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Bridging the Gap Between Orthodoxy and Orthopathy in the Life of The Reformed Pastor

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO:

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ORTHODOXY AND ORTHOPATHY

IN THE LIFE OF THE REFORMED PASTOR



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

PORTLAND SEMINARY

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PORTLAND, OREGON

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This certifies that the doctoral Project Portfolio of

Daniel McKinney

has been approved by
the Evaluation Committee on March 14, 2022
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership & Spiritual Formation.

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DEDICATION

For Stephanie.

This does not happen without your support, encouragement, patience, and grace.

In loving memory of Rev. William “Tripp” Albert Sanders III.

Beloved son of God, husband, father, pastor, and friend.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	iii
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	v
List of Abbreviations	vi
Research Method	vii
Abstract	viii
Introduction.....	1
Project	12
Project Launch Plan	37
Appendix A—Milestone 1 The NPO Charter.....	46
Appendix B—Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay	53
Appendix C—Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report	75
Appendix D—Milestone 4 Prototype Iteration Report.....	90
Appendix E—Supplemental Project Documentation	98
Bibliography	148

List of Figures

Figure 1: “Bridging the Gap” in NPO Expertise Essay, p. 63

Figure 2: “Bridging the Gap” in Retreat Session 1, p. 106

List of Tables

Table 1: Evolution of the NPO, p. 15.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EQ—Emotional Intelligence

NorCal—Northern California Presbytery

PCA—Presbyterian Church in America

RESEARCH METHOD

This Project utilized a blended methodology that draws upon bibliographic resources, data derived from stakeholder collaboration, and human-centered design and iteration processes to create a heuristic-based, application-oriented Project.

ABSTRACT

What if Reformed pastors cared about every aspect of their humanity with the same passion they care about their doctrine? When we think about the health of the reformed pastor, we tend to think mainly in terms of our orthodoxy. From 2018-2022 I have witnessed the most orthodox of pastors fall into marital unfaithfulness, resign due to relational conflict, and suffer from burnout. All of this within the state of Utah, where there are only 7 PCA churches. Therefore, there is a need to bridge the gap between Reformed Theology and the emotional, spiritual, and relational health in pastors of the Presbyterian Church in America in the state of Utah.

The imbalance of the emphasis on doctrine stems from a misunderstanding of John Calvin's famous statement on the knowledge of God and knowledge of self. Most see this knowledge as intellectual and doctrinal. Calvin, however, cared more about the emotional life of Christians than is often thought. He saw emotions as a vital part of what it means to be made in the image of God; not simply intellect and correct theology.

This insight is important for PCA pastors in Utah because being a healthy pastor in our denomination emphasizes orthodoxy; orthopathy is suspect. Belief is most important and little attention is given to other aspects of their humanity. My role is to help them put on their own "oxygen masks" so they can be of help to others. I am not asking them to de-emphasize their doctrine; I am asking them to put a greater emphasis on the other important aspects of their humanity. The project I have created is a three-day retreat that gives pastors the time and space to get away from the routines of pastoral ministry, and to focus on their emotional, spiritual, and relational well-being.

INTRODUCTION

When the doctor asked her nurse to get the staple remover off her desk, all I could do was laugh under my breath. I was sitting on a table in an Emergency Room in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee. An hour earlier I had split my head wide open on a youth retreat in which I was one of the adult leaders. I hit my head so hard I was almost knocked unconscious. Evidently I was bleeding all over the place, but I was completely unaware because I was too focused on other things. One of the teenagers had to point out, “Dude! You are bleeding all over the place!” It took eight staples to close the gash on my head.

As a pastor it can be too easy to bleed all over the place emotionally, spiritually, and relationally and not be aware of it. They are angry and frustrated and not sure why and do not know how to deal with it. They have forgotten how to commune with Jesus and ignore their first love. They wonder if anyone really knows them and why they are so lonely and isolated. But instead of focusing on their well-being, they focus on too many other things: the growth of the church, the impact of their ministry, and writing great sermons. All too often the congregation is fine to focus on such things. Are the sermons good? Check. Are good programs up and running? Check. The church is growing? Check. Great! Nothing to see here.

The aspects of their own health are ignored, and the next thing pastors know they are cheating on their spouses, addicted to porn, addicted to work, in conflict with those on staff, and resigning from churches because of burnout. In 15 years of pastoral ministry, I have seen all of this; most of it in the last five. COVID has not been kind to those in ministry.

I started this discovery journey because my friend and mentor resigned from being a pastor because of moral failure, and he was not sure how he got to that point. I started thinking about lack of self-awareness in the Reformed world because self-awareness is not given a lot of

emphasis. Our emphasis is orthodoxy; self-awareness is psychobabble. But there was a growing intuition in my own heart that orthodoxy can only get us so far. Emotional Intelligence was not on my radar at this point, but I did write this in my NPO Discovery: “One thing that comes to mind is delving a little more into Rolheiser’s chapter on divorce as well as his section on ritual. This is a stereotype for sure, but folks in my denomination have divorced emotion and family of origin and personality from their spirituality.”

My first NPO was: “Pastors divorce their sense of self-awareness from their spiritual formation.” In my Discovery Workshop and One on One Interviews I discovered I was on the right track, but the NPO was too broad. My stakeholders, which included pastors, pastors’ wives, and staff members, were encouraging me to trust my intuition and focus on Reformed pastors in the PCA. One stakeholder encouraged me to try and frame my NPO in a more positive way. Something like this: “What are some of the benefits of growing in self-knowledge while in pastoral ministry?”

One of the key insights from the Discovery Workshop, however, was, “What if the congregations do not want the pastor to become more aware of their own weakness and brokenness?” This was a key insight because it started me thinking about where pastors could be safe to process these things if their congregation was not going to help them. From the Discovery Workshop, the NPO said, “Considering the humanity of the pastor, we have discovered a lack of self-awareness within the pastor which is caused by unrealistic inner and outer expectations placed on the pastor by himself and the congregation. If solved, it would mean a safe church, mentally healthy and wholistic pastors who are willing to take emotional and relational risks, more shared ministry, and healthy ways to express and respond to brokenness.”

Throughout the year of discovery my NPO began to narrow. (See table 1: Evolution of the NPO, page 15) I began to think about the pastors in my presbytery and wondered how I could be of help in caring for them. A quote from Henri Nouwen kept coming to mind: “I am convinced that priests and ministers...need a truly safe place for themselves. They need a place where they can share their deep pain and struggles with people who do not need them, but who can guide them ever deeper into the mysteries of God’s love.”¹ Edwin Friedman was encouraging me to be a nonanxious presence, Matthew Boulton was helping me to rethink Calvin’s two forms of knowledge, and Tim Keller was showing me pastors need life-long growth and encouragement in their pursuit of spiritual formation. The question for me became, “What is my role in helping pastors in this pursuit?”

During the Design Phase of the project, Dr. Park-Hearn suggested one way I could be of help was to “Bridge the Gap” between reformed theology and emotional intelligence. I started thinking about writing a book because this felt more scholarly, and presbyterians love scholarship. My NPO still felt too broad, so I met with several of the leaders in my presbytery² and asked them the question, “How can a presbytery pastor its pastors well?”³ I spent over two hours with eight other pastors, and we came up with three pitches: 1. Make The Northern California Presbytery More Relational; 2. Hire a “Presbytery Pastor”; 3. Establish Pastoral Cohorts that would meet for mutual support and encouragement. While none of these focus

¹ Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994), 50.

² In the presbyterian form of church government, a presbytery is the governing body of its regional churches. PCA pastors are not members of their churches, but of their presbytery. I am a member of the Northern California Presbytery that is made up of almost 40 churches in Utah, Nevada, Northern California, and Hawaii.

³ My NPO had changed from “Reformed Pastors Divorce Self-Awareness From Their Spiritual Formation” to “How Does a Presbytery Pastor Its Pastors Well?”

specifically on Emotional Intelligence, the goal was to create the space so that EQ could be discussed. The result was that I started meeting with many of the PCA pastors in Utah as a group monthly for prayer, support, and learning from one another. The pandemic only exacerbated how lonely pastors were and how they were becoming the targets for isolated and fearful congregants. Without EQ, they were going to take on all the emotions of their congregations and potentially be crushed by them if they did not know how to engage with them in a healthy way. Tired and hurt people hurt tired and hurt people.

In my research I was attempting to bridge the gap by thinking of how to communicate the work of Pete Scazzero in a way reformed pastors could tolerate. This was important because several of the pastors in Utah are suspicious of emotions or anything that sounds “Monastic” like spiritual formation or the spiritual disciplines. I found help for this in two places: *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology* by Matthew Boulton and *Calvin’s Company of Pastors* by Scott Manetsch. Both were helping me to see Calvin cared about more than just orthodoxy in the lives of the pastors in Geneva. He cared just as much about their characters and lives as well. He cared about their hearts and their relationships. In a preaching lecture at Covenant Theological Seminary (the PCA’s national seminary), Dr. Gregory Thompson summed this up well: “Calvin did not just want us to ask, ‘How is my preaching,’ but ‘What am I becoming?’”⁴

By the end of the Design Phase, my Most Viable Project began to focus on just the PCA pastors in Utah. I love Utah. I think it is a unique place to minister, and I care deeply about the pastors that are here. I began to think I would write a chapter or two of a manual or book. Dr.

⁴ Greg Thompson, “I Will Seek Him Whom My Soul Loves: Cultivating Habits of Love” (lecture, Covenant Theological Seminary Fall Preaching Lectures, St. Louis, MO, September 2015).

Park-Hearn encouraged me to move forward with “Reflections on the Emotional and Spiritual Well-Being of PCA Pastors in the Unique Ministry Context of Utah.” The focus of my project had moved from PCA pastors in general to PCA pastors in the Northern California Presbytery to PCA pastors in Utah. I could not be a help for everyone, but I could be a help for the pastors in my home state.

The reality of not being able to help everyone hit in a way I never expected. On August 1, 2021, one of my dearest friends took his own life. He was a husband, a father, and a pastor. This was easily the greatest loss of my life, and the grief was debilitating. I started to rethink everything. I contemplated quitting this degree. The only reason I did not was because my friend would have thought this was a dumb idea. Toward the end of September, I went on a very long walk and concluded I did not want to write a book. In asking, “what do I really want to do?”, I started to rethink how I could best care for the PCA pastors here in Utah and how I would measure this. I started to think how I could best “bridge the gap” and provide the space for this to happen. After another long walk with Dr. Park-Hearn at Cannon Beach, the idea of a retreat began to formulate, but I was not sure how to accomplish this with such little time left in the semester.

As I started to give more thought to a retreat, two words kept coming to mind: presence and space. I wanted the Holy Trinity to be present and work in the hearts and minds of pastors while providing the space for them to be around those who understand pastoral ministry and did not feel the need to be “on.” I also wanted to provide a beautiful place where they could enjoy God’s creation while being free from pastoral responsibilities. What I did not want this retreat to be is a time to gather more information to take back with them, to challenge anyone’s theological tradition, or to work on their marriage. If they were given the time and space to focus on their

own well-being, these other needs would have the potential to fall into place. I wanted the Spirit to work while they were there; much like a sermon works on the heart in the moment of those who listen. This does not mean that nothing changes later, but that any later changes come only from what is happening in the heart right then.

How would I know if any of this was happening? First, their demeanor changes. They come in tired and burdened and leave rested and lighter emotionally. There are things they want to implement when they go home: better spiritual rhythms, a Rule of Life, or read some of the books or articles I referenced. The ultimate assessment seems to be if they want to do another retreat, and they want others to experience it. Most of this information can be gathered by feedback toward the end of the retreat. When I did the prototype retreat, I discovered that an evaluation discussion around a campfire worked well.

When I think about the long-term objectives of the project, I want these retreats to be a regular part of the process for the PCA pastors in Utah to get to know one another, trust one another, and care for one another. Most have committed to two retreats a year. We already meet monthly, but retreats have a way of bringing people together in ways that monthly meetings do not. While the PCA pastors in Utah are my primary audience, I also hope to do a couple of retreats a year for pastors in the Northern California Presbytery, and for pastors in other denominations throughout Utah.

In these retreats I want to communicate the importance of EQ for reformed pastors in Utah. They put so much emphasis on orthodoxy, but so little on orthopathy. I want to take a chance and ask them to put just as much emphasis on their own well-being as they do on their doctrine. My NPO states, “There is a need to bridge the gap between reformed theology and the emotional, spiritual, and relational health of PCA pastors in the state of Utah.” There are nine

pastors. Of the nine, I would say two are on the bridge with me, four are at the start of the bridge thinking they might want to explore, two are eyeing the bridge suspiciously from a safe distance, and one does not return my emails or phone calls.

There is still a way to go. Even after the retreat, there is still hesitancy to move closer to the bridge for some. My assessment of this comes from a couple of comments: “What does *the Bible* say about Emotional Intelligence?” “I still don’t get this whole EQ thing.” This reveals the need to fill in some of the gaps. More research on Calvin and other important names in our theological tradition like Warfield and Carson will be helpful, but I am not convinced these guys need more information. Cultivating personal relationships with them will be most beneficial. The above comments come from those who were somewhat suspicious of me and why I moved back to Utah. Four years later, the three of us are working together to revamp our church network. They are still a safe distance from the bridge, but they are at least allowing me to be close to them and are supportive of these retreats.

Creating a retreat was not the only viable approach to my NPO. Writing a book and creating pastoral cohorts were other possibilities. In a lot of ways, I started down this path in 2005 when I was studying for my MA in Counseling. I read *The Emotionally Healthy Church* by Pete Scazzero and wrote a review for it in one of my classes. This book was helpful and paradigm-shifting. I even tried to start a small group with it as an Assistant Pastor right out of seminary. It was a glorious failure. Everyone in the group questioned it, my senior pastor didn’t like it, and I was too emotionally immature to push back. Scazzero’s books have sold millions, thousands download his podcast, and churches all over the country are enrolled in his Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Courses. I think I would like to write a book one day integrating Scazzero’s work with Calvin one day, but my focus has narrowed to the nine PCA

pastors that are in Utah. These pastors would not read another book. It would maybe get added to their “To Read” list, but that would be about it. They are, however, willing to participate in retreats.

The other option was to create pastoral cohorts. After 25 years of pastoral ministry, Chris Vogel started an organization called NXTGEN Pastors. “Chris’ interest in training the next generation of pastors focuses on mentoring men in the areas of spiritual formation, soul-care, emotional and cultural intelligence, and leadership skills. This mentoring is done through ministry cohorts, thus providing the men with a community for a lifetime of mutual shepherding.”⁵ Chris and I have had many conversations including some face-to-face when he visited Salt Lake back in November. He has created several modules on EQ, has partnered with seminaries, and several presbyteries across the country are using his curriculum. The Northern California Presbytery hopes to implement these cohorts in 2023.

Based on Chris’ vast experience and my limited experience in working with those in ministry, we both think the cohort curriculum is better suited for younger seminary students and for pastors that are at least in their mid 40s. We think this because seminary students are eager to learn, and older pastors are more aware of themselves and their limits. Older pastors are competent in the hard skills of ministry (preaching, administrations, etc.), but see their need to work on their soft skills (EQ, spiritual formation, interpersonal skills, etc.). There are two reasons why I chose not to pursue cohorts. In the seven PCA churches in Utah, there is only one member who is planning to go to seminary any time soon. Chris thinks you need at least five or six to make a cohort viable. Second, the majority of the PCA pastors here are in their early to mid 30s. As I get closer to 50, I have come to the conclusion that those in their 30s are not self-

⁵ <http://ngpastors.com/about>

aware enough to realize what they do not know. They have a Master's degree, and are usually married with children. In their minds they are mature and know what they are doing. Going through a curriculum on EQ over several months feels like another seminary class, and none of them want to do that. But they do want to participate in a retreat.

And they do *love* John Calvin. Therefore I chose to focus on him and his theology in my research. I was a senior in high school when I first started diving into reformed theology. By my junior year in college, I was a Calvinist, but all I knew about the man himself was that he was a lawyer turned theologian who led reformed churches with a heavy hand. There is certainly truth to this but, like all of us, Calvin was more than just a one-dimensional character. He had his issues for sure, but he was human—a human created in the image of God who loved Jesus and cared deeply for God's people.

