIV). As such, it considers intellectual rationalizations as informative but not necessarily reliable, and understands the potential I have for self-

[59] John Trokan, "Models of Theological Reflection: Theory and Praxis," *Catholic Education: Journal of Inquiry and Practice* 1, no. 2 (1997): 151.

delusion. Undertaking spiritual reflection with an attitude of humility and as an act of faith in God's omniscience allows for "radical inbreaking."[60]

A deeply held view of Pentecostals is that "God breaks into human knowing apart from rationality."[61] The apostle Paul confirms his own experience of "in breaking" when he declares, "I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12 NIV). The ultimate purpose of spiritual reflection is to generate knowledge from a source other than self in the recognition that there are limitations to rational reflection alone.[62]

Spiritual reflection in the context of my own pneumatological Pentecostal worldview presupposes an authority beyond the self that guides my praxis (reflection-action). This means that I understand the limitations of the self in knowledge generation thereby seeking wisdom, guidance, and discernment from a source other than my own intellect. It is in spiritual reflection that I ask questions about the meaning of life through a framework of God's love and care for the world. Spiritual reflection allows me to wait on God and for God. This manner of reflection actively listens in silence for Him to speak. And when He does communicate, my leadership practices and I are transformed at a depth beyond what reflective thinking and or critical reflection can produce.

*Summary*

Spiritual reflection constitutes a dynamic encounter with the person of the Holy Spirit in a process of knowledge generation not limited to the realm of reason for the

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[60] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality.*

[61] Parker, *Led by the Spirit,* 176.

[62] Ibid.

purpose of self-transformation, the changing of power relationships and the improvement of leadership practice. This transformation is about the giving of a transformed self to the world as a servant of God, leading in a way that reveals godly principles and practices. Traditional praxis knowing as it is related to "human critical reflection and action is considered sufficient for the ongoing transformation of social reality."[63] However, if it is void of "transcendent authority," it cannot fully inform the process of self-transformation for the purpose of conforming with God's will for our lives.[64]

The contrast between human knowledge and divine knowledge is that divine knowledge grounds the self in a personal God who defines the nature and the outcome of the knowing event.[65] Johns calls for what he conceives of as a refined epistemology of praxis.[66] I view this as a Pentecostal epistemology of praxis. It is one that acknowledges the facilitating power of the Holy Spirit to inform practices.

Spiritual reflection, therefore, embraces a different kind of knowledge, one that transcends theory to demand a faithful response to that which is known. In this case Pentecostal spirituality as it relates to spiritual reflection contributes differently to what is known through the intellect. Knowing in the context of the intellect or the senses as it is related to reflective thinking and critical reflection cannot understand or apprehend God. The spiritual dimension of reflection, however as it is described in this dissertation, produces knowing related to the Hebrew concept of knowing. The Hebrew word for

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[63] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 73.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit," 74.

knowing is *yada* and is more in keeping with knowing that comes from experience and is *knowing* that relates to the heart rather than the mind.[67]

"This knowing arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by active and intentional engagement in lived experience."[68] This way of knowing is more like a dance then a deduction.[69] The transrational nature of knowing by the Spirit allows me as Pentecostal to "seek truth both within and outside the sphere of reason."[70] This epistemic emphasis on the Spirit is unlike theological reflection where knowing is a rational, cultural, religious tradition or communal event. The relationship of the Trinity, i.e. the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Christian theology, expresses a Trinitarian knowing, which is a *relationality* referred to by Loder and Neidhardt as the relational logic of the Spirit.[71] Knowing by the Spirit is to appreciate the Trinitarian work of the Holy Spirit. When Pentecostals say that "they know, that they know, that they know" it is not knowing, that they can be reasoned out of.[72]

In contrast to Western epistemology, Biblical epistemology does not go from theory to practice where we conceptualize and then implement action, particularly in relation to God. Obedience to action does not flow out of conceptualization. It flows out of encounter and then relationship, in a dynamic process infused with obedience through

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[67] Ibid., 78.