The book that helped me to see this most clearly was Mathew Boulton's *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology*. It was the first book I read that helped me understand Calvin's humanity. He cared deeply for the people he had been called to shepherd. He saw himself as a pastor first and a theologian second. It is certainly easy to think of him during his time in Geneva as an autocrat, but this is a simple, misleading caricature. He was trying to *form* the people of Geneva into lovers; lovers of Jesus and lovers of one another. He wanted to accomplish this formation through the spiritual disciplines of the Monastic Rule. Calvin was not against monasticism, but against its abuses. He did not believe in the spiritually elite but wanted to make spiritual formation accessible to everyone.

Calvin's Company of Pastors was also eye-opening to the way Calvin cared for other pastors. He did start The Academy to train their intellect, but one must keep in mind he needed to train other pastors who could defend the work of the Reformation. He also cared a great deal for

the character, the growth of pastoral skill, and the overall well-being of those whom he trained. He was not training “theological brains on a stick” but pastors who would love Jesus and their people well. Thinking about Calvin’s work with pastors, I am reminded of Nouwen’s quote from above: “I am convinced that priests and ministers...need a truly safe place for themselves. They need a place where they can share their deep pain and struggles with people who do not need them, but who can guide them ever deeper into the mysteries of God’s love.” This is exactly what Calvin was attempting to do.

As I reflect on the past three years, there is no doubt pursuing this degree has been life changing. A dear friend of mine called Portland Seminary “the Mayo clinic of spiritual formation.” He was right. The Lord has used this journey in so many ways. There have been the joys of learning from those from other theological traditions, sitting under Dr. Morse’s teaching, starting lifelong friendships, seeing Calvin in a different light, and seeing the gap in my own congruence become much smaller. I was so uncertain about who God has created me to be, but I am becoming more and more content with who I am as the beloved of God.

There have also been disappointments along the way. When I started this program, I was envisioning reading a lot and writing something that would be beneficial for other pastors in my denomination. It was disappointing to spend more time on workshops, interviews, IRB documents, and benchmarks than on pursuing content. In some ways it felt as though the content took a backseat to the process. Now that the end is in sight, however, I am more thankful for the process than I once was. The iterations led me to do something which is more life-giving to me and to those whom I serve.

Because of this program I was able to be present with three churches who had lost their pastors, spearhead a merger between two struggling churches, and engage with conflict in ways that once terrified me. None of this would have happened without pursuing this degree.

I have always been a dreamer, but so often when someone would ask, “How are you going to make that dream a reality?”, I would have no answer. There is, however, a holy confidence that was not present before. My kids love to say, “Dad, you are not always right, but you are always sure.” So, when I dream about the future after the degree, they may not be the right dreams, but I am sure they could happen. I often dream with “what if” statements. The following are in light of this project:

- ❖ What if there was a space that was similar to a monastery; a place where the weary traveler (ministry leader) knew they would be welcomed, listened to, were safe, fed, and spiritually and emotionally nourished and were reminded they are a beloved daughter or son of God?
- ❖ What if pastors who were close to burnout could come to a beautiful place for rest and recovery and be reminded of their first love?
- ❖ What if they were given the space to think through the root of this burnout and encouraged to pursue healthy ways and rhythms of meeting the needs of pastoral ministry?
- ❖ What if my wife and I owned a place where pastors and their families could come free of charge to rest, relax, and play?
- ❖ What if this place provided the space and time for unhurried hikes where a pastor and I could talk or simply be quiet?

As you read the following, I hope you can dream with me.

Milestone 5: Project

INTRODUCTION

Opening an email Sunday morning right before church is never a good idea. As I read the email communicating my mentor and dear friend's resignation due to sexual infidelity, the knot in my stomach grew tighter and tighter. My family had moved back to Utah six months earlier so that we could be a support to the eight PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) pastors scattered throughout the Utah Valley. I was going to be a guest preacher so that pastors could get a week off, teach Sunday School to lighten the teaching load, and, along with my wife, provide counseling for pastors and their wives. When we first arrived, there was no indication that within eight months, three churches would be without a pastor, and a fourth church would be scheduling a much-needed sabbatical for their pastor. What was quickly realized is that those in ministry do not simply need someone to fill their pulpit every occasionally; they need emotional, spiritual, and relational support as well.

Ministry is difficult regardless of the location. Utah, however, is unique with most of its population being members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). To give some context to its difficulty, the reader should know a couple of things. First, only three percent of Utah's population regularly attends a non-LDS church. This percentage includes Catholics, mainline Protestants, and Evangelicals. For comparison, eight percent of Egypt's population regularly attends church. Second, when we moved to Utah the first time in 2006, our realtor, who had lived in Saudi Arabia for almost 10 years, said that Utah reminded him of his time in the Middle East with its state-run religion.

A few challenges arise out of this. The first is the need to define terms when having religious conversations. The LDS church uses the same vocabulary as historical Christianity but

has a completely different dictionary. One must be clear about what is meant when discussing the nature of God, the nature of Jesus, the nature of salvation, the nature of faith and grace, etc. It does not matter if you are talking with a member of the LDS church or not because these subjects are understood by all through the lens of LDS theology.

The second, and I believe, greater challenge is living as a religious minority. Being a presbyterian pastor in Utah, I am met with suspicion coming from all sides. The LDS members are suspicious because I am not LDS; while the non-religious are suspicious because all religion is the same and dangerous. It can take quite a while to build relationships as one works through misunderstandings and false assumptions regarding others' motives.

Finally, Christians themselves present a challenge to Utah pastors. Utah is a very transitory place. A lot of churchgoers move to Utah for school, outdoor adventure, or a new job and end up leaving after two to three years because it is too different and difficult from where they lived before. One pastor stated he felt like he had planted three different churches in 10 years because of the turnover. Being in the minority can also cause churches to become insular. Motivating Utah Christians to reach out to their non-Christian friend, neighbor, or co-worker is difficult. The desire to only be around people like themselves outside of work and school is a challenge not so easily overcome. Sunday morning is one of the few times in which they do not feel as though they have to explain themselves, so the thought of inviting their LDS or unbelieving friend to church is daunting.

The above is meant to give the reader the context into which this project is presented. PCA pastors in Utah face many difficulties, and there is very little focus on or support for their emotional, spiritual, and relational well-being. The churches are too small to have staff members, and denominational support is non-existent. In an informal questionnaire that was sent to former

and present PCA pastors in Utah, several mentioned loneliness and isolation as one of the many challenges to pastoring in Utah. The PCA is primarily a Southeastern denomination, and the PCA churches in the West are often overlooked. To put this in perspective, since its creation in Birmingham, AL in 1973, the PCA has held only two of its General Assemblies west of the Mississippi. The last one was in Colorado Springs in the mid 90's. This makes sense considering, for example, there are 137 PCA churches in Georgia; there are seven in Utah.

Throughout the country, pastors are not doing well. On top of the regular burdens of ministry, pastors are having to deal with COVID, political and cultural polarization, and watching more and more Americans leave the church. This is true in any context. In Utah, add the burdens of being a religious minority, having little to no support, and constantly living under a cloud of suspicion. It is not surprising that none of the original PCA pastors from 2006 are still here. The ones that are here are exhausted and close to burnout. If more attention is not given to their personal well-being, it is a very real possibility my friend who fell into sexual sin will not be the last.

Moreover, Reformed theology does not put a strong emphasis on the emotional well-being of its pastors. If one were to picture a train, orthodoxy (doctrine) would be the engine, orthopraxy (behavior) would be the passenger cars, and orthopathy (emotions) would be so far back as the caboose the engineer would not even be able to see it. The goal of my project is to give PCA pastors in Utah the space to slow down and give focus to their own emotional, spiritual, and relational well being in order to prevent leaving Utah and/or leaving ministry all together.

Table 1: Evolution of the NPO

NPO	Date	Document
Pastors divorce their sense of self-awareness from their spiritual formation.	October 8, 2019	NPO Discovery Plan
Considering the humanity of the pastor we have discovered a lack of self-awareness within the pastor which is caused by unrealistic inner and outer expectations placed on the pastor by himself and the congregation. If solved, it would mean a safe church, mentally healthy and wholistic pastors who are willing to take emotional and relational risks, more shared ministry, and healthy ways to express and respond to brokenness.	December 11, 2019	NPO Charter
Our presbytery has the opportunity to help young ministers to begin thinking about their emotional intelligence and spiritual formation and their impact on their ministry. So the question I am asking is, "How Can A Presbytery Pastor Its Pastors Well?"	November 11, 2020	Design Exploration Plan
The importance of emotional health for PCA pastors within the unique ministry context of Utah.	September 13, 2021	Project Delivery Plan
There is a need and an opportunity for bridging the gap between Reformed Theology and the emotional, spiritual, and relational well-being of PCA pastors within the unique ministry context of the state of Utah.	October 12, 2021	Project Progress Report
There is a need to bridge the gap between Reformed Theology and the emotional, spiritual, and relational health of PCA pastors in the state of Utah. There is an opportunity to provide PCA pastors in Utah the relational, spiritual, and emotional space to focus on their pastoral health.	November 9, 2021	Project Delivery Plan

NPO STATEMENT

There is a need to bridge the gap between Reformed Theology and the emotional, spiritual, and relational health of PCA pastors in the state of Utah.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

I have created a three-day retreat that is centered around:

- Physical Space and Location: aesthetically pleasing Air BnBs or secluded cabins in locations such as Moab, Utah; Bear Lake, Idaho; and Big Sur, California. These are places that are beautiful and provide the amenities for rest, contemplation, and adventure
- Three to five content driven lectures on emotional intelligence, spiritual formation, pastoral communities, and self-care
- Guided times of solitude, reflection, and prayer
- Small group discussions
- Resting in nature
- Community building through story, conversing around fire pits, enjoying good food and drink, and sharing adventures

There are several reasons for doing a retreat. First, retreats provide the much-needed space for pastors to step away from the tyranny of the urgent in pastoral ministry and slow down long enough to pay attention to what is happening in their own inner world. Second, it is renewing to be in a space where the pastor does not need to be “on.” Imagine floating down the Colorado River on a paddleboard under moonlight. There is no sermon to prepare, no liturgy to write, no email to send, and no parishioner to counsel. Third, the pastor is with other people who

understand the stressors of ministry. There is no need to explain their weariness, depression, or sense of loneliness. Fourth, retreats can be a place for pastors to be vulnerable and feel safe.

Henri Nouwen writes, “[Pastors] need a place where they can share their deep pain and struggles with people who do not need them...” Fifth, being out in nature heals the mind, body, and soul.

In a word, retreats provide rest. In *Lifelong Leadership*, MaryKate Morse writes, “Resting reminds us that God loves us and designed us to need and want time apart with friends, family, and him...Constant going is neither helpful nor worshipful.” Pastors get asked a lot of things, but no one is asking them if they are resting.

There are practical and personal reasons for doing a retreat as well. Retreats give participants the opportunity to discuss content in small or large group settings instead of reading a book and processing it on their own. They also provide opportunities to give feedback to its leaders while it is fresh on the participants mind. In giving feedback in a discussion format, participants are able to build on one another’s ideas which helps the leader know how to best meet felt needs for the next retreat. For me personally, retreats are a large part of my story. I was converted at a retreat; I have formed life-long friendships at retreats; and I have never walked away from a retreat thinking, “Well, that was a waste of time.”

PROJECT SCOPE

- What the Retreat Is
 - Time Frame: 72-hour retreat arriving the night before anytime before 9PM and departing when necessary following the third day
 - Restful
 - Contemplative

- Playful and adventurous
 - Discussion centered around EQ, Spiritual Formation, and Pastoral Communities.
- However, there might be times to look specifically at family of origin, work through a genogram, or be introduced to the enneagram
- What the Retreat Is Not
 - A time to absorb more information
 - A marriage retreat
 - A place to have theological positions changed
 - Group therapy
 - Estimated Finances
 - Lodging: \$1500
 - Food and Drink: \$1000
 - Adventure Trips: \$1000
 - Transportation: \$200
 - Speaker (when brought it): \$2000
 - Total: \$3700-\$5700

BENCHMARKS

- At least five pastors join a small group in order to read *Resilient Ministry*, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, or *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders* over the time period of one year
- Eighty percent of Utah churches see the need for their pastor to get away for spiritual and relational retreats as indicated by giving \$500 toward a 'retreat fund'

Church	Contact Information	Date Contacted	Follow-Up	Amount Pledged
Brigham Bible Church				
Grace Church Layton				
Crosspoint Presbyterian				
New City Salt Lake				
Jordan Valley Church				
Corner Canyon				
Copper Hills				

- Five pastors sign up for a more extensive retreat in the Fall
- At least one pastor decides to pursue counseling due to seeing the disconnect between his spiritual and emotional life
- Two to three PCA pastors in Utah listen to Pete Scazzero's *Emotionally Healthy Leader* podcast titled, "The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality" and discuss together.

I will send a copy of the link, and ask for a time to meet and discuss

- The Northern California Presbytery uses this project as part of the rationale for the hiring of a Pastor at Large who will help facilitate cohorts and pastoral retreats as well as provide resources for the soft skills of ministry
- PCA churches across the country invest in supporting these retreats as indicated by giving \$20,000 by the end of year

The remainder of the document orients the reader to the description of the project. The first section describes what needs to be thought through before the retreat, the schedule, the content, and the evaluation. The second section gives media documentation. This will provide audio files from the prototype, show retreat space, prayer apps, and potential spots for future retreats. The third section will evaluate the seven benchmarks considering the proposed project. Lastly, the Appendix will provide the reader with a script for most of the elements of the retreat as well as the lectures of each session.

PRESENTATION OF PROJECT

Before the retreat begins, there are certain elements through which to think. The following are examples of items which were prepared in advance for the prototype retreat.

Food and Drink

The menu should be nice, but not so complicated that too much time is given to food preparation. It is important to find out if any participant has food allergies and health concerns. One of the participants attending the prototype retreat needed to be gluten free, and one of the participants is pre-diabetic. Here is a sample menu:

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks and Drinks
Eggs Spinach Sausage Biscuits and gravy Gluten-free Pancake mix	Varieties of Bread Sandwich meat Chips Fruit	Steaks Potatoes Vegetables Lasagna Salad mix	Chips and salsa Fruit Candy Favorite snack for everyone to share Favorite beer Wine Whiskey Gin Cocktail mixers

Group Dynamics

The ideal situation is not having staff from the same church. This may keep one or both from being completely honest about how things are going. If one of the goals is for a pastor to not be “on,” then it will be better to not have to worry about what is said in front of someone with whom they work. I am still thinking through having pastors from different denominations on the same retreat. While it is always good to hear from different traditions, I wonder if it is better for everyone to speak the same “theological language.”

Packing List

Warm clothes for fire pit
Toiletries
Bible and Journal

Favorite snack to share
Head lamp
Tobacco of choice (if so desired)

Thank-You Gift

It is a nice touch to provide a thoughtful gift for the participants as a way of saying thank you for coming. A leather-bound copy of *Hour by Hour* was given at the prototype retreat to help promote the use of The Daily Office.

Space

For the prototype, some of the participants had to share a room. In an ideal situation, each participant would have their own bedroom to have their own space. There needs to be great outdoor amenities. The AirBnB for the prototype retreat had a fire pit and an incredible view of the Salt Lake Valley. A fire pit is a must. There is something almost magical that happens sitting around a fire. There needs to be fun things to do: pool table, ping pong table, foosball, hot tub, swimming pool, basketball court, etc. The common space needs to be large enough for everyone to sit comfortably. The TV needs to have a way to connect to computer for videos, slides, etc.

Pre-Retreat Questionnaire

This will be sent out a few days before the retreat and has a couple of purposes. First, it puts the participant into a reflective mind-set and prepares them for some of the themes of the retreat. Second, it gives the leader an idea of how the participant is entering the space: tired, depressed, excited, limping in, etc. One of the participants from the prototype suggested the questionnaire could be used at the first meal of the retreat for guys to get to know one another a little better. There are only a few questions so as not to overwhelm the participant, but still provides helpful information. The following is a sample questionnaire:

Note: Try to answer questions 1-4 without reference to your family and ministry; at least as much as possible

1. How would you describe the state you are in coming into this retreat?
2. What do you most need from this retreat?
3. What was the best thing that happened to you this past year (or less depending on time between retreats)?

4. What was the hardest thing?
5. Answer questions 3 & 4, but within the context of family and ministry.

Content

One of the helpful criticisms from the prototype retreat was there was too much content and not enough time for reflection and discussion. This was true. Three lectures were given in a little over twelve hours time. On a three-day retreat, there would be one lecture a day with plenty of time for reflection and discussion. The following are the titles of the lectures given at the prototype retreat:

Session One: “Calvin and Emotional Intelligence or You Are Not Just A Theological Brain on a Stick”

Session Two: “Calvin & Silence or Sit Still and Shut Up”

Session Three: “Calvin and Pastoral Community or You Cannot Know Yourself By Yourself”

Schedule

Below is the schedule for the prototype retreat. The ideal retreat would be three full days with participants arriving anytime by 9PM the night before and leaving any time after breakfast on the fourth day. The schedule needs to be fully planned with plenty of room for flexibility. Below is the prototype schedule followed by an example of my ideal schedule. The prototype was only two nights. This made it much easier for pastors to get away during the middle of Advent. Four of the five participants want a three-day retreat next time. Three days give more time for silence, reflection, discussion, and play. Two days feels rushed and four full days is too long for pastors to get away.

Prototype Retreat: December 7th-9th, 2021**Day 1**

3:00-5:00 Arrive and Get Settled

6:00-7:00 Dinner

7:00-7:30 Evening Prayer

7:30-9:00 Session 1

9:00-?? Fire and Fellowship

Day 2

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-9:30 Morning Prayer

9:30-10:30 Session 2

10:30-12:00 Solitude and Reflection

12:00-1:00 Noon Prayer and Lunch

1:00-2:30 Session 3

2:30-3:30 Group Evaluation

3:30-6:30 Free Time

6:30-7:30 Dinner

7:30-8:00 Evening Prayer

8:00-?? Fire and Fellowship

Day 3

8:30-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-9:30 Morning Prayer

9:30-10:30 Solitude and Reflection

10:30-11:00 Pack Up

11:00-12:00 Lunch

Three Day Retreat Schedule

Arrive anytime before 9PM before the first full day

Day 1

8:00-9:00 Breakfast (this is a retreat; no need to get up too early)

9:00-9:30 Morning Prayer

9:30-10:00 Morning Session

10:00-12:00 Reflection and Discussion

12:00-1:30 Noon Prayer, Lunch, and Discuss Pre-Retreat Questionnaire

1:30-6:00 Free Time

6:00-7:00 Dinner

7:30-8:00 Evening Prayer

8:00-?? Fire and Fellowship

Day 2

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-9:30 Morning Prayer

9:30-10:00 Morning Session

10:00-12:00 Reflection and Discussion

12:00-1:00 Noon Prayer and Lunch

1:00-6:00 Free Time and One on One Appointments If Requested (I would make myself and/or other retreat leader available for counseling, discernment, prayer, etc. with retreat participants)

6:00-7:00 Dinner

7:30-8:00 Evening Prayer

8:00-?? Fire and Fellowship

Day 3

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-9:30 Morning Prayer

9:30-10:00 Morning Session

10:00-12:00 Reflection and Discussion

12:00-1:00 Noon Prayer and Lunch

1:00-6:00 Free Time and One and One Appointments If Requested

6:00-7:00 Dinner

7:30-8:00 Evening Prayer

8:00-?? Fire and Fellowship

Day 4

7:30-8:30 Breakfast, Pack-Up, and Depart

Plan for Free Time

On a retreat that requires a lot of emotional, spiritual, and relational energy, there is the need for time to rest and refresh. On a three-day retreat, there is plenty of time for naps, hikes, exercise, four-wheeling, axe-throwing, escape rooms, mountain biking, dirt-biking, snow shoeing, snowmobiling, or paddle-boarding. There is the need to play; to get outside, move the body, do something adventurous and life giving. Or, to simply take a nap. The place used for the prototype retreat had a pool table, foosball table, and basketball court. During the free time in the late afternoon and early evening, the participants played games, laughed so hard they cried, and had great conversations around the fire pit while smoking pipes and drinking cocktails.

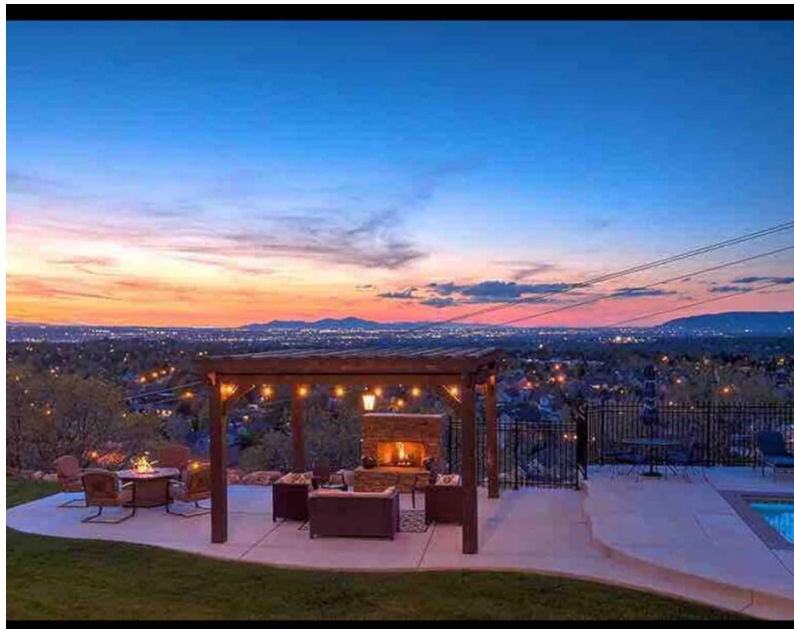
Retreat Evaluation

Other retreat leaders encouraged me to allow time for the evaluation to take place as a group discussion. This worked well for a few reasons. First, I was able to record it. It was helpful to go back and listen to the recording a couple of times and think through what was said. Second, discussion fosters good ideas and follow up questions from each participant. Third, everything is fresh in the participant's mind. Fourth, everyone gives feedback without the opportunity of skipping the written evaluation. Moving forward, however, I plan to implement group and individual evaluations. The anonymity of an individual evaluation frees the participant to be more forthright in their feedback. The following are the questions used during the prototype retreat:

- 1.What, if anything, do you hope to take with you from this retreat? New thoughts, practices, things to read, explore, etc?
- 2.What do you wish we had more time to do? What could be done without?
- 3.What is your honest feedback regarding the content? What was helpful? What was unhelpful, even disturbing? Where do I need to do more research?
- 4.Is this something to which you would invite others in ministry? Why or why not?
- 5.How many times a year (if any) would you be willing to attend a retreat?
- 6.Is this something you think your church would be willing to invest? Would your church/leadership consider giving at least \$500 a year toward a "retreat pot?" Why or why not?

MEDIA

Retreat Space



Fun & Games



Prayer Apps⁶

Morning Prayer

Evening Prayer

Night Prayer

U Lord, open our lips
**All and our mouth shall
 proclaim your praise.**

Your light springs up for the
 righteous

**All and all the peoples have
 seen your glory.**

**One or more of the
 following is said or sung:**

**this or another prayer of
 thanksgiving**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,
 king of the nations,
 to you be praise and glory for
 ever.

From the rising of the sun to its
 setting
 your name is proclaimed in all the
 world.

As the Sun of Righteousness
 dawns in our hearts
 anoint our lips with the seal of
 your Spirit

that we may witness to you

Midday Prayer

Draw us into your love, Christ
 Jesus : and deliver us from fear.

Lord, make me an instrument of
 your peace.
 Where there is hatred, let me
 bring love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 where there is sadness, joy.
 O Divine Master, grant that I may
 not
 so much seek to be consoled as to
 console,
 to be understood as to
 understand,
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive,
 it is in pardoning that we are
 pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born
 to eternal life.

Glory to the Father, and to the
 Son. and to the Holy Spirit.

[< Back](#) [Morning Prayer](#) 

Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and
 our neighbor.

Most merciful God,
 we confess that we have sinned
 against you
 in thought, word, and deed,
 by what we have done,
 and by what we have left undone.
 We have not loved you with our whole
 heart;
 we have not loved our neighbors as
 ourselves.
 We are truly sorry and we humbly
 repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
 have mercy on us and forgive us;
 that we may delight in your will,
 and walk in your ways,
 to the glory of your Name. Amen.

~~Almighty God have mercy on us~~

⁶ I shared the app link with each of the participants, and we prayed through them together for Morning, Noon, and Evening Prayer.

Future Retreat Locations: Moab, Utah; Big Sur, California; Bear Lake, Idaho



Audio Files⁷

[Retreat Lecture 1](#)

[Retreat Lecture 2](#)

[Retreat Lecture 3](#)

[Retreat Lecture 3 \(cont.\)](#)

[Retreat Feedback](#)

⁷ The script for these are found in Appendix E

ASSESSMENT

Quick disclaimer: It is important that one keep in mind how emotional health is not in the vocabulary of reformed pastors. We are more prone to focus on doctrine and behavior. There is very little discussion in seminary, and the ordination process is ninety five percent focused on correct theology. The idea of diving into family origins, self-care, emotional intelligence, etc. was such a foreign concept to me until my late 30s. Almost all the pastors here are in their early to mid 30s. If I get them to even start the process, I feel this project has been a success. So, what would “start the process” look like?

Benchmark #1: At least five pastors join a small group and read *Resilient Ministry, The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, or *Emotional Intelligence For Religious Leaders* over a one year time period

This is a very reachable goal for several reasons: First, Reformed pastors love to read books and gather more information. Second, each participant at the prototype retreat asked for more resources and was eager to learn more. Third, they also asked to have something to read before the next retreat for further discussion. Perhaps a book will be too much prior to a retreat, but I could send them book summaries, articles, or podcasts. Fourth, one of the participants at the prototype retreat said, “I am your audience: a typical PCA pastor who does not think about these things (EQ, spiritual formation, self-awareness, etc.). And while I may not be ready to cross the bridge, I am glad you brought me to the bridge, and I want to explore it a little more.” This pastor is young and curious and is willing to meet on a regular basis. Finally, one of these books could also be used for content discussions for our monthly pastors’ meetings. Several guys have asked for our time together to be centered around content. This, of course, supports my point that

our emphasis is on information. However, they are willing to receive more information regarding Emotional Intelligence.

Benchmark #2: Eighty percent of Utah pastors see the need to get away for spiritual and relational retreats as indicated by creating a budget item for retreats in their 2022 church budgets

Considering fifty percent of PCA pastors in Utah have committed their churches to give \$500-\$1000 to this project, I believe eighty percent is within reach. Furthermore, Mission Utah (Utah's church planting network) has committed to help fund the next retreat. The financial investment of local churches is an encouraging sign that pastors see the value of this project and want to support it.

Benchmark #3: At least one pastor decides to pursue counseling due to seeing the disconnect between his spiritual and emotional life

In the last four years I have seen one pastor resign due to moral failure, one pastor desperately needs a sabbatical, and one church lose all of its staff in just two months time due to relational conflict. The remaining pastors are tired and close to burn out. While these pastors are gifted and their churches are growing, I am concerned there is a disconnect between their emotional and spiritual health.

As I have spent significant time with each one of them, I often hear stories of trauma from their past, issues within their marriage, or patterns of over-function during their work week. When I ask how they plan to deal with such things, they are at a loss. "Oh, that is in the past," they say. "I am not being faithful if I am not working 60-70 hours a week." "I just need to do what the Bible says, and I'll be okay." If this project helps them to get below the surface of these

issues, then perhaps they will see their need for counseling as they learn they cannot heal and grow on their own.

One of the encouraging signs of this benchmark being met is some of the pastors are becoming more and more vulnerable with me. I am seeing guys who were content with “doing their own thing” a few years ago to now leading the charge on our monthly pastors’ gathering. Some are acknowledging their workaholism and are asking for help with their schedules. Of course, the issue is not their schedule, but at least they are asking for help. This retreat gives them the space to begin to think through how their emotional and spiritual life cannot be compartmentalized, and if they do not deal with issues from their past they will continue to run on fumes.

Benchmark #4: Five pastors sign up for a more extensive retreat in the Fall

Four of the five pastors who participated in the retreat prototype committed to a second retreat later this year. The fact they committed to a second one before the prototype was completed is very encouraging. The fifth pastor wants to do another retreat, but he has four young children, so he wanted to check with his wife before committing to anything else. Also, the Director of Loving Utah (a multi-denomination church planter support group) asked me to do retreats for nonPCA pastors.

Benchmark #5: Two to three pastors listen to Pete Scazzero’s *Emotionally Healthy Leader* podcast titled, “The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality” and discuss together

I have in mind those PCA pastors who are the most suspicious regarding Emotional Intelligence. Scazzero does a great job of introducing and defining Emotional Intelligence and lays out the importance of it within pastoral ministry in a non-threatening way. I am asking them to give up 30 minutes of their time and to give me an honest assessment of the podcast.

Depending on their feedback, this will help me think more about how to “Bridge the Gap” for pastors who are suspicious.

Benchmark #6: The Northern California Presbytery uses this project as part of the rationale for the hiring of a Presbytery Pastor who will help facilitate cohorts and pastoral retreats as well as provide resources for the soft skills of ministry

For a little over a year, I have been in discussion with the leaders of my presbytery regarding this role. In February we are meeting to go over a possible job description, funding, and other logistics. The plan is to make a proposal to the larger presbytery in May, and to receive presbytery approval in October. This is an important benchmark because retreats give pastors the time and space to think through subjects such as Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Formation, and Pastoral Communities. Those who participate in the retreats can begin the process of seeing the importance of these subjects.

Benchmark #7: PCA churches across the country invest in helping support these retreats as indicated by giving \$20,000 by the end of year

Per my launch plan I will contact over 20 churches and ask for \$1200. This is very doable. When I tell other pastors what I am doing, the usual response is, “How can I help?” Since most of these churches have large budgets, \$1200 should not be a problem. I talked to one of these pastors yesterday, and he said, “I think we can handle the whopping request of \$1200.” When we meet I will ask for more.

Milestone 6 - Project Launch Plan

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of pursuing this degree, I hoped I could be a help to PCA pastors within the unique ministry context of the state of Utah. The iteration process, while incredibly frustrating at times, has been a helpful and refining experience. The following is a roadmap for the pursuit of creating meaningful retreats for pastors. My prayer is these retreats will be a place and time for rest, refreshment, and the encouragement to persevere in pastoral ministry.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

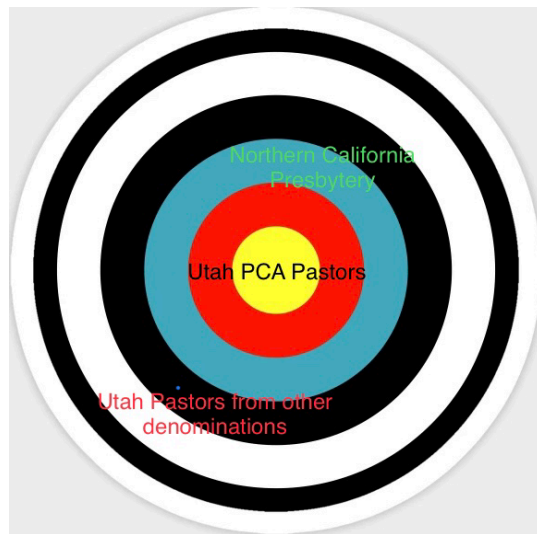
NPO Statement: There is a need to bridge the gap between Reformed Theology and the emotional, spiritual, and relational health of PCA pastors in the state of Utah.

Brief Description of the Project: I have created a 72-hour retreat often including but not limited to the following:

- Three to five content driven lectures on emotional intelligence, spiritual formation, pastoral communities, and self-care
- Guided times of solitude, reflection, and prayer
- Small group discussions
- Resting in nature
- Building community through story, fire pits, food and drink, and adventure

AUDIENCE

My primary audience consists of the nine Utah pastors in the PCA. Other potential participants are pastors from other denominations in Utah as well as other pastors in the Northern California Presbytery. The following illustrates my priorities:



Utah PCA: I have been engaging with PCA pastors on a regular basis throughout the iteration process. They have been vital amongst the stakeholders as they have given me valuable feedback all along the way. Before pursuing this degree, I was meeting with each one of them on a regular basis providing support, encouragement, and at times, counseling. In March of 2021, we began to meet as a group to cultivate relationships, pray for one another, and learn from one another. Both individual and group meetings are happening monthly. Several of the PCA pastors were able to participate in the prototype retreat in early December and are looking forward to the next one.