[68] Ibid.

[69] James Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 82.

[70] Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Athens, Berlin and Azusa: A Pentecostal Reflection on Scholarship and Christian Faith," *Pneuma* 27, no. 1 (January 2005): 141.

[71] Loder and Neidhardt, *The Knights Move*.

[72] A.W. Tozer, *Life in the Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009).

love. For example, one cannot have objective notions, ideas or theories about God, out of which obedience to His word flows. In spiritual epistemology, relational encounter through faith produces action. It is this process of relational encounter through faith that empowers the method of spiritual reflection.

Spiritual reflection responded to my question about how faith informs my practices. This question and "can self-reflection without the work of the Spirit lead me to deeper knowing?" emerged as significant in the course of my inquiries. These reflective questions from early in my research reveal that I was hopeful of finding a way to engage the Holy Spirit in the process of transforming my leadership practices. This hope gave me motivation to search the literature, to build on what I found there, and to order the process of inviting the Holy Spirit to guide me through my spiritual disciplines. In this chapter, I have shown how my search of the literature enabled me to contextualize my experiences *and* to contribute to the field of Christian, pastoral leadership development.

# CHAPTER 5:

# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

In this dissertation I have provided a leadership change process that contributes to pastoral leadership transformation. This change process reflects an engagement with a holistic framework of reflective practices that constitutes what it means to reflect from a whole person perspective. The inclusion of spiritual reflection in this holistic framework facilitated by spiritual disciplines contributes to self and practice transformation. What began this dissertation was my interest in improving my leadership practices, what concludes it, is a change process now presented as an opportunity for other leaders also who would seek to cultivate habits of the mind, affections, and spirit towards the improvement of their practices.

Of significance as an outcome the research change process is the development of a method of spiritual reflection to compliment reflective thinking and critical reflection. This method of spiritual reflection arose as a response to what was missing from reflective thinking and critical reflection. Therefore, one of the most exciting aspects of my research has been my ability to speak of the work and influence of the Holy Spirit and ultimately to my transformation as a pastoral leader and missionary educator. I therefore now have confidence to present the framework of holistic reflection developed in the course of this inquiry to the larger pastoral leadership community for further testing and feedback.

For some time scholars have lamented the fact that the Holy Spirit has in practice been relegated to a major unexamined presupposition in most mainline and now even

Pentecostal churches.[1] It has been my joy and distinct privilege to be able to convey through my research how the Spirit's action in the world requires a different method of reflection. The ability to speak of and emphasize the influence of the Holy Spirit in knowledge generation is significant not only as it pertains to the contribution it makes to the field of reflective practice scholarship but also how the method might contribute to Pentecostal theological thought and scholarship in a way that re-ignites a passion for the Spirit in good leadership. Although I have always known and been aware of the Holy Spirit in my life, I now have a greater understanding of the way in which the Holy Spirit in fact leads me into all truth and shows me things to come. Central to this is the way in which my relationship with the Holy Spirit has contributed to an emphasis on God's way and not my way in my leadership practices.

Subsequently I have learned how to think more deeply and critically about what I am doing. I am cognizant of questioning the assumptions I bring to my leadership and understand the significance of communing with the Holy Spirit to generate knowledge that contributes to good leadership. The application of which is my increased capability and effectiveness in exercising my educational influence to assist other leaders also, in the process of knowledge generation towards the improvement of their leadership practices.

Aside from affirming my spiritual life as a researcher, I view the method of spiritual reflection developed as contributing to the broader theological discussion regarding an epistemology of the human spirit that reflects a more holistic approach to

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[1] Loder and Neidhardt, *The Knights Move*; Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Overcoming Holy Spirit Shyness in the Life of the Church," in "The Holy Spirit and Christian Life," Karl Koop, *Vision a Journal for Church and Theology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2012).

reflection within the theological reflection dialogue. Few models of reflective practice in the literature, except for theological reflection demonstrate how to use spiritual disciplines to generate non-rational ways of knowing that are of the Spirit.