Northern California Presbytery: This is the regional body of PCA pastors, of which I am member that stretches from Utah, Northern California, and Hawaii. When I returned to Utah in 2017, some of the leaders approached me regarding the possibility of creating the position of a

“Pastor at Large” for the presbytery. This is a big step for our denomination because this is not a common position. Pastors in the PCA are not members of the churches they pastor. Instead, they are members of their regional presbytery. Our presbyteries, however, operate more like a church court instead of a local church body of believers. The presbytery is responsible for examining candidates for ordination, review church board minutes, and discipline of its members when necessary. There are also several committees that give reports on campus ministries, missionaries, discipleship initiatives, and General Assembly matters. The connection to this position and this project is the presbytery is asking me to help make the presbytery more relational and to give its members the space to cultivate their own well-being. In crafting a job description, one of the responsibilities would be to plan and implement a yearly retreat for the entire presbytery and smaller, regional retreats throughout the year. The goal is pastors begin to get to know one another and themselves in a way that is not centered around church business. We plan to make the proposal at our May meeting and finalize it in October. The presbytery meets three times a year, and I usually go the day before and leave the day after to spend time and cultivate relationships with different pastors.

Utah Pastors from Other Denominations: One of the participants at the prototype retreat was the executive director of an organization called Loving Utah. The organizations tag line is, “Survive, Thrive, Multiply.” Its goal is to come alongside Utah pastors with support, resources, and training opportunities. I have a good relationship with the director, and he has asked me to partner with this organization. When Loving Utah started, they hoped to do retreats, but they did not have anyone to plan and lead them. Loving Utah has a semi-annual conference in which over 100 pastors attend. The director has asked me to give a presentation at the next conference with

the hope of starting retreats for groups of 5-6 pastors at a time. We are meeting in a couple of weeks to discuss this further.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

February 3rd-5th: Northern California Presbytery meeting with administrative leaders to work on a “Pastor at Large” job description. We will also work on an annual retreat as well as smaller, regional retreats for Utah, Sacramento area, Bay area, Napa Valley area, and Hawaii.

Last Week in February: Host a catered dinner for Utah PCA pastors and their wives to lay out the vision for a revamped Mission Utah.⁸ Retreats are a big part of this new work.

March: Create brochure, website, and/or keynote presentation for fundraising purposes.

April: Create retreat follow-up plan. During the prototype, pastors asked for resources to think through things—podcasts, bibliography, articles, etc. Perhaps an annotated bibliography would be helpful.

April-End of Year: Fundraising. My goal is to raise \$20,000 a year to help supplement the cost of retreats.⁹ I plan to reach out to the following churches and will document the outcome in the following table.¹⁰

Church	Contact Information	First Contact	Follow Up	Amount Pledged
First Pres Augusta, GA				
LMPC Lookout Mtn., TN				

⁸ Mission Utah is a church planting network that started in 2005. Sixteen years later, there are 7 PCA churches with an eighth starting in May. Church planting has been “Phase One.” We are putting on a pause on church planting to move on to Phase Two: The health of the pastors and churches that have been planted.

⁹ Mission Utah is a 501(c)(3) organization that can receive these funds.

¹⁰ I have a significant relationship with each one of these churches. Some have supported me in the past. Some I attended and was on staff when I was in college and seminary. And some I served in some pastoral capacity. The majority, however, are those in which I have a strong enough relationship with someone on staff that it would not be surprising for them to receive a call from me regarding fund raising.

Mountain Fellowship Signal Mtn., TN				
Second Pres Memphis, TN				
Resurrection Brooklyn NY				
The Table LaFayette, CO				
Denver Pres. Denver, CO				
Redeemer Pres. Winston-Salem, NC				
Ebenezer Pres. Rock Hill, SC				
Trinity Pres. Charlottesville, VA				
Covenant Pres. St. Louis, MO				
Providence Pres. St. Louis, MO				
Pacific Crossroads Las Angeles, CA				
Grace Church Kentfield, CA				
Valley Springs Roseville, CA				
Canyon Creek San Ramon, CA				
Trinity Pres. San Luis Obispo, CA				
Grace Church Palo Alto, CA				
Covenant Paso Robles, CA				
Grace Woodlands Woodlands, TX				
Colleyville Pres. Colleyville, TX				

April-June: As part of the fundraising, I plan to meet with each elder board of the PCA churches in Utah. My goal is to raise \$3500-\$7000 (at least \$500 a church). When I reach out to the other churches, it will be vital for them to know that churches in Utah are investing in this as well.

Late May-Early June: Lead a retreat for the other PCA pastors that were not able to attend the prototype in December. The goal is for 3-5 pastors to attend, and to receive feedback for future retreats. Don Graham plans to be at this retreat to observe and give feedback.

Last Week In June: Attend retreat with Don Graham to observe how he leads.

Late September-Late October: Lead first regional presbytery retreat with the goal of 5-10 pastors attending. The Northern California is made up of churches in Utah, Hawaii, and from San Luis Obispo to Chico, California. I have split the presbytery up into five smaller regions: Utah, Hawaii, Central Coast, the Bay Area, and the Sacramento Valley area. I have been offered a cabin in the Sierra Mountains for this retreat, but it will depend on who is able to come. This area would be almost equidistant for the Bay and Sacramento areas.

Late September: Present retreat opportunities at Loving Utah Conference. The goal is that 5-10 pastors will sign up to receive more information.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The best feedback I received was at the end of the prototype retreat. It was a combination of informal and formal discussion centered around the following evaluation questions:¹¹

1. What, if anything, do you hope to take with you from this retreat? New thoughts, practices, things to read, explore, etc?
2. What do you wish we had more time to do? What could be done without?

¹¹ These questions were adapted from Ken VanVliet, Don Graham, Shane Sunn, and Chris Vogel. Men that lead various types of retreats throughout the country.

3. What is your honest feedback regarding the content? What was helpful? What was unhelpful, even disturbing? Where do I need to do more research?
4. Is this something to which you would invite other folks in ministry? Why or why not?
5. How many times a year (if any) would you be willing to attend a retreat?
6. Is this something you think your church would be willing to invest? Would your church/leadership consider giving at least \$500 a year toward a “retreat pot?” Why or why not?

Of course, the most obvious evaluation is if no one commits to participating to future retreats, or if I am unable to raise the funds. If no one wants to participate, I can find out why and make improvements based on their feedback. Other improvements will be based on the evaluation discussed toward the end of each retreat. For example, one of the suggestions made at the end of the prototype was to provide more time for individual reflection and group discussion. This will be a definite addition to the next retreat in the Spring.

A helpful comment regarding the lectures was that it might be better to focus on one area of content at a time. Since Emotional Intelligence is at the heart of where I want guys to focus, it will be helpful to give time solely to EQ at upcoming retreats. During the prototype retreat, there was a lot of content, but not enough time to process and reflect on new information. In the future, content sessions would look something like this: Thirty-minute lecture followed by a short break. This would be followed by at least an hour for individual reflection and pairing up with another participant. The content session would end with group discussion. Bringing in guest speakers is an option as well. Ken VanVliet, Don Graham, Chris Vogel, George Robertson, Joe Novenson, and Richard Winter would be possibilities. Each one of these men have led similar retreats. All

but Richard Winter¹² have given me some thoughts regarding these retreats. All have been vital in my thinking process. At the end of the retreat, the evaluation process could be mostly devoted to finding out how well the participants were able to grasp EQ and see its importance to pastoral ministry. If I were to give three, thirty-minute lectures they would look something like this:

- I. What Is Emotional Intelligence and Why It is Important
 - a. My own story
 - b. Definition
 - c. Emotional Maturity
 - i. Differentiation
 - ii. Pastoral health
 - d. Case Studies
 - e. Where do we see EQ in Jesus?
- II. The Bible and the Emotions
 - a. The Psalms (Calvin and Peterson on the emotions of the psalms)
 - b. Does God have emotions? (thinking through the “impassibility” of God)
 - c. Jesus
 - d. Qualification for elders (technical vs interpersonal skills)¹³
- III. Reformed Theology and Emotional Intelligence
 - a. Not de-emphasizing doctrine and the intellect, but putting greater emphasis on emotions as to move toward a more wholistic humanity

¹² Dr. Richard Winter is a retired psychiatrist, professor emeritus, and former director of the counseling program at Covenant Theological Seminary. Richard was my professor and counseling supervisor when I was a student. Studying for my Master of Arts in Counseling with Richard is where this path began.

¹³ Chris Vogel, “What is Emotional Intelligence,” accessed January 29, 2022, <https://ngpastorsapp.com/module/what-is-emotional-intelligence/>

- b. A different look at Calvin's two forms of knowledge
- c. For Calvin, expressing emotions is what it means to be human
- d. Emotions reveal what we most value
- e. Moving past symptoms and getting to the root of sin (how do we help our congregants do this if we are unwilling to do it ourselves?)

Appendix A: Milestone 1 – The NPO Charter

Personal Research Manifesto

In light of Nouwen and Shulz, I will utilize the following values and practices: a willingness to admit error, a willingness to listen with a view to learn and not argue, and a willingness to be open to how I impose my agenda.

NPO Statement

Considering the humanity of the pastor we have discovered a lack of self-awareness within the pastor which is caused by unrealistic inner and outer expectations placed on the pastor by himself and the congregation. If solved, it would mean a safe church, mentally healthy and wholistic pastors who are willing to take emotional and relational risks, more shared ministry, and healthy ways to express and respond to brokenness.

NPO Scope

I am narrowing the scope of my research to pastors in my current denomination, The Presbyterian Church in America. I do not anticipate there being much cost incurred due to the ease of being able to communicate over the phone and internet. I am also leaning toward honing in on men who are new to ministry. A working book title would be something like *Before It's Too Late: The Benefits of Self-Awareness in Pastoral Ministry*.

NPO Context

Practically speaking I hope my research will be a help to the Candidates and Credential and the Ministers and Churches Committees of The Northern California Presbytery of my denomination. I will be having conversations with PCA pastors from all across the country. The majority of the denomination, however, is geographically located in the Southeast. Conversations will be held with those across generational lines. Because the PCA only ordains men, I will be

primarily focused on them, but I hope to be able to speak to wives of pastors as well. I realize this limits the potential audience for this project, but I think it also helps stay narrow in my focus.

Root Causes

There were several root causes that were discussed during the Discovery Session and 1x1 interviews:

- Ignoring wounds from family of origin
- Ministering out of a false sense of self
- Unaware of personal limits—living under the pressure of trying to meet unrealistic expectations from the congregation and from the pastor himself
- Idolization of ministry
- Lack of true friendships—no support or place to share; no one to whom to open up
- Fear
- Misplaced identity
- Shame
- Desire to escape pain—pain in self and those under the pastor’s care
- Need to be needed
- Pressure to be “successful”
- Unresolved pain/trauma from the past and present
- Stigma of having mental health issues

Discovery Session Stakeholders

RL is a 70 year old missionary who has worked with several pastors as an administrative assistant and church bookkeeper. B&R L is an early thirties couple who have worked on church staffs and are currently leading a ministry to those in their early 20’s in Salt Lake. NW is a 31

year old seminary student and pastoral intern. DE is a mid 50's Director of a multi-denominational ministry that encourages and provides resources for church planters and established pastors. MB is a mid-thirties wife of a pastor and clinical therapist that specializes in trauma and shame. MP is also a mid-thirties wife of a pastor and mother of four. She and her husband just returned from a summer-long sabbatical.

One-on-One Interviews

- Rev. JN is a retired PCA pastor with over 40 years of pastoral experience. He has pastored churches in South Carolina and Tennessee.
- Rev. GR is a current pastor in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Prior to this he pastored in the PCA in Missouri and Georgia. He has over 30 years of experience.
- Rev. JA is the current pastor of a PCA church in Texas. He has over 10 years of pastoral experience.

Academic Resources

Here are few of the books that I am really excited about: *Tending Soul, Mind, and Body: The Art and Science of Spiritual Formation* by Todd Wilson, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than I.Q.* by Daniel Goleman, and *The Care of Souls: Cultivating A Pastor's Heart* by Harold Sinkbeil. Other authors include Pete Scazzero, Henri Nouwen, Eugene Peterson, Ed Stetzer, Basil Pennington, David Benner, Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, Ronald Rolheiser, Diane Langberg, and Dan Allender.

Appendix: Discovery Session and One-on-One Interviews Report

Discovery Session Description

I met with seven discovery stakeholders on October 24th from 6-9pm in the conference room of Missio Dei Church near downtown Salt Lake City. RL is a 70 year old missionary who has worked with several pastors as an administrative assistant and church bookkeeper. B&R L is an early thirties couple who have worked on church staffs and are currently leading the Fellows Initiative in Salt Lake. NW is a 31 year old seminary student and pastoral intern. DE is a mid 50's Director of a multi-denominational ministry that encourages and provides resources for church planters and established pastors. DE was a church planter/pastor before becoming the director of Loving Utah. MB a mid-thirties wife of a pastor and clinical therapist that specializes in trauma and shame. MP is also a mid-thirties wife of a pastor and mother of four. She and her husband just returned from a summer-long sabbatical. I would have loved to have had an elder from one of the local PCA churches, but none were available to meet at that time. I think it will be helpful to get the perspective of an elder considering they work closely with the pastor. I felt like I followed the Discovery Session protocol pretty well and it led to great discussions, and as far as I could tell, everyone seemed to feel they were heard. They were excited about my project, and encouraged me to continue in the direction I am headed.

Discovery Statement

When we got to the final statement, we had some difficulty try to capture everything we had discussed. The following is my attempt to summarize while remaining faithful to what was said. You can see what I mean in the appendix.

Considering the humanity of the pastor (audience) we have discovered a lack of self-awareness within the pastor(NPO) which is caused by unrealistic inner and outer expectations placed on the pastor by himself and the congregation. If solved, it would mean a safe church, mentally healthy and wholistic pastors, risky freedom, more shared ministry, and how to express and respond to brokenness.

I know this is awfully wordy, but it gives me a good place to start and some potentially good chapter headings.

Critical Insights from Discovery Session

One of the issues that came up was the reality of the potential conflict that could arise between congregants and their pastor. The question was raised, “What if the congregation does not want a pastor that is self-aware of their weaknesses and brokenness? What if they want a pastor that will continue to burn themselves out trying to meet their expectations?” I thought this was a really insightful question and one that I had simply taken for granted. The reality is church members oftentimes put their pastor on a pedestal, and it can be shocking for all the wrong reasons when they realize the pastor is every bit as human as they are. This insight got us thinking about the expectations that are placed on the pastor; both within and without. The congregation has in their mind what a pastor should be like. The pastor has in his mind what he should be like, but perhaps neither are realistic. The self-aware pastor knows his limits, but does the congregation want him to know his limits?

One-On-One Interview Discoveries

I interviewed three men with a combined ministry experience of almost 70 years. There were two major “Aha” moments that jumped out at me. First, I do not know the extent a pastor can grow in their self-awareness without experiencing some sort of personal crisis. All three

have face significant events in their lives that forced them to look at their inner world in a way that had not taken place. For one, his wife looked at him one day and said, “You love everyone and care about everyone except for me.” That conversation led to intense counseling. Another began to experience severe panic attacks that led him to look him at a traumatic experience when was a child. The last, as moderator of his presbytery, was thrown into the crisis of another church in which the pastor had committed serious sexual sin, abuse of power kind of stuff. The interviewee had never dealt with anything like that before and was forced to look at the issues in his own life.

The second “Aha” moment was when one of the pastors called me out for the way I was framing my research. He pointed out my tendency to view other pastors in our denomination in a negative way. He was right. So instead of thinking about this project in terms of “Pastors in the PCA tend to divorce their inner life from pastoral ministry;” he encouraged me to frame it more in a positive way: “What are some of the benefits of growing in self-knowledge while in pastoral ministry”—or something along these lines. This was really helpful advice and has actually made me more excited about this project.

Synthesis

After putting both exercises together, I still believe I am headed in the right direction with my research and was emboldened by the encouragement of everyone involved up to this point. As I look at the Discovery Session and the 1x1 interviews, one of the common threads is the need for the pastor to have someone in their life in which they completely confide in. Nouwen’s quote is spot on here: “I am convinced that priests and ministers...need a truly safe place for themselves. They need a place where they can share their deep pain and struggles with people who do not need them, but who can guide them ever deeper into the mysteries of God’s love.” In

the Discovery Session, the participants recognized the need for the pastor to have someone outside the congregation who truly knows them, limits and all. In the 1x1 interviews, each pastor is a part of a group of other pastors that provide friendship, accountability, and spiritual and emotional support. One of the interviewees said he needs others in his life because he is so prone to self-deception and justification and his friend group tells him who he really is.