Another important aspect of the research was the intensely developmental and deeply transformational aspect of the mental and spiritual practices and habits cultivated over the period of the research. They afforded me with a greater opportunity to act diligently and with integrity towards a seeking of the broader good of those in my church community and those I work with globally. I judged my new way of thinking and acting against the feedback of others who would comment on my leadership practices. I view these mental and spiritual habits as having been advanced by my reflective intentionality. These mental habits formed over time and were nurtured as I became more artful at using reflective practice. Furthermore, in the course of my research my engagement with existing literature enhanced my use of reflection and in fact contributed to the added method of spiritual reflection. One contributor to the development of these mental and spiritual habits was the value of submitting myself to the accountability, challenge, and feedback from faculty advisers, coaches, mentors, and critical friends. Their guidance and encouragement were especially valuable in the dark times when I felt mired in the muck of loneliness, despair, and confusion, feeling like I was going in circles and not really accomplishing anything of value. Or, when I was gripped by self-doubt about my ability to find language to articulate what I was learning so that it would make sense to my readers. There was many a time when I felt like I had analysis paralysis. Ultimately the cost of self-study action research is the emotional turmoil and the spiritual upheaval of the inward journey. This is where our deepest notions of self are subjected to reflective

scrutiny. This is where we become known, this is where we discover where we stand and where the journey has taken us.

Though the philosophy of research is admirable, epistemologically and ontologically, it is taxing. It stretched me intellectually emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Ultimately it changed me. I consider myself decidedly different from when I began the research. Even if the changes are not overt and others do not recognize them as radical; I view myself differently. I consider that I have grown as a minister and as a researcher. I now live my life as a practitioner researcher. Reflection is part of my daily life and work. I see myself as a reflective individual.

In summary the knowledge generated through this research is of at least four kinds. Firstly, it is in the form of a framework of holistic reflection presented for pastoral Christian leaders/practitioner researchers to further test in their practices. Secondly it is *experiential* through my direct encounter with the person of the Holy Spirit as a context of my life and work as a Pentecostal pastor and missionary educator. Thirdly it is relational in that I have engaged with others including my faculty advisors, critical friends group, family, congregants, and colleagues who have assisted me in the process in more ways than I can mention mostly though feedback and critique about my research. Lastly it is *practical* in relation to how I have learned to apply the framework of holistic reflection to revisit my own practice experiences and subsequently to solve also the problems I encounter regularly in my leadership role as a pastor and educator.

What I have experienced in the process of this journey has had implications for both my personal life and my leadership practices. These implications are related to the hope I have had for my leadership throughout this research. As a result of my research I

am fulfilling my desire to connect and engage with others at a heart level, to be known by God and to know others as I wish to be known and to continue seeking ways in which my leadership can make a positive difference in the world.

Although this research has come to an end, my learning journey has risen to a new level. Going forward I will be more proficient in how I learn from my leadership experiences. I am now more fully capable of managing my leadership and myself. I have become a more capable researcher and a more effective facilitator of the leadership of others. As a result of my learning I am no longer as definitive as I once was about the reality of life. Although I have always been a *black and white* person, I have now learned to live in the grey where I can hold the tension of a leader being transformed. The implication of this is that I am more disciplined in my thinking and writing.

I no longer have the need to have all the answers and to show up as the solution. I no longer see myself as the problem solver, but I see *us* as collective problem solvers. My typically Western approach to leadership that was essentially heroic no longer dominates.[2] I am learning that I need not solve problems and achieve goals on behalf of everyone else. I have come to understand that the problem with this style of leadership is that it required everyone else to be helpless.[3] This style of leadership is centered on a deficiency view of other people, where deficits in others can only be remedied by a few great leaders.[4]

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[2] Runcorn, *Fear and Trust.*

[3] Ibid., 2.