Next Steps

With the above in mind, I think next steps include having more conversations regarding my NPO with other pastors within my denomination. All three interviewees gave me other men to talk to including those who have been defrocked because of various moral failure. It will be interesting to hear the how's and the why's of what led to their downfall. It will also be good to hear from those who are reaping the benefits of self-awareness, and to hear their stories as well.

Two action steps come to mind: start lining up conversations with both sets of men and to continue reading works that will help me in my questioning and the positive framing of the project.

Appendix B: Milestone 2 – NPO Topic Expertise Essay

INTRODUCTION

I made the mistake of checking my email on a Sunday morning. The subject line was “Resignation.” I read in shock to learn that my friend, my mentor, my pastor was stepping down due to moral failure. As more and more people learned of his resignation, the responses were always the same: “How did this happen?” “This is the last person I ever imagined doing something like this.” “Was there not someone in his life who knew what was going on?”

As I met with my friend over the next few months, he expressed similar questions: “How did it come to this?” “How did I not know I was capable of this?” “Why didn’t I tell someone what was happening before it was too late?” There is a common theme throughout these questions: lack of self-knowledge. Both in my friend and in those who asked the questions regarding his sin.

My friend’s resignation got me thinking a lot about self-knowledge, especially in the life of the pastor. Do pastors get so caught up in knowing the hearts of those in their congregation that they lose sight of what is happening in their own heart? Would my friend be less surprised by the sin of someone in his congregation than he was by his own? Are there reasons, especially in the Reformed understanding of pastoral ministry, why pastors can sometimes lose sight of knowing themselves?

SECTION 1: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he writes this famous passage: “Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two

parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.”¹⁴ Much has been written on this passage, but I cannot help but wonder if we have limited Calvin’s understanding of what it means to know the self. Do we limit it to a forensic understanding of the self? By this I mean, do we know ourselves only in light of knowing God as righteous, and humanity as unrighteous? Is this forensic understanding the only knowledge of self Calvin meant? It is certainly at least this. Calvin himself writes, “For as there exists in man something like a world of misery, and ever since we were stript of the divine attire our naked shame discloses an immense series of disgraceful properties every man, being stung by the consciousness of his own unhappiness, in this way necessarily obtains at least some knowledge of God.”¹⁵

I think it makes sense that we tend to limit Calvin to this understanding. From his unhappy demeanor in almost every painting, to his impeccable logic as a lawyer; of course we tend to limit Calvin’s understanding of knowledge of self to a forensic, intellectual way. In *Calvin’s Company of Pastors*, Scott Manetsch writes:

“The founding of Geneva’s Academy in 1559 represented an important milestone in Calvin’s efforts to elevate the theological competence of ministers both in Geneva and throughout the reformed world. Well over half—forty-seven out of eighty-three—the pastoral candidates admitted to the Company of Pastors between 1560 and 1609 are known to have received theological training at the Academy.”¹⁶

I have been a part of countless theological examinations of young ordinands, and theological competence is *the* issue. But was it the only issue for Calvin?

¹⁴ John Calvin. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (mobi) . MobileReference. Location 780, Kindle Edition.

¹⁵ John Calvin. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (mobi) . MobileReference. Kindle Location 785, Kindle Edition.

¹⁶ Scott Manetsch. *Calvin’s Company of Pastors Oxford*: Oxford Press, 2013), 49. Kindle Edition.

In the preface of *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, B.A. Garrish writes, “But faith is more than intellectual belief or assent. It is a matter of the heart rather than the brain—a matter, that is, of the whole person.”¹⁷ In introducing Calvin’s preface to his commentary on the Psalms, Elsie McKee writes, “[Calvin] demonstrates clearly that emotion is an important element in human life.”¹⁸ While Calvin certainly wanted intellectually competent ministers in Geneva, the intellect was not his only concern. As a matter of fact, “A second examination explored the candidate’s character, assessing his life and morals against the qualifications set forth by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.”¹⁹ This certainly is not an explicit argument for understanding Calvin’s knowledge of self as more than just intellectual, but it at least suggests that Calvin wanted more from his Genevan pastors than doctrinal precision.

It is impossible for the pastor to assess his life in light of the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 if he does not know himself in way that encompasses his whole person: emotions, character, personality, etc. Pete Scazzero puts it this way: “We lead more out of who we are than out of what we do, strategic or otherwise. If we fail to recognize that who we are on the inside informs every aspect of our leadership, we will do damage to ourselves and to those we lead.”²⁰ My pastoral friend did irreparable damage to himself, his wife, his children, and his church because he did not know who he was on the inside.

¹⁷ John Calvin. *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee (New York: Paulist Press, 2001) (Kindle Location 96). Kindle Edition.

¹⁸ John Calvin: *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee (New York: Paulist Press, 2001.) (Kindle Location 790). Kindle Edition.

¹⁹ Manetsch, 85. Kindle Edition.

²⁰ Peter Scazzero. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 48.

Does the Bible have anything to say regarding a knowledge of self that is more than forensic or intellectual? The following is a brief discussion of three, pertinent passages on the importance of self knowledge.

Textual Discussions

1 Timothy 3:1-7

This is one of the foundational passages in which Paul lays out the qualifications for those who would seek to be a pastor. It requires a pastor to be able to answer all sorts of questions about himself:

- Is he above reproach? (verse 2) Does he have integrity? Is he trustworthy?²¹
- What is his marriage like? What is his relationship to his children like? (verses 2,4)
- What is relationship to alcohol, money, and strangers? (verses 2,3)
- Can he teach? (verse 2)
- Is he not violent, but gentle? Is he quarrelsome? (verse 3)The Greek word for violent (plaktan) suggests someone who is ready for a fight: “a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person.”²² Does he need to be right? If so, what drives this? Is he an angry person? From where does this anger come?
- Regardless of being a new convert, does he struggle with pride or conceit? (verse 6) Does he know his motivation for wanting to become a pastor?

These are not merely intellectual questions. These are questions about the heart. Manetsch sums it up this way: “Ministers were expected to be humble and willing servants of Christ’s church

²¹ N.T. Wright. Paul For Everyone: The Pastoral Letters; 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press,2004), 29.

²² Thayer Greek Dictionary

rather than greedy mercenaries for hire. Accordingly, Calvin, Beza, and their colleagues were especially suspicious of candidates who displayed personal ambition or greed, or who appeared more concerned with self-advancement than providing pastoral care for the people of God.”²³

Theodore Beza goes as far as to choose godly character over the primacy of the intellect: “an unschooled, but godly artisan is ‘more worthy of handling the sword of the Word of God than even those who have studied their entire lives.’”²⁴

Matthew 3:13-4:9

This is such a vital passage because it gets at the heart of the identity of the pastor, and the temptation to define ministry by what he does, what he has, and what others think of him.²⁵ All three synoptic writers place Jesus’ baptism before his being sent out into the wilderness and the launching of his ministry. This is significant because it shows that Jesus had to know who he really was before starting out. As Jesus comes out of the water, the heavens open and hears the voice of his Father, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (3:17)

With this identity embedded into the depth of his being, he is sent out into the desert where Satan attacks the very core of who Jesus is. “*If* you are the son of God,” Satan begins the accusations. You’re not really the Beloved Son of God, Jesus. You are what you do: turn these stones into bread. (4:3) You’re not really the Beloved Son of God, Jesus. You are what others

²³ Manetsch, 81-82. Kindle Edition.

²⁴ Manetsch, 83. Kindle Edition.

²⁵ M. Basil Pennington. *True Self, False Self: Unmasking the Spirit Within*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 34ff. See also Henri Nouwen’s *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994) where Nouwen calls the the three temptations: To be relevant, to be spectacular, and to be powerful. Dale Bruner names them: sensationalism, spectacularism, and successism.

think of you: let people see angels catch you when you jump from the temple. (4:6) You're not really the Beloved Son of God, Jesus. You are what you have: just worship me and I will give you the kingdoms of this world. (4:9)

These are not temptations from which the local pastor is immune. The attacks come from Satan, church members, the pastor's inner voice: "You are what you do, Pastor: you better hit your sermon out of the park week in and week out. You are what others think of you, Pastor: you better figure out how to not let anyone down. You are what you have, Pastor: you better have grown this church within the next 12 months." If the pastor does not know his true identity and the way in which he could potentially minister out of his false self, then he will become fearful, lonely, and self-protected.²⁶

Psalm 51

Calvin called the Psalter, "'An anatomy of all the parts of the soul' for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which human minds are wont to be agitated."²⁷ Psalm 51 is a mirror in which the pastor can see clearly what can happen if he does not know himself well.

Verse three is the realization that David knows his transgression, and that his sin is ever before him. It is not until Nathan confronts David (2 Samuel 12:1-10) that he knows who he really is. Calvin warns those who think they may be above David's sin: "We do not imagine that David, during this interval, was so wholly deprived of the sense of religion as no longer to

²⁶ Pennington, 35-36.

²⁷ John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety ed. by Elsie Anne McKee (Kindle Locations 799-800). Kindle Edition.

acknowledge the supremacy of the Divine Being. In all probability he continued to pray daily, engaged in the acts of Divine worship, and aimed at conforming his life to the law of God... Well may we tremble to contemplate the fact, that so holy a prophet, and so excellent a king, should have sunk into such a condition!”²⁸ Derek Kidner points out that Nathan’s confrontation opens up a “new self-knowledge” within David, and that David comes to the stark realization his affair with Bathsheba “was no freak event: it was in his character...”²⁹ My friend did not wake up one morning and decide to have an affair. The capability to do this was in him, and he did not know it.

It was a grace for God to reveal to David the truth of his inward being in verse 6. The Hebrew word *tuchoth* brings to mind the image of dark clouds rolling away.³⁰ What God wants from David is for the dark, hidden spaces of his heart to be exposed so that real healing can begin. A broken, contrite heart (verse 17) does not happen unless David knows the reality of his inward being. If the pastor does not know that of which he is capable, then he is attempting to keep the hidden spaces hidden. Scazzero calls this an unwillingness to face the shadow: “You cannot change what you are unaware of. However, once we acknowledge our shadow—both its root causes and expressions—her power over us is diminished, if not broken. Exposing the shadow to the light of Jesus is the first, and most important, step we must take in order to receive this gift.”³¹

²⁸ John Calvin. Calvin’s Commentaries. Christian Classic Ethreal Library <https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom09/calcom09.xvii.html>

²⁹ Derek Kidner. Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 190.

³⁰ Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Dictionary

³¹ Scazzero, 66.

Analysis and Application

One of the aspects of my research is attempting to understand why so little emphasis is placed on the heart of the pastor, especially as they begin the process of ordination. Sure, someone may ask them if they struggle with pornography, but there is little follow up in regard as to *why* this is a struggle. We spend way more time examining their understanding of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and less time examining their hearts. What would this look like? Is there a quantitative way of finding out how well a potential candidate knows himself—the true self and not the false self? My hope is that I can show that Calvin cared about the heart of self-knowledge, and not just the intellect. *Calvin's Company of Pastors*, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, and even *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology* seem to suggest this was an important aspect of pastoral theology for Calvin, but it has been lost in the theological rigor of Calvin's writings.³² Calvin was first and foremost a spiritual leader and a pastor. And while "Calvin's theology is regarded as primarily intellectual, he himself put the greater weight on the heart; heart and head must go together but the heart is more important."³³ This primacy of the heart is what I hope to recapture for the Reformed pastor.

³² John Calvin. *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, Location 160, Kindle Edition.

³³ Calvin, Location 175, Kindle Edition.

Section 2: Topic History and Key Voices

“We would prefer that our next pastor not wear his emotions on his sleeve.” I was in the process of applying to Solo Pastor positions in my denomination, and this was one of the top requirements at one of the churches someone had suggested I apply. This was almost ten years ago, and even then this struck me as such a strange requirement. I am sure there is a historical precedent for this characteristic within the church, but even so, why prefer a pastor keep his emotions to himself?

It is possible this was one of only a handful of churches that would say something this explicit. However, it is not a stretch to say this is the ethos of my denomination. Consider the Ministerial Data Form. This is an information gathering form that potential pastors fill out for churches seeking Senior, Solo, or Assistant pastors. It asks for generic information such as education, age, marriage status, children, etc., but it also asks for self-evaluation in the following areas³⁴:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Preaching | • Church Administration |
| • Teaching | • Team Work |
| • Evangelism | • Counseling |
| • Discipleship | • Leadership Training |
| • Worship Leadership | • Recreational Activities |

It is not too difficult to see what is missing. There is nothing asking about the inner life of the pastor. I interviewed with several churches, and only one asked me anything regarding self-knowledge. I mentioned above that the ordination process is not different. A friend of mine was reflecting on this when he wrote, “It is tragic. I remember thinking, when I passed ordination,

³⁴ Other areas not listed: Christian Education, Pastoral Visitation, Stewardship, Diaconal Ministry, Youth Work, College and Career, Senior Citizens, Singles Ministry, Presbytery/General Assembly Involvement, Community Service. See Appendix 1 for the MDF I filled out.

how many areas of my life could be totally jacked up and no one would know. That's more likely to be the cause of problems in ministry. It's very rare for a PCA pastor to just turn into a heretic."³⁵ To be honest, I have no idea how to back this up scientifically, but I can name on one hand the number of pastors I know personally who left ministry because they no longer believed in Jesus. I can think of several that have left, or more often than not were asked to leave, due to lack of self-knowledge.

Brief Historical Overview

It is interesting to me that the importance of self-knowledge is not any more prevalent than it is within my denomination. Two of the most well-known quotes about self-knowledge come from the pens of probably the two most quoted theologians in the history of the PCA:

Augustine and Calvin.³⁶ According to Pete Scazzero, Calvin and Augustine were bookends to the volumes of church history:

Augustine wrote in *Confessions*, in AD 400, "How can you draw close to God when you are far from your own self?" He prayed: "Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know thee." Meister Eckhart, a Dominican writer from the thirteenth century, wrote, "No one can know God who does not first know himself." St. Teresa of Avila [16th Century] wrote in *The Way of Perfection*: "Almost all problems in the spiritual life stem from a lack of self-knowledge." John Calvin in 1530 wrote in his opening of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: "Our wisdom . . . consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other."³⁷

One should include the voice of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) when he writes, "So then in the beginning man loves God, not for God's sake, but for his own. It is something for him to *know how little* he can do by himself and how much by God's help, and in that knowledge to

³⁵ Rev. Bryce Hales, in a text conversation with the author on April 25, 2020.

³⁶ C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien are probably a distant third and fourth—at least in the books I have read and the sermons to which I have listened.

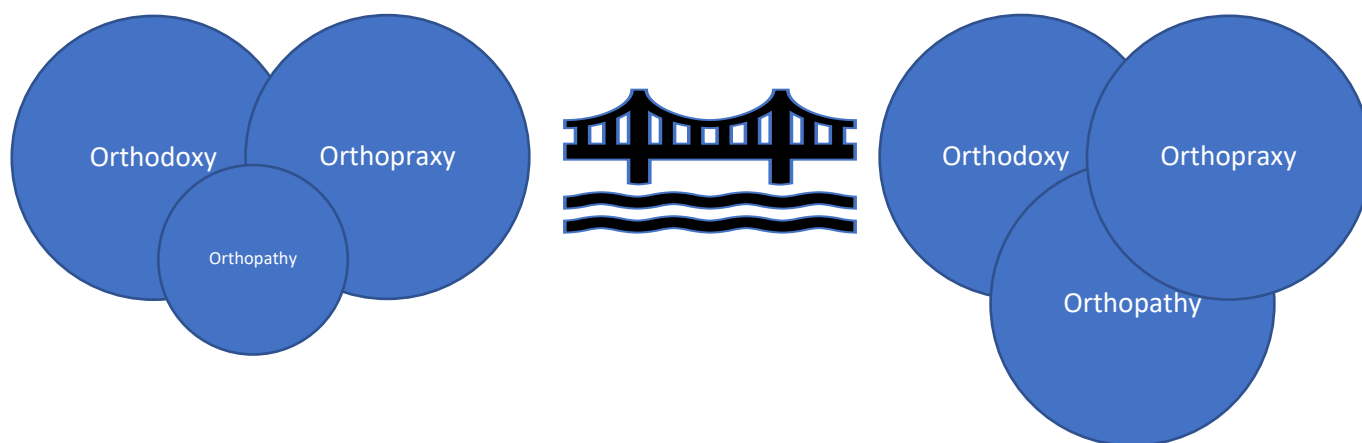
³⁷ Scazzero, 39.

order himself rightly towards God, his sure support.”³⁸ Add the voice of Ignatius of Loyola, a contemporary of Calvin, and one starts to hear the chorus of the importance of the inner life.

Scazzero says this about Ignatius:

It wasn't later until I learned of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, and his classic work on the importance of maintaining a balance between our reason (intellect) and feelings (heart). His development of a set of guidelines that respected the important place of emotions in discerning God's will has served believers for 450 years. He rightly emphasized the foundation of a complete commitment to do God's will, follow Scripture, and seek wise counsel. Yet, in addition, he provided excellent guidelines for sorting out how God speaks to us through the raw material of our emotions. The issue is not, by any means, to blindly follow our feelings, but to acknowledge them as a part of the way God communicates to us.³⁹

Comparing these quotes to the present-day ethos of the PCA, there seems to be a gap between the importance of emotions and the primacy of the intellect. I am not suggesting an either/or approach, but a both/and. I am referring to a more balanced approach to our orthodoxy (the intellect), orthopraxy (the behavior), and orthopathy (the emotions). See Figure 1.



Neither am I suggesting this gap happened in a vacuum. The primacy of the intellect has been part of our denomination's DNA from its beginning. In *Calvin's Company of Pastors*, Scott Manetsch points out that Calvin wanted to “elevate the theological competence of ministers both

³⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*, Kindle Edition, 27, emphasis added.

³⁹ Scazzero, 47-48.

in Geneva and throughout the reformed world,” and that by the end of the 16th Century “nearly one thousand five hundred students had studied at the *scholars publica*, including the sons of princes and magistrates, and many of Europe’s leading reformed pastors and theologians.”⁴⁰

After reading this I wrote in the margins, “Princeton makes sense to me now.” No one faults Calvin for this. He needed competent men who would be able to defend the Reformed faith, and starting *The Academy* was the natural result of this. The question I am asking is who is writing *now* with the hope of bridging the gap?

Key Voices

Tim Keller

It would be foolish to not start with the most well-known pastor in the PCA. Keller has been incredibly influential in urban church planting, preaching, and evangelism. But he has not written or communicated much in way of the inner life of the pastor. Recently, however, he has released two videos in which he speaks to the importance of it.

The first was at a breakout workshop for Together for the Gospel titled, “Calvin’s Company for Pastors Today.”⁴¹ Keller’s main point was that today’s pastors need more wholistic formation than simply learning how to become a better preacher. Three sub points stand out:

1. It takes far more than preaching to form people. Keller was referring both to lay people and preachers. Formation is more than simply getting the right information.
2. Calvin did not hate monastic practices. His fight was against what Keller called “Elite Monasticism”. Keller argues, pointing to Bolton’s *John Calvin: Life In God, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology*, that Calvin was wanting to

⁴⁰ Manetsch, 48-49.

⁴¹ Tim Keller, “Calvin’s Company for Pastors Today,” The Gospel Coalition, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/211581520>.

democratize monastic practice. Keller argues that Calvin was attempting to create an entire region that spent time in solitude, prayed and sang the Psalms, and sat under the preaching of the Word. Calvin was heavy-handed at times, for sure, but at the end of the day he was trying to create a city full of men and women who were lovers of Jesus.

3. Pastors need more intense, ongoing, spiritual formation than they are getting right now.

Keller even says he wished he would have spent more time working on his own formation, and now that he has stepped away from full time pastoral ministry, he is making definite plans to grow in this. Next to his comment on preaching, this was probably the most jaw-dropping statement he could have made. I was greatly encouraged he said this to so many pastors that wish to emulate him.

Keller's next communication on the subject came out just a few weeks ago. In this video, he is in his study wanting to encourage pastors to make sure their oxygen mask is on before they try to help others during the COVID-19 pandemic. "It does you no good to be sucking air when you are trying to help others."⁴² Keller points out that most of the burnout he sees in the lives of pastors is because they fail to take care of their own heart. The following are four principles in which the pastor puts on his oxygen mask first:

1. **Extraordinary Prayer:** Pastors are encouraged to follow Jesus in the way of taking the time to be in extended times of solitude. This is more than having a quiet time; it's a robust use of the means of grace, spiritual disciplines, and

⁴²Tim Keller, "A Message From Tim Keller: Resilience and Burnout," YouTube, April 6, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRoHSa9G88Q&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR02QmCy7GBIqqnskdIdN12Hk7hpTUIqHbKkv18scxfCkLG3JX2f8N7GqqY>

formative practices. Keller points out the more Jesus was “doing” ministry, the more he needed to be with his Father.

2. **Resilience Without Stoicism:** In summarizing 2 Corinthians 4:8ff, Keller says that Paul is not telling pastors to not show emotion, but instead there is permission to lament, to cry, and even to break down, trusting the work of Christ is what will pick us up. It is in the extraordinary prayer of the first principle where Jesus meets us in our weakness. The Psalms are such a great resource here because they teach us how to bring the raw emotion of humanity to God in prayer.
3. **Radical Refocusing:** During a crisis, the pastor needs to be willing to drop the “extras” of ministry and do only what the Bible prescribes. Question everything and be open to change in ministry.
4. **Gospel Resolve:** At some point you just “gut it out and do the next thing.” This last principle is harmful if the other three do not precede it. Keller is realistic and experienced enough to know that sometimes you just have to make that phone call, plan that meeting, and write that sermon. Sometimes there is no other way around it.

Granted, none of these are breaking new ground, but it is great that Keller tells his viewers how important it is they take the time to practice spiritual formation and to be honest about emotions—both with ourselves and with those we pastor.

Eugene Peterson

Peterson must be included because not only is he Presbyterian, he is one of the two most influential writers in my own pastoral ministry.⁴³ You do not get far into any of Peterson's works before recognizing how important the inner life of the pastor is to him. For example, in the first 15 pages of *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, Peterson writes, "The religious leader is the most untrustworthy of leaders: in no other station do we have so many opportunities for pride, for covetousness, for lust, or so many excellent disguises at hand to keep such ignobility from being found out and called to account."⁴⁴

There are several quotes and anecdotes I could use, but the one that first comes to mind is the story he tells of when he was a young church planter and he had to send in pastoral reports to his superiors.⁴⁵ Every month he had to report to his denomination executives how many pastoral calls he had made, a financial report of offerings, building plans, worship attendance, and committee activities. After the statistics he would write several pages of his understanding of God's presence in his life, areas of inadequacy that were revealing themselves in his ministry, and strengths and skills that seemed to be emerging.

After a few months of doing this, Peterson got the impression no one was reading the second part, the personal part, of his report. So he started making up stories about a slow slide into depression, a growing drinking problem, an affair, and peyote induced celebrations of the Eucharist. Month after month, Peterson and his wife would laugh and laugh at these embellished stories, but month after month there was no response from those who were responsible for his

⁴³ The other is Henri Nouwen, but I have decided not to include him in this essay because I am focusing on the voices in my own tradition. He has probably shaped me even more than Peterson, and his writings are always in the forefront of my mind while I work on this degree.

⁴⁴ Eugene Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 15.

⁴⁵ Peterson, 77-80.

spiritual and emotional health. Peterson writes: “The people who ordained me and took responsibility for my work were interested in financial reports, attendance graphs, program planning. But they were not interested in *me*.”⁴⁶

This is anecdotal, but not unheard of. When I made the decision to shut down a church plant in downtown Salt Lake, I never heard anything from the very people who had sent me to do that work in the first place. These examples at least give some support to the reality that the inner life of the pastor is not as important as the “success” of the ministry.

Pete Scazzero

In the next to last semester of seminary (Spring '05), I read a little book titled *The Emotionally Healthy Church*. It was the first time I began to see the importance of a healthy integration of the emotional and spiritual life. In 2003 Pete Scazzero wrote, “[Christians] may present themselves as spiritually mature, but something is terribly imbalanced about their spirituality...Many are supposedly ‘spiritually mature’ but remain infants, children, or teenagers emotionally. They demonstrate little ability to process anger, sadness, or hurt.”⁴⁷ He expounds on this in *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship* and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*.

His latest work, *Emotionally Healthy Leadership*, is most pertinent to this discussion. The theme of this book is this: “If we [as leaders] fail to recognize that who we are on the inside informs every aspect of our leadership, we will do damage to ourselves and to those we lead.”⁴⁸ From here he traces out four main ideas for growing in awareness of the inner life.

⁴⁶ Peterson, 80.

⁴⁷ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 17-18.

⁴⁸ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 48.

1. **Face Your Shadow:** The shadow is what Scazzero calls the “damaged, but mostly hidden version of who you are.”⁴⁹ The shadow reveals itself through sinful action or through more subtle needs (to be liked or to come through for everyone).
2. **Lead Out of Your Marriage or Singleness:** Scazzero takes issue with the default way leaders tend to understand marriage and singleness. For example, “Christian leaders need sound doctrine and a foundational theology, but they can’t be experts on everything. There are more essential things to know and understand than a theology of marriage, singleness, or sexuality.”⁵⁰ He calls this type of thinking a “disconnect” and challenges leaders to consider new ways in how to lead out of their singleness or marriage instead of making it a second tier issue. How we interact in our most vital relationships is a good barometer for how we are doing in our inner life.
3. **Slowing Down For Loving Union:** “We may have...a successful ministry. We may know a lot about God in our heads. But none of these things matter if we remain *unknown* by Christ. What matters is the genuine fruit that comes only out of a deep and surrendered connection with Jesus.”⁵¹ The idea is that leaders know how to do a lot for Jesus, but we struggle to simply be with Jesus.
4. **Practice Sabbath Delight:** In this chapter, Scazzero laments over how little time church leaders take to rest. A counselor friend tells him, “They can’t stop. If they stop they’ll die. They’re terrified...Something so much deeper is driving them;

⁴⁹ Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 55.

⁵⁰ Scazzero, 91.

⁵¹ Scazzero, 117.

they just have no idea what it is.”⁵² Taking the time to rest and be quiet leads the leader to pay more attention to what is happening in the inner life.

A counselor once told me that not paying attention to the inner life is like trying to drive with a piece of cardboard over the dashboard.⁵³ You do not know what gear you are in, how fast you are driving, how much gas you have in the tank, or if you need to change the oil. In his writings, Scazzero’s goal is to help leaders remove the cardboard from the dash so they can see what is happening in their inner life.

Zack Eswine

Zack is a Presbyterian pastor and an adjunct professor at Covenant Theological Seminary where he teaches homiletics. In 2015 he published a book titled *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy In Our Limitations Through A Daily Apprenticeship With Jesus*. This book is a breath of fresh air to a busy pastor. He graciously reminds the pastor that he cannot be everywhere, cannot fix everything, and cannot know everything. The third section of his book is called “Reshaping Our Inner Life” where the reader is forced to think through what drives the need to try and be everywhere, to try and fix everything, and to try to know everything. “We have held on to fixing, knowing, and being everywhere as fast and as famous as we can, like a toddler who can’t go a day without his blankie.”⁵⁴ By quieting our souls God brings healing and mending to our broken hearts.

⁵² Scazzero, 144.

⁵³ Dr. Sarah Turley in a conversation with the author on April 2, 2020.

⁵⁴ Zack Eswine, *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy In Our Limitations Through A Daily Apprenticeship With Jesus*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2015), 143.

Eswine has a voice worth listening to because he has been made aware of the issues of his own life. He sees the “beauty and arson” of those he has pastored (an elder and deacon resigning because of uncontrollable anger and a horrid affair), and in his own life after a failed marriage. Eswine is raw and beautiful when he writes, “The only thing large, famous, and fast about me, and much of my ministerial crowd is our brokenness.”⁵⁵

Tasha Chapman, Donald Guthrie, and Bob Burns⁵⁶

These three authors spent seven years researching questions such as: “So how do pastors pursue learning and growth? Where do pastoral couples receive mentoring and pastoral care? How do pastors stay current in our rapidly changing world?” They met with several pastors and their spouses for multi-day retreats they called Pastor Summits. *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* is the “summary and analysis” of those interviews.⁵⁷

Based on their research, there are five needed themes for Resilient Ministry: Spiritual Formation, Self-Care, Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Intelligence, and recognizing Marriage and Family Stressors. This is the first book written by those with a Reformed background to mention the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ). The authors define emotional intelligence as the “ability to manage [your] own emotions and to appropriately respond to the emotions of others.”⁵⁸ The authors acknowledge there is a difference between understanding EQ and putting it into practice, and suggest the need of growing in prayer and worship, exercise, and

⁵⁵ Eswine, 22.

⁵⁶ All three authors have ties to Covenant Theological Seminary. CTS is the official seminary of the PCA and is making strides in preparing new pastors for the emotional, relational, and spiritual toil of pastoral ministry. One practical way they are doing this is by requiring more counseling courses for their Master of Divinity students.

⁵⁷ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us Surviving and Thriving*, (Downers Grove IL: IVP Books, 2013), location 40, Kindle edition.

⁵⁸ Marcy Levy Shankman and Scott J. Allen, *Emotionally Intelligent Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008). Quoted in *Resilient Ministry*, location 1171, Kindle edition.

reflective work.⁵⁹ This is so important as it reflects the more wholistic view of humanity in the graphic above. Understanding and growing in emotional intelligence is one more way to bridge the gap.

Section 3: Synthesis and Conclusion

In what ways has the literature and scholarship you examined helped you to discover any areas of agreement or consensus?

I came into this project thinking there was not a lot out there in the Reformed community regarding the importance of the inner life of the pastor. Just looking back over the “Key Voices” section, it is encouraging to know that my presumptions were wrong. I will discuss below more of the gaps in my own reading that I need to examine. It was, however, encouraging to see that I have been wrong about Calvin. He very much cared about the emotions and passions of those he pastored. Not only that, *Calvin’s Company of Pastors* sheds very clear light on the way he cared about the hearts of those with whom he ministered in Geneva. Calvin’s concern was not just with the intellect. I would have never thought that before I started my research.

Writings on Pastoral Piety supported this idea as well. The introduction of his commentary of the Psalms describes a Calvin that very much cared about the inner life. Regarding the Psalms, which he saw as a mirror into the inner life, Calvin wrote, “Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which human minds are wont to be agitated.”⁶⁰ Calvin, I learned, was not the one dimensional, intellectual giant, but one who “deeply appreciated the beautiful gifts of God’s creation, including food and drink, music and flowers, and many other natural joys, which

⁵⁹ *Resilient Ministry*, location 1338, Kindle edition.

⁶⁰ *Pastoral Piety*, location 787-800, Kindle edition.

should be valued as God's good gifts and used with glad and serious stewardship.”⁶¹ I had never heard of *this* Calvin in college or seminary.

What are some of the ongoing tensions, disagreements, or pressure points in the topic literature?

One of the ongoing tensions I feel in my own research is how to demonstrate in more academic ways how we may have misconstrued Calvin's "knowledge of self." Calvin does not make it easy. As one continues to read the first section of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the reader finds the following:

we always seem to ourselves just, and upright, and wise, and holy, until we are convinced, by clear evidence, of our injustice, vileness, folly, and impurity... And since nothing appears within us or around us that is not tainted with very great impurity... the inference to be drawn is that men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.⁶²

It is difficult to read this and think Calvin meant anything less than a forensic understanding of "knowledge of self." Augustine does not do me any favors either when all he can write about is how awful it was for him to steal pears from a neighbor. This was one of the ways in which he knew himself. Writing this out makes me realize I need to spend more time with Augustine. I read *Confessions* several years back. I think it is time to dust it off. This leads me to the final question...

What are the gaps in the literature, missteps, and/or other scholarship problems or limitations?

I came across the following in the "notes" section of *Resilient Ministry*:

D.A. Carson posits that the negative attitude among Christians toward emotions comes from the influence of certain strands of Greek metaphysical thought. These views "insist that emotion is dangerous, treacherous, and often evil. Reason must be set against emotion, and vulnerability is a sign of weakness." D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 215... And John Frame explains, "Theologians have sometimes thought that emotions are unworthy of God...."

⁶¹ *Pastoral Piety*, location 366, Kindle edition.

⁶² *Institutes*, 1.2.1

Scripture ascribes many attitudes to God that are generally regarded as emotions ... [such as] God's compassion, tender mercy, patience, rejoicing, delight, pleasure, pity, love, wrath, and jealousy.... God, speaking in Scripture, regularly expresses emotion and appeals to the emotions of his hearers" (Frame, *The Doctrine of God* [Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R, 2002], pp. 609, 611). And B. B. Warfield expressed similar sentiments in his article "On the Emotional Life of Our Lord," in *The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 1950).⁶³

Carson?! Frame?! Warfield?! This is the starting outfield for the Reformed League All-Stars! I had no idea these guys had written anything on this subject. These will be writers that will help fill in the scholarship gap of those who have written on the importance of emotions in the Reformed world.