[4] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 340; John Nirenberg, *The Living Organization: Transforming Teams Into Workplace Communities* (Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin Professionals Publishers, 1993).

The many failures I experienced in my research journey have made me more malleable. Because of them I have developed a greater awareness of my imperfections, not to excuse them but to live with them. The social implication of this is how others no longer live under the burden of having to perform for me, or work to be accepted by me. They now experience a greater measure of autonomy and more liberty to express themselves as they are encouraged to contribute and participate in shared leadership that values their knowledge and provides them with continued growth and development opportunities.

Embracing empathetic leadership does not mean that I have abandoned my organizational responsibilities. They still need to be attended to in order for the church to function cohesively as an organizational structure with governmental polity and policy constraints. I can now do so however, while still considering the feelings of others. My desire is to continue to make progress in my leadership.

## Further Research

More scholarship is needed to address transrational ways of knowing as they are experienced through the beliefs and practices associated with Pentecostalism. "Although several, point to this dimension of Pentecostal belief and practice, no one has explored this transrational dimension in Pentecostal discernment and decision making in any depth or detail."[5] In keeping with this theme of interest would be how engaging with the Holy Spirit in the practice of knowledge generation, towards self and practice transformation might reignite a passion for the Holy Spirit in American Pentecostal churches.

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[5] Parker, *Led by the Spirit,* 37.

Further research on the distinctive contribution spiritual disciplines make to this pneumatological epistemology can also be explored in more depth. This can be done as pastors make accessible their own experiences of *hearing* from the Holy Spirit. It would be informative to discover how others create the context for sensing the guidance of the Spirit with the result of developing new ideas for action and direction in their leadership.

A final point of interest for further research would be the outward behavioral evidence indicators that arise out of a greater participation in action research by pastoral leaders.

## Finally

Having consciously set myself to understand my leadership patterns and behaviors through the rigorous practice of reflexivity, I have experienced personal transformation and transformed leadership practices. I view this personal transformation as having occurred at the identity level. It relates to how I now see my work and myself. I have significantly moved away from my self-constructed identity to valuing my identity as in Christ and in relationship with the Holy Spirit. It is my view that the work of the Holy Spirit has been central to my claim of transformation. It has taken deep-rooted reflection and hard work to leave the old and familiar behind. My old state was rooted in tradition. My new state is anchored in Christ and the values I hold as a Christian. I am no longer so concerned about the expectations of others, and I can now *see* the *other* as participant and contributor rather than just provider and doer. Even though this research project has come to an end, my journey of learning is ongoing. I began my research with a prayer, and I will therefore also end it with a prayer from the Apostle Paul.

I always thank God for the grace He has given me in Christ Jesus. For in Him I have been enriched in every way—in all my speaking and in all my knowledge—because the testimony about Christ is confirmed in me. Therefore I do not lack any spiritual gift as I eagerly wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep me strong to the end, so that I will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called me into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful (1 Cor. 1:4-9 NIV).

# SUPPORTING MATERIALS

## APPENDIX A:

The data provided below is from one of my action research cycles. It is a narration of events sourced from my data archive that shows how reflection contributed to developing my thinking about power. The various pieces of data sourced from my journals, includes excerpts from email correspondence with the related parties to the situation. The data helps tell the story of how action research works in the progression of learning, development and change over time. I provide it to show both my internal processes and the outward behavioral evidence associated with my learning.