One last gap worth mentioning is the fact I did not use *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goldman in this paper. I read it, I loved it, and it will show up in future research, but I did not include it in this paper for the same reason I did not include Nouwen. There are great thoughts in it on self-awareness, the science of emotions, and the importance of emotions, and it has been incredibly helpful as I think of the need for pastors to grow in emotional intelligence. *Resilient Ministry* refers to it a good bit in its two chapters titled "Understanding Emotional Intelligence" and "Developing Emotional Intelligence."

This has been such an eye-opening essay to write, and can I even say I had fun writing it? There are a lot of great writers who have thought more deeply than I have on this subject, and I am thankful for the ways they have influenced me. I am very much looking forward to pursuing this topic more and more.

⁶³ *Resilient Ministry*, location 3459-3472, Kindle edition.

Appendix C: Milestone 3 – Design Workshop Report

This semester has been a combination of starts and stops that has led to significant tweaking of my NPO. The Design Workshop, informal conversations, and other readings have suggested my NPO from last year was too broad, and almost impossible to measure. By changing the focus to just the Northern California Presbytery and how the presbytery can pastor its pastors, I feel my NPO is both more helpful and measurable.

NPO Statement

My NPO has changed from “Reformed Pastors Divorce Self-Awareness From Spiritual Formation” to “How Does A Presbytery Pastor Its Pastors Well?”

NPO Scope and Constraints

In order to make the focus as specific as possible, I am thinking primarily about the men who are graduating from seminary and coming into the Northern California Presbytery for licensure and ordination.⁶⁴ Within a month of joining the presbytery, each man will join a cohort with other guys in their region and stage of life. This cohort will meet monthly for two years. Each cohort will be encouraged to meet at each presbytery meeting beyond the first two years. I do not see any substantial costs, as one of the practical goals of my project is to make pastoring pastors part of the quarterly meetings our presbytery already holds. Most church budgets include time, travel, and financing for presbytery meetings.

NPO Context

On average, the 35 churches of the presbytery welcome 12-15 men a year. They are typically coming in to church plant or to come on staff with an established church as a youth pastor, assistant pastor, or senior pastor. Being that we are all in the same geographical region of the same denomination, we share a similar cultural and theological context. This does not mean, however, we share similar philosophies of ministry or what being pastored by the presbytery might look like. This will be part of the prototyping process that will hopefully provide a way

⁶⁴Typically a seminary graduate has already “come under care” of his local presbytery while in seminary. In order for him to become a member of the Northern California Presbytery, he must have a call from a specific congregation. He then begins the process of meeting the requirements for licensure and ordination in the Presbyterian Church in America. These requirements include a written and oral examination in the following areas: English Bible, Theology, and Church History (for licensure); and Sacraments and Church Government (for Ordination). This is usually a two-step process that requires hours of study, and hours of examination. Notice there is nothing about the character or spiritual formation of the one coming into the presbytery, and thus the problem.

forward with which those in the presbytery will be comfortable. This makes it incredibly important that I define my terms very carefully.⁶⁵

Root Causes

From last year's Stakeholder Workshop and this year's Design Workshop, it was discovered that the Root Cause for pastors failing morally is due to the lack of concern for the spiritual and emotional health of the pastor. There is too much assumption the pastor is healthy: "He's a pastor for crying out loud!" In the PCA, we consider a pastor healthy if his doctrine and behavior are correct, but we pay little attention to his inner world. Part of the problem rests on the local presbytery. There is very little interest in the pastor's character, marriage, or emotional health. The result is a very articulate and theologically insightful man whose definition of successful ministry comes out of his false self. David Benner defines the false self as, "...*our* strategy for meeting our basic needs for love, survival, power and control."⁶⁶ Ministry then comes out of his sense of right belief and right behavior, rather than from who he is in Christ.

Definition of 'Done'

Younger pastors will be motivated to pay attention to the life long process of pursuing the balanced life of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy within their pastoral ministry. This can be measured by their vitality, longevity, faithfulness (to both church and family), knowing limits, and pastoral fruitfulness.

Three Big Ideas

1. Create A Presbytery Cohort

⁶⁵ Terms such as "Contemplation, Spiritual Formation, and Emotional Health" could raise some eyebrows. But if I use words like "Mediation, Sanctification, and Leadership Principles," they might be a little easier to swallow. Weird, I know, but this is the Reformed world I live in.

⁶⁶David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 75-76. Emphasis mine.

2. Create A More Relational Presbytery
3. Create the Position of Presbytery Pastor

3 Napkin Pitches

- Create A Presbytery Cohort
 - Big Idea: To create groups of 3-5 pastors that would talk less about theology and best practices, and more about their heart issues. The books mentioned above will serve as springboards to think through and how to grow in Spiritual Formation, Self Care, Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Intelligence, Marriage and Family Stressors, and Ministry Leadership.
 - Audience: This would be intended for guys that are recent seminary graduates (1-2 years out).
 - NPO: This would create opportunities for the guys in the presbytery to begin to pastor one another.
 - Benefit: Pastors in the presbytery would not struggle as much with isolation. I would benefit in creating something that has been life changing to me in my own ministry.
 - Approach: Form one group of 3-5 pastors that will meet once a month from January to April in order to discuss one of the books mentioned above. Depending on the book they pick, a chapter or chapters will be read beforehand and discussed at each meeting. I will facilitate the meetings.
 - Risks: Some guys would rather continue being a “Lone Ranger” in ministry, and not want to be a part of the cohort. Some guys will not see their need for it. Some will feel like it is “one more thing to do.”

- Assumptions/Hypotheses to Test: Will this be attractive enough so that 2-3 more groups will be formed by October 2021?
- Benchmarks of Success: One group of 3-5 participants is formed and have met at least three times by the end of April. I will create an evaluation form ask the participants to fill out in order to help me think about how to move forward.
- Other Approaches: There is a ministry called NXTGEN Pastors that helps presbyteries create these sorts of cohorts. I am not doing anything novel because I do not want to reinvent the wheel. However, there are only a handful of presbyteries that are participating because this ministry is new and unknown.
- Create A More Relational Presbytery
 - Big Idea: We want to explore the possibility of restructuring our meetings so that the “business” portions are done online in order to give space on Fridays and Saturdays to the relational and emotional care of our pastors.
 - Audience: This would be intended for all members of the Northern California Presbytery.
 - NPO: Spiritual and emotional health will not be an emphasis if we only operate as an ecclesiastical court.
 - Benefit: The presbytery benefits from it because the meetings would be something to which people look forward. I benefit from growing in relationship with other pastors in my region.
 - Approach: Most presbytery meetings are not life giving. If we reduce the business aspects of it, we can spend more time together relationally. In order for this to happen, we would need to do more business via Zoom.

- Risks: There might be those who will be uncomfortable with making decisions via Zoom instead of it being face to face. There is some debate, and a lot of voting that takes place.
 - Assumptions/Hypotheses to Test: Can we figure out a way to have more informal/relational time together as a presbytery?
 - Benchmarks of success: There are two pastors in Utah who feel like “fish out of water” at our presbytery meetings. If the two of them begin to connect relationally with other pastors in the presbytery, then we are moving in the right direction.
 - Other Approaches: I talked to two veteran pastors in another part of the country, and they were asking the same question. Is anyone doing this? I think what sets this part of the NPO apart is that presbyteries are not looked at as being healthy and life-giving. We want to change that. We want our meetings to be something the guys are looking forward to.
- Create A Presbytery Pastor
 - Big Idea: This would be someone who has the experience, time, and space to treat those in the presbytery like he would those in a congregation.
 - Audience: This would be intended for all the members of the Northern California Presbytery, their families, and their churches.
 - NPO: The problem is there is no one to provide pastoral care to the members of the Northern California Presbytery.

- Benefit: The members of the presbytery would have pastoral support. I benefit from knowing that maybe this will help younger pastors know they have support.
- Approach: This is novel because this is not typically how PCA presbyteries work. They are more of an ecclesiastical court than a relational entity.
- Risks: Some guys might be suspicious of an informal leader of the presbytery. They might see it as an “extra office” or some sort of other nonsense.
- Assumptions/Hypotheses to Test: Will the presbytery buy in to having this kind of role? Namely, will they be willing to help support this position financially?
- Benchmarks of Success: Pastors in the presbytery know there is at least one person with whom they are safe and do not have to be “on” as a pastor.
- Other Approaches: The other approaches are known as Anglican or Roman Catholic where there are bishops.

Design Workshop Stakeholders

- RP: Pastor, church planter, contrarian of the group
- RB: Pastor, chairman of Candidates and Credentials Committee
- MP: Pastor, church planter, elder statesman of pastors in Utah
- BC: Pastor, theologian
- LL: Pastor, former Chairman of Mission to North America Committee
- PS: Pastor, church planter, member of Ministers and Churches Committee
- RM; Pastor, church planter, former moderator of the presbytery

One-On-One Interviews

- PD: Retired seminary professor of spiritual formation, church planter, director of church planting for his presbytery

- CV: Pastor, church planter, director of NXTGEN Pastors, director of church planting network in his presbytery
- RC: Pastor, church planter, denominational leader

Annotated Bibliography

The following resources have helped me formulate arguments for the need, practical and innovative ways forward, and biblical and theological insights.

Thompson, Greg. "I Will Seek Him Who My Soul Loves: Cultivating Habits of Love." Covenant Theological Seminary Fall Preaching Lectures, St. Louis, MO, September 2015.

Dr. Thompson (PhD., University of Virginia) is an important voice in my denomination. He became the senior pastor of a large congregation in Charlottesville, VA at the young age of 31. The pastor that preceded him was removed from his position because of a drug addiction that he fed by robbing congregants' home. Dr. Thompson gave this lecture to Covenant Seminary (from which I graduated in 2005) noting the need for pastors to pay attention to their inner world rather than simply how well they preached or their theological precision. As the Sr. Pastor of a larger church, he began to model his leadership after that of an Abbot of a monastery rather than the CEO of a small business. In this he is modeling the potential success of pastoral cohorts. One of my favorite quotes from this lecture is, "the preacher should not be asking 'what am I going to say this week,' but 'what am I becoming?'"

Van Vliet, Ken. "The Identification of and Solution to Commonly Held Evangelical Beliefs and Perspectives That Create Barriers to Spiritual Formation" (2019). *Doctor of Ministry*. 299.
<https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/299>

In his dissertation, Dr. Van Vliet argues there are three major barriers to the average Evangelical in regards to her spiritual formation. What he calls "A Truncated Gospel: An Angry

God, Aiming for Heaven, Missing Earth, and Distorted Discipleship.”⁶⁷ This is an important work because these barriers are not just for the average Evangelical. They are barriers to several in my presbytery; especially those who limit Christian discipleship to right behavior and right belief.⁶⁸ Presbyterians are notorious for the focus on right belief, and Dr. Van Vliet paves a path for the encouragement of the need for a resource that takes into account ‘the whole person and how the various parts of the person affect the other parts and therefore the whole.’⁶⁹ This helps me to think about how to encourage the pastors in my presbytery to not just focus on how they can dot their “doctrinal I’s” and cross their “theological T’s,” but the overall health of their entire being.

West, John Lee, Roy M. Oswald, and Nadyne Guzman. *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders*. New York: Bowman & Littlefield, 2018.

The phrase emotional intelligence (EQ) has deservedly garnered much attention since Daniel Goleman’s work, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.⁷⁰ The authors of *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders* take Goleman’s groundbreaking work, and narrow its focus to “religious leaders who bear the emotional and spiritual burdens of others...because no other professional venue requires a person to manage as many emotional and

⁶⁷Ken Van Vliet, “The Identification of and Solution to Commonly Held Evangelical Beliefs and Perspectives That Create Barriers to Spiritual Formation” (Doctor of Ministry Dissertation: Portland Seminary, 2019), 3-23.

<https://digital commons.georgefox.edu/dmin/299>

⁶⁸Van Vliet, 20-23.

⁶⁹Van Vliet, 30-31.

⁷⁰Daniel Goldman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995.)

spiritual burdens as are demanded by religious leadership.”⁷¹ With all three authors having pastoral or chaplaincy experience, they understand and can relate to the emotional demands of pastoral ministry. The goal of the book is to help religious leaders learn to “process [their] feelings and to address the emotions of others constructively.”⁷²

Appendix: Design Workshop Description

The design workshop was conducted on November 10, 2020 via Zoom from 10AM-12PM Mountains Standard Time. Before meeting I sent the following request to those who would participate:

Hey fellas! As most of you know, I started a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation at Portland Seminary last year. It has been nothing short of life-changing, and I am excited about my course work and the research side of things.

Being in my second year, I am at that point to where I need to narrow and refine my research, and I need your voices to help me to that end. One of my projects for this semester is to enlist a group of stakeholders (folks who could potentially benefit from my research) in order to get their input on my research thus far and to think about what to do next. Basically I need to surround myself with people way smarter than I am, and then take credit for their thoughts 🙄

So what do I need from you? I need about a half day on Zoom (unfortunately) any time before Thanksgiving from at least 5-7 of you. We would meet as a group, and during that time I’ll catch you up to speed on what I’m thinking, what research I have done thus far, and then hear from you as a group as to whether or not I am heading in the right direction, what am I not thinking about, and what would be most helpful—especially what would be most helpful for the Northern California Presbytery.

So, if you love Jesus at all and care at least a little bit about His Bride, you’ll help me. Let me know if you are at all interested, and we’ll go from there.

As one can tell from the email, these are guys that I know well and were eager to help me with my research. Those who were present are all pastors in the Northern California Presbytery. All except one has led either the Ministers and Churches Committee, the Candidates and Credentials

⁷¹John Lee West, Roy M. Oswald, and Nadyne Guzman, *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders* (New York: Bowman & Littlefield, 2018), 19. Kindle Edition.

⁷²Ibid, 18.

Committee, or the Mission to North America Committee. One of them is the current moderator of the Presbytery. My main agenda was to have them “dream big” in answering the question, “How Can Our Presbytery Pastor Its Pastors?” I adapted *Gamestorming’s* 3-12-3 Brainstorm Game⁷³ and turned into 5-15-5. I asked them to individually answer my main question for five minutes; writing everything down that came into their head. I then split them into one group of three and one group of four. They spent 15 minutes brainstorming together, and then reported to the group. The next fifteen minutes were spent narrowing everyone’s ideas into eight main categories. From there we voted on the top three that we wanted to pitch as napkin ideas.

Overall, I felt the meeting went really well. If I could do it all over again I would have scheduled two different times, but getting all of these guys in one place for two hours was already like herding cats. So on a scale of 1-5, I would give it a four. I would give it a five if we could have spent more time together. I give it this high a number because we came up with really good, practical ideas of how we can pastor pastors in our presbytery. Guys are excited about the possibilities, and are excited about moving forward with some of the prototypes.

⁷³ Dave Gray, Sunni Brown, and James Macanutf. *Gamestorming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers*(Beijing: O’Reilly), Location 1253. Kindle.

Design Workshop Documentation

Whiteboard[2]-01

Pastor for pastor

- Stephen Baldwin
- Formalizing my role
- spearheading group with SR. member of each cohort
- other presbyteries?/other denominations
- Paul Hahn
- how do we empower and resource the pastors we already have? solo role, no other committee—spreading it out

Cohort

- take out candidates sermon and have a good one as part of worship
- pick Ross' brain
- MNA working with NextGen
- Is this valuable and will they commit?
- Build expectation for those coming in
- introduce cohort with idea of all being stressed
- what about those who are already in cohort

Relational Presbytery

- dialogue with each committee chair to see what kind of time could be freed up
- preliminary business online
- featuring stories of ruling elders taking care of pastors
- taking the time to build trust
- one to two overnights in order to "feast" together

Whiteboard[2]-01

-a pastor for pastors

- retired pastor—respect and years of experience, street cred
- part of a cohort—meet monthly and annual three day retreat
- help churches understand how to take care of pastors
- help congregation help pastor
- recenter on faithfulness and not necessarily on "success and sessions as well
- care for emotional and spiritual life for the pastor—servant care/counselor for pastor and wife
- understand resources available
- retreat centers, beach houses, etc.
- "Bishop" for care
- financial counseling
- holding each other accountable instead of session
- time to do it/restructure presbytery to make this happen/ come in Wednesday and do business on Friday
- one meeting a year for spousal care

each cohort would have a "pastor"

- bishop/pastor to pastors/official role paid for 10 days a year/ regional bishops & mentors
- training elders and teaching how and why to care for pastors
- a CIA safe house
- business online as much as possible to leave time for cohorts
- testimonies/stories of grace for pastors instead of crash and burn
- curriculum for emotional healthiness—someone comes in and preaches so that pastor can focus on emotional health
- expect/mandate RBI counseling at least once a year—starts with candidates coming in and handed off to churches and minister for ongoing look at emotional health
- presbtery online private forum

-setting tone with C&C is vital

- we want right answers, but not just right answers/how can we love you and get to know you

1. pastor for pastors
2. making pres. more relational
3. cohort 3
4. teaching sessions 1
5. EHS curriculum and giving pastors time to focus
6. designated getaway location
7. RBI counseling 1
8. congregational training on pastoral success

The notes on the left are the results from brainstorming. The notes on the right include grouping them into eight categories. From there we voted on the top three: Making the Presbytery More Relational, Having A Designated Pastor for the Presbytery, and Establishing Cohorts. I also uploaded a brief Keynote presentation to Google classroom so that one can get an idea of how I directed things.