Incident

The incident involves my interactions with a long-time employee. The employee was the director of one of our local humanitarian programs. He had worked in the position for several years. His responsibilities related to the day-to-day operations of the program he managed. He also had oversight for other seasonal programs, two of which had recently come to an end. Given his availability I decided to add fundraising responsibilities to his portfolio related to his primary program. I did this in part because I would otherwise have had to reduce his hours and in part because my increased executive responsibilities made it difficult for me to fundraise for his project. In my mind it was the perfect opportunity for him to take responsibility for funding the program he managed. Over the years I had attempted to get him to accept more of the fundraising responsibilities. He had always declined to do so. I should have seen this as an indication of his lack of interest in fundraising. Irrespective, I persuasively discussed my decision

with our board of directors who agreed that he should be given the added responsibility. An added reason for my decision was related to him leaving work early every day. In my mind I felt that he had come to accept this as his new normal.

Initial reflections

I made the decision without consulting the employee. Over the years I attempted to encourage him to show an interest in fundraising to no avail. This irked me but at the time he was managing other programs, so I did not press the issue. However, after discussing the situation with the board, and having their agreement I communicated the board's decision with the employee. After giving the news about his new responsibilities, I proceeded to tell him how to go about the fundraising. I suggested he start working on getting an advisory committee together. I recommended he approach various entities to ask if they would be willing to assist him in this task and if they had ideas that might be helpful. I continued that it would not be a bad idea to include someone who worked for a large multinational company. I also stated that he needed to begin tracking the funding we had coming in for next year so that he knew what the fundraising target needed to be. I added that raising funds for the program was taking up too much of my time besides which it added costs of the program. I communicated this, paying scant attention to his less than enthusiastic response about the decision. I brushed off his attitude as inconsequential. I assumed that he would be pleased at the decision given that it enabled him to remain on as a full-time employee.

Over the course of the next several months I noticed that he became less productive at managing his program, something he had always done with enthusiasm. Furthermore, I noticed that he did very little about fundraising. During this period, he

often commented on how he was not a fundraiser, and did not enjoy asking people for money. At a subsequent board meeting I was asked how he was doing. I mentioned my concerns about his lack of enthusiasm. I relayed that in my estimation the employee had not only been unproductive at fundraising, he also appeared to have lost interest in managing his program.

Board member discussions related to the incident

The board decides that it is time to give the employee an ultimatum. They suggest drafting a letter to the employee to let him know their thinking. They are of a mind to terminate him. I am told to give the employee an, *all in* or *out* directive. Their feeling is that he could at least have made a concerted effort to engage with his new responsibilities. By the time, I had learned a substantial amount about my leadership behaviors and had begun to see how my directive, task-oriented behaviors might have contributed to the situation, disenfranchising the employee. I asked the board of directors if I could have the opportunity to speak to the employee, before presenting him with their ultimatum.

Data is related to my reflection *in* action while interacting with my board on the issue.

As the board discusses the situation, I am reflecting on the best way to approach this long time employee. Although I feel that there is little excuse for his failure to comply with my directions relating to his new responsibilities, I am aware of how my directive style of leadership might have played a role in his performance. After the board discussions I decide on a new approach. I write to our board suggesting that I have a final conversation with the employee before issuing the ultimatum. I relay my decision to ask

certain questions prior to letting him know the board's decision such as, "does he still want to be doing this? Is he burnt out? Does he want to move on? What about becoming a part-time employee?" I let them know that I believe this might give us more insight into what is transpiring. I ask the board to pray for me and tell them that I will notify them of the outcome of our discussion. On my return from the board meeting I am asked by the employee, how the meeting went giving me the perfect opportunity to engage him in a discussion.

This data regards email communication with the board of directors regarding my subsequent interaction with the employee

After much prayer and a decision to live my values in practice, I decided to measure my words in our conversation. We met at 4 pm yesterday. In a calm and dispassionate way, I briefly explained the boards concerns. The employee started out by saying that he felt that he was working harder than ever at managing his program and that perhaps neither I, nor the board recognized how much he was doing. I acknowledged that there had been an increase in his workload as we were serving an increased number of clients. However, I reminded him that he had previous managed an additional two programs and that he now only had one to manage. I worked hard not to sound accusatory. I then brought up the issue of what I viewed to be his lack of passion for the job and sighted instances where clients and board members had felt that he was less than pleased, enthusiastic, or committed to what he was doing. I was able to site three specific examples of this from reports I had received and added that I had personally felt at times that he was doing the minimum. I suggested that it was perhaps because he felt burned out. I pointed out that he had not followed through with some of the board directions

from the previous year; neither had he followed directions I had given him before leaving for an overseas trip. He acknowledged that this was so. Again, I reiterated that I understood if this was a result of burn out after eleven years on the job. I reiterated that as long as I did the fund raising the project expenses would be disproportionate, and that I could no longer solely do the fund raising if our program was going to be financially viable. He emphasized that he still had a passion for the program but was not comfortable with approaching people or cold canvassing for money. I told him that the board had graciously considered that this could be the case. They wanted me to convey that an option might be for him to reduce his working hours. He would then not be required to take on the fundraising responsibilities. At that point I suggested that he not give me an immediate answer about accepting reduced hours but that he pray about it and talk to his wife about it. I explained that I did not want an intellectual or emotional response but a heart response. I said that he could take time to think about his decision. I also said that based on his decision the board would make recommendations and that one of the board members would be present with me when this happened. (Data Archive: 23rd September 2009).

Employee's response via email

I thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and desires about my future with the organization. After having the past 10 days to pray and discuss with my wife what I would like to do, the answer seemed very clear to us. I do now and always have had a passion for running and overseeing the program. It is something I feel fits my gifting of organization and administration and something I feel I do well. As for the area of fundraising it is something I am very uncomfortable doing and feel very inadequate at.

I feel it is best for the organization and for myself to be allowed to do that which I enjoy and excel at. So it is my request to be allowed to work Monday through Wednesday

Data related to board feedback

As a result of the employee's decision I received positive feedback from the board of directors. Evidence of this is shown in the data below. They were happy that the situation with the employee was amicably resolved. Furthermore, they were pleased to know that we did not lose a valued employee; one who had been with the organization for a long time. At the same time the board realized that given his decision to reduce his work hours his compensation package would need to be adjusted. I believe my changed approach towards him enabled us to move forward in a new kind of working relationship with him.

Final reflections

My analysis of the data collected over the period of time, spanning several months from the initial incident shows how my perspective changes. Initially I am frustrated with the employee and later I recognize how my style of leadership contributed to marginalizing him. This was the result of my awareness of the social, political and relational implications of the way I used power in the situation. In relation to this particular incident, I recognized how my leadership actions impacted the employee, his family, the organization's clients and our board of directors. This awareness of the social implications of power fosters understanding of how in making decisions for the employee rather than with him, contributed to his demoralization and how this impacted his ability to be productive. Furthermore, I recognized how my directive leadership had given him no opportunity to voice an opinion or have a choice about what he wanted to do. From

the data captured I see how I failed to question my assumptions about his willingness to take on new responsibilities. Furthermore, I become aware of how I had coerced him to accept the fundraising responsibilities by using *logical argument* and *persuasion* in my attempt to convince him that taking on the these responsibilities was for the benefit of all. I noted how the pressure I exerted on him had in fact worked contrary to both his well-being and the organization's, as a whole. I realize how my behavior was *out of sync* with my values.

Two new things emerge from my data. Firstly, I note how I prayed and asked the board for their prayer (I had as yet not identified it as spiritual reflection) and secondly how I made a decision to act in accordance with my values. I now view this as a decision to use the power of my position ethically. The external behavioral evidence of my learning in this situation is related to my new approach. Instead of giving directions or making accusations, I decide to ask questions and seek answers. I approached the employee with a consideration of his *agency* thus liberating and empowering him to make his own decisions based on his own values, needs and the awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses.

Ultimately the board was pleased that they no longer had to deal with a disgruntled, long-term employee and that they did not have to be involved in negotiations with a new employee. For my part I felt that the learning I experienced enabled me to redeem the situation. Just forms of leadership call others to be their best possible selves. My learning raised my awareness of self—in relation to the *other and* self and others in relation to God. This enabled me to live my value of love as empowerment and inclusiveness.

# APPENDIX B

In this appendix I give another example of how I collect data related to my inquiries. With respect to this particular incident I show how part of my data collection includes my reflections on former behaviors versus current behaviors.

This is reflected in the table below. It shows how I record the contrast between my former and my current leadership behaviors related to a practice experience. The right-hand column (current practices) shows what behaviors I exhibited in keeping with my learning and as a reflection of my values. The left-hand column records reflections of how I would formerly have behaved in the same situation

The context of these behaviors is an interaction with a congregant after a Sunday morning service, where the congregant approached me unexpectedly stating that I never spoke to her after the services. I recorded the incident because I viewed it as significant not only given how my learning enabled me to reflect *in* action at the time, which is one of the aims of practice improvement but also because it triggered my thinking in relation to others in the congregation who might have similar perspectives. Post action reflection on her remarks triggered the thought that perhaps there are members of my congregation who feel disadvantaged. I reflect by asking the following questions:

- Why do I believe they feel disadvantaged?
- If this is the case what can I do as their pastor to make them feel accepted as part of the church community?
- Are there ways in which we as a church body can be more effective in reaching out to those who do not feel included?
- What would that look like?

I observe that when I pay attention in this way I increase my sensitivity to the felt-needs of others. Prompted by the Holy Spirit I acknowledge that even though I never purposefully ignored the person who approached me, neither did I intentionally single her out for a chat. I noted that she was one of those individuals who live in the shadows. I perceived her to be shy, timid and afraid of confrontation. As such I assumed it took a lot for her to approach me. This got me thinking about how many other shy, introverted people there are in our congregation who never speak to anyone unless they are approached and therefore perhaps feel also excluded.

Given these assumptions I am grateful that our exchange was positive, at least that was my view of our exchange. I viewed it as positive because even though her rather forceful statement caught me off guard I was able to respond by affirming her concerns and engaging her in an empathetic way. This was the result of learning to reflect *in* action, or to *think on my feet.* It was my perception that she felt validated by my response. I later received unsolicited feedback from her letting me know that she thought I never spoke to her because of something she had done related to her work with our children's ministry. I frankly had no idea what she meant and had never been aware of an issue with her and our children's church. The feedback itself revealed the importance of questioning my assumptions and of recognizing that my assumptions may be inaccurate, as were mine in this case. I assumed that she felt excluded. The table below reflects how I envisaged my response to her would have been under my former practices and how it actually was during our interaction. I present it here to make visible to my reader some of what reflection consists of in the interrogation of practice. Monitoring my learning in this way helps me keep in view what it is that I desire to achieve with my leadership practices.

| FORMER | CURRENT |
|---|---|
| • Felt exasperated by her interruption and her remark that I never spoke to her<br>• Dismissed the truth in her words with rationalizations<br>• My thoughts would have been critical and judgemental<br>• My actions would probably have been dismissive<br>• Objectified her as another complaining congregant | • Paid attention with compassion<br>• Validated her concerns<br>• Valued her observations making a mental note to reflect on how her feelings might mirror the feelings of others in the congregation<br>• Respected her voice, while respecting my own<br>• Embraced her with acceptance |
| • Found ways to end the conversation | • Engaged her in conversation |
| • Absentmindedness | • Paid attention |
| • Judged myself | • Reflected on how I could use the situation as a learning experience<br>• Consulted with our church staff about ideas that would help us better connect with our entire congregation to help them feel part of the church community |

**Table 2. Representation of former and current leadership practices.**

# APPENDIX C

This appendix relates to how I have used metaphor and poetry in my research to make meaning of my learning experiences.

Through rich story and art, the practitioner paints a big canvas of experiences. There is much insight that can be drawn from this canvas of experiences. Here I give details sourced from my data archive of how I used artistic mediums such as poetry and metaphor to help me process my own feelings of anxiety and despair related to one such experience.

For the last ten years, a family member has been slowly regressing into her own reality of times past. As her close personal family members and caregivers, we all fluctuated between being understanding, having angry outbursts and falling into sheer exhaustion. Some of us though present bodily, were absent mentally. We found ourselves engulfed in our own painful, emotional struggle. The consequences of living with this degenerative disease, was a perpetual challenge to my assertions of leading in consideration of the *other*. Frustration, inaction, anger and even despair often appeared to be the *supreme rulers,* winning over the hearts and minds of our family. I process my feelings by writing:

"I feel overwhelmed by the cage, I am a bird hemmed in by responsibility!"

Thinking metaphorically in this way means spotting a thread of similarity between two dissimilar objects, events, or whatever: one of which is better known than the other, and

using the better-known one as a way of speaking about the lesser known.[1] I further express my anguish in poetry:

> Oh if on the wings of a dove I could fly
> And soar above the sky
> Away from turmoil, heartache and pain
> And yet what would I stand to gain
> A brief respite from the reality of life
> Embrace it my soul – you are in a fight
>
> Not alone you stand– there is still the light…
> For comfort and strength until the time is right…
> Reflect and think a while
> Of the years of heartfelt, love and care
> With all her heart, your loved one did share
> For the child she bore now bears the yoke
> Of her frailness and things that it bespoke
>
> Be glad for the opportunity to grow
> Even in this, tis important to know
> That the challenge you face is life's natural flow
> It is time to contest for her dignity true
> For someday remember it could be you.

[1] Sallie McFaque, *Metaphorical Theology* (London: Fortress Press, 1982), 15.

# APPENDIX D

This appendix outlines more information about one of my convictional knowing experiences as mentioned in the dissertation. I relates to a dream I had in the course of my inquiries. As a Christian pastoral leader, I am familiar with dreams that have personal significance. Over the years I have experienced knowing through dreams in the form of insight and direction for troubling situations. I categorize these events as *revelatory*. Christian theologians commonly use the technical term, revelation when referring to one of two types of revelation: natural and special. Natural revelation is the kind Paul discusses in Romans Chapter One, a revelation in creation. The other as refers to special revelation; namely the sort of revelation represented by the Christian Canonical Scriptures. However, I am using the term revelation in this context in the same sense that scientist, artists, writers and others do who use the term to denote a sort of unique, personal insight. As a Pentecostal Christian I understand dreams as part of the Christian experience and not necessarily *bizarre.* Examples can be found in Gen. 41:1-7; Gen. 46:2; Judges 7:13-15; Dan .2:28 NIV.

Indeed, there are many secular (non-religious) examples of people who have received answers, insight, revelation, direction and other sources of information through dreams. Some examples would be scientists such as Howe and his mechanical penetration of the needle in the sewing machine; Bohr, and the structure of the atom; Einstein and the principle of relativity, Medeleev's and the periodic table; Kekule's, discovery of the structure of Benzene and aromatic chemistry and Loewi's proof that our nerves transmit signals chemically.

Knowing, related to a personal experience like my dream, involves more than just knowing about the event. Legitimizing the event means there is a presumption that I could offer some kind of absolutism about what I experienced—I cannot. Reducing my experience to language or to any other explicit medium, is abstracting from it. It is of immense practical use, no doubt, but it merely simplifies the experience.[1]

What is relevant is that the experience is my own and that it contributed to insight about the implications of my leadership practices on others thus moving me closer to understanding the distance between my actions and my values. The dream made me aware that I was task oriented rather than people oriented. Jesus emphasized people orientation when he reminded Martha that she was busy with many things but had neglected what was important (Luke 10:40-41 NIV).

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[1] Martin, *Living on Purpose.*

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