Post Workshop Message

Fellas, I wanted to thank you again for taking the time out of your busy schedules to help me think through the Opportunity of NPO (Need, Problem, or Opportunity). I think we have the great opportunity to think through how to best pastor the pastors of the Northern California Presbytery. We have lost too many men to sexual sin because they felt isolated and unsafe within our own presbytery. We also agreed there was a degree of a lack of self-awareness that led to their downfall as well. As we brainstormed in asking the question, “How Does A Presbytery Pastor Its Pastors Well?” we landed on three big ideas that we would like to pursue.

1. Making the Presbytery More Relational: We recognized there was not enough time given to relationships during our quarterly meetings. We want to explore the possibility of restructuring our meetings so that the “business” portions are done online in order to give space on Fridays and Saturdays to the relational and emotional care of our pastors. This would include time for cohorts, a focus on spiritual and emotional health, and resources that could educate Ruling Elders in how to best care for their pastors.
2. A Presbytery Wide Pastor: We recognized the need to resource someone who has the time and space to treat the presbytery like his congregation. We want someone who has the experience and respect of those in the presbytery. Someone who is safe, known, and has the “street cred” that would be attractive for our pastors to be vulnerable. The presbytery pastor would be someone who plans presbytery-wide retreats, provides counseling resources, and oversees the organization of cohorts.
3. Presbytery Cohorts: We recognized the need for each pastor to be in a cohort for mutual encouragement, accountability, and not pastoring out of isolation. We mentioned briefly the possibility of the MNA committee working with NextGen Ministries in order to help

us think through how this would work in a practical way. The idea would be to have 3-5 guys in a group that would be led by one “Sr. presbyter”—someone who has been in ministry for a while. Each senior member of the group would then give feedback to the Presbytery Pastor so he could have an idea of trending struggles and other issues.

What are some potential benchmarks so that we know we are moving in the right direction? I would envision the following: 1.) Each presbytery meeting does a little more business online than the one before. I think it is important to make incremental changes so that folks can respond to change at a rate they can absorb. 2.) We pitch the idea of a presbytery pastor to the entire presbytery in the next one or two meetings. They need to have this on their radar so they can start thinking about the “Who” and the “How.” 3.) We start putting those who are coming under care in “strongly encouraged” cohorts. And by “strongly encouraged”, I mean making it as mandated as we possibly can. This is where we start if we want to begin to introduce the concept of “Being in a cohort is part of what it means to be in the Northern California Presbytery.”

I hope this gives a clear picture of our work. I would love to hear from you what I am leaving out, thoughts you have had since our zoom meeting, and areas in which I should do further research. Thank you again for your help in all of this!

One-On-One Interviews Documentation

I did a poor job of interview documentation. I did not take a ton of notes on two of the three. On the third I did not take any notes at all because I was too busy focused on the leader of one particular ministry as he took me through his website: <https://ngpastors.com>

This website is research “gold” because this ministry is doing a lot of what I am interested in. We even talked about the the possibility of starting cohorts here in Utah in the near future. The second interview was with a former seminary professor from Covenant Seminary (where I attended) who taught spiritual formation classes. The third interview was with a veteran pastor/church planter who is one of our denominational leaders. See interview notes below.

12:40 PM Wed Dec 9

Seminary Professor

Phil D. - article on FCA website

Chris V. - soft skills

Ted Powers

→ MNA & meter of Church Planting

→ spiritual formation
leadership development
emotional intelligence
cultural intelligence
mental wellness

- always hearing from guys 3-5 years out of class wondering what to do
- wishing they would have paid more attention to his spiritual formation class → trying to get them to see aspect of knowing self
- important to know personality in order to then know your self
- lead what kind of church you will plant
- proper cohorts & experience of them

* need for "Bishops" in presbytery but so incredibly difficult w/ many presbyteries are set up

→ esp those in fast pastorate

12:12 PM Wed Dec 9

Untitled (Draft)

who does this well? Aversion of leadership

Need of accountability

Make a decision to either be a parent or a healthy life giving community.

→ never have experienced this

→ mentoring & experiencing

Don't try to be everything for everyone - encourage guys to go get it.

Keep it bound on the gospel - vulnerability

Attempt to play a role vs personal responsibility

Getting to have session skin in the game.

* All of this has to be organic.

No means of evaluating emotional health

Older - never confessed

Younger - all have therapists

→ cohorts

Posters have to light the path

Fly of the fathers

- like it's a mirror to others

Appendix D: Milestone 4 – Prototype Iteration Report

Prototype #1:

- **Prototype Description:** Reflections on the Emotional and Spiritual Well Being of PCA Pastors in the Unique Ministry Context of Utah
- **Goldilocks Quality Strategy:** A Keynote proposal that summarizes the need for Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Formation in the life of a pastor
- **Research Question:** How can I help PCA pastors in Utah grow in their understanding of the importance of their own emotional intelligence?
- **Assessment Benchmark:** Will 3-5 pastors be willing to get together on a monthly basis in order to encourage one another in this area?
- **Prototype Participant Demographic Description:** Six PCA pastors aged 31-52 with a combined 24 years of pastoral ministry in Utah.
- **Summarize What You Learned:** Giving the majority of the time to the topic of Emotional Intelligence is what worked the best. I am glad I did this because this is what ended up being most important to the guys who were present. I was wrong to have assumed that I would have to convince them why this was important. This subject very much mattered to the participants, and they were thankful I am going to put this in written form.
- **What Was Your Important Discovery:** I need to work hard at making this as practical I can for the pastors that are here. It is one thing to think about this and to be made aware of its importance, but how can I make this most useful for Utah pastors?

Prototype #2

- **Prototype Description:** Preparing a job description for a new position in our presbytery titled Director of Presbytery Development or Director of Presbytery Care
- **Goldilocks Quality Strategy:** the Ministers and Churches Committee (M&C) thinks it is good enough to present to the entire presbytery
- **Research Question:** What are the practical implications of having someone focused on the pastoral needs for those in the Northern California Presbytery?
- **Assessment Benchmark:** Will the M&C Committee make a recommendation to bring about the formal position of Director of Presbytery Development/Care and will the presbytery votes to approve it
- **Prototype Participant Demographic Description:** Five members of the Ministers and Churches Committee of the Northern California Presbytery aged early 30's to mid 50's. All of the members present are ordained pastors in the Presbyterian Church in America.
- **Summarized What You Learned:** Presenting a detailed job description of what this position could look like was incredibly helpful. We have thrown around a lot of ideas in the past, so having something more concrete was useful for these guys as it gave them a better idea of what this position could look like. If I could have done it all over again, I would have made my Keynote presentation a little more spiffy. I think it would have captured their attention and imagination a little more. You will be able to see what I mean when you compare the presentations in Google Classroom.
- **What Was Your Important Discovery:** One thing that requires more thinking is how will I bridge the gap between the Conservatives and Progressives within the Presbytery.

This is important because one of the practical outcomes of the position is creating cohorts. Will guys on different theological sides of the aisle be willing to trust and learn from one another?

Most Viable Prototype

Through the prototyping process, I have learned Prototype #1 is the most viable. Not only is it the most viable, but I am the most excited about it. It will also be a big help in increasing my skill set if I were take on the role of Director of Presbytery Development/Care. To make the aspect of my NPO even more specific, Dr. Park-Hearn has encouraged me to move forward with a manual of sorts entitled *Reflections on the Emotional and Spiritual Well Being of PCA Pastors In the Unique Ministry Context of Utah*. While the time constraints will prohibit writing an entire book, I am going to write at least a chapter on the importance of Emotional Intelligence for pastors. The hope is that it will be a tool for both the PCA pastors that are already here as well as those who may come to Utah after seminary. My research and writing focus will be on Emotional Intelligence for pastors: What Is It; Why It Is Important; The Bible and Emotions (at least a survey); What Are The Practical Applications including the connection between lack of emotional health and burnout, immorality, and even suicide.

Appendix: Prototype 1

- **Recruiting Screener:**
 - Invite—My NPO audience are all pastors in the Presbyterian Church in America who live and minister in the state of Utah. Their age range is early thirties to early fifties with ministerial experience from one to fifteen years
 - Exclude—Youth ministry intern at one of the churches that has not completed undergraduate studies. I will also exclude other church leaders.
 - Interview Questions
 - What are some areas in which you would want to grow as a pastor?
 - How would meeting with other pastors encourage you?
 - Would you be willing to meet on a monthly basis for prayer, mutual encouragement, and to learn from other pastors?
 - If you could discuss one book with other pastors, what would it be?
 - How would you define Emotional Intelligence, and do you think it is important regarding pastoral ministry? Why or why not?
 - What would you most hope for in participating in a cohort?
 - Have you ever been a part of a pastoral cohort? What went well? What could have been done better?
 - What kind of value, if any, do you see being part of a group where you do not have to prove anything?
- **Interview Script**
 - What are your initial thoughts and reactions?
 - What kind of glaring holes are you seeing in my thinking?
 - What was most helpful?
 - What needs more research and deeper thinking?
- **Documentation**
 - See Keynote attachments in Google classroom

- Interview and Observation Notes

Reflections on Emotional & Spiritual Well Being...

If I ever present this given, try to do away w/ all the "ums." At least listening to it, it is pretty damn distracting.

It is the mercy of God that makes us aware of our skewed emotional awareness. In the context we need to love one another enough to demand that we are honest w/ each other.

Here are the people you are going to encounter & not only do you need to aware of your own stuff, but you have to help them see it as well.

* It would be helpful to come up w/ a way that would help pastors vet out staff, leaders, ruling elders, etc.

One of the good things is the recognition that we put too much emphasis on orthodoxy. "This is what we're missing" - the emotional aspect.

* This is great stuff, but how do we use this stuff. So vulnerability has to start w/ the leaders. - the members, the pastors.

North looking @ Wes' questions of
"why are Reformed folks skeptical of this kind
of stuff?"

How do we define health? How do we
evaluate it?

By being weak in one of the three things
or imbalances of all three. We can believe we
are qualified for ministry simply on orthodoxy.
We are ~~only~~ as healthy as our weakest
point.

Do you know how the folks in your
congregation experience you?

"We like Jesus ^{eyes} teaching folks, but we don't
particularly like Jesus sleeping."

I actually sound like I know what I'm talking
about.

Am I really describing the environment of the
make-up of current Ultra PCA guys? What
else is going on - not necessarily just
this. * Need to follow up w/ JS on this!

What are some of glaring holes?

Most helpful or needs more thought?

Why does Utah need a more "truly fit" ministry presence?

What do our people need to survive?

How do we deal w/image? How do deal w/a limited emotional tool kit?

One of the things that will be helpful is to come up w/some sort of questions, evaluation form, etc. for guys coming into Utah/Presbytery.

Appendix: Prototype #2

- **Recruiting Screener**

- Include—Members of the Ministers & Churches Committee and other senior leaders of the presbytery including current moderator, chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee, chairman of the Mission to North America Committee, and the chairman of the Discipleship Committee
- Exclude—Other members of the presbytery
- Interview Questions:
 - Do you see this as an important position? Why or why not?
 - What are a couple of your biggest hesitations regarding the position of Presbytery Pastor? What would you be most excited?
 - Do you think this could be a formal call, or do you see it as an addition to something else that is already being done?
 - What are five characteristics you would look for someone who took on this position?
 - What are some of the weaknesses of our presbytery, and how do you think this position could strengthen some of them?
 - What are some of the “must haves” on the job description for this position?
 - Who do you think benefits the most from this position: those under care/interns, younger pastors, experience pastors?

- **Interview Script**

- What are your initial, unedited reactions? The good, the bad, and the ugly?
- Where would like to see more clarification?
- What aspects were important to you? Not important?
- Where would you like to see more research?
- What are some potential objections from the presbytery?
- What questions do you want to ask of me?

- **Documentation**

- See Keynote presentation in Google classroom

- **Interview and Observation Notes**

- See below

Pres. Proposal

- those under care falling cracks
- need person/committee

Challenges - geography

how do we integrate retreats/forums by
legislatively, financially?

- how do we work w/ regional cohorts?

Next Pres.

- how to insure sustainability?

what if I am replaced?
sustainable benchmarks?

- Operating Expenses

↳ how do we know this
is working

- Finances - objectives

- bridge the gap w/ consensus

- Budget

↳ I like it
push through the skepticism

Retreats

sample schedule that can transition to pres. meetings

The Bamboo Center

Pres Reports

Anecdotal Stories

Appendix E: Milestone 5 – Project Appendix Documentation

Retreat Script [(brackets)indicate commentary, thought process, or anything else not specifically said at retreat]

First Evening

Introduction to Session One

Thank you so much for taking the time to be a part of this retreat. My prayer is this will be a restful and refreshing time of learning, reflection, and play. Tonight will be the first of three sessions in which we will think through Emotional Intelligence, the discipline of Silence, and the necessity of Pastoral Community. As we move through them, you will see the way in which they intersect. Let me start by sharing briefly why I am doing this.

Within six months of moving back to Utah, my friend and mentor resigned from ministry due to sexual sin. As we spent time together afterward, one of the questions I would often hear him ask is, “How did I get here?” He had been a successful church planter, a seasoned pastor others wanted to emulate, and a dear friend to so many. This question has haunted me for some time because he did not wake up one morning and decide to have an affair. It had been a long time in the making, but he was unaware of what was happening in his own heart. It made me ask the question, “Am I aware of what is happening in *my* heart?” This sent me down the path of studying Emotional Intelligence and the need for self awareness.

I started to think through my own story and my pastoral training in Reformed theology and came to the conclusion that paying attention to emotions is not an emphasis for a PCA pastor. I am especially concerned for those who pastor in Utah because of its unique challenges that can lead to exhaustion and burnout. I wanted to present what I have been studying in a way

in which was not merely providing information, but to provide the space to be quiet, rest, reflect, and learn from one another.

So here we are. In this first session I want to do a couple of things. I want to introduce Emotional Intelligence and its importance for pastoral ministry. Some of you may be a little suspicious of this subject; so the second thing I want to do is show that John Calvin was just as concerned for the emotional life as much as he was the intellect. Ready? Here we go...

Lecture One: Calvin and Emotions or You Are More Than a Theological Brain on a Stick

POEM

“Words That Should Be Shouted”

Shit. Fuck. Damn.

These are words I can say. These are words that are fitting. These are words that describe. What I feel.

They are not evil words.

That should not be spoken. These are words.

That should be shouted.

At football games.

At basketball games.

At carpool lines.

At grocery stores.

At restaurants.

At holiday gatherings.

Shit. Fuck. Damn.⁷⁴

This was written by a dear friend of mine who lost her husband earlier this summer.

Words do not capture the depth of grief and heartache in which she has experienced, but this poem gives you a good idea of what she is going through. Is this an okay way for Christians to speak? Does God accept the weight of her emotions? Does this poem make you uncomfortable? Have you ever felt this deeply? Does Scripture give us permission to feel this deeply?

SCRIPTURE

⁷⁴ Jennifer Sanders, “Words That Should Be Shouted.” A poem shared with the author via text on November 24, 2021.

Just some examples:

Individuals

Even before the Fall, Adam and Eve enjoy one another and experience a great freedom of knowing one another and being known. Gen. 2

“We were naked and afraid...” Gen. 3

“Cain was angry, and his face fell.” Gen 4

“And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah .” 2 Samuel 6

“For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place that the LORD will choose, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.” Deut. 16 Throughout the Old Testament feasts, there is the command to be joyful because of what God has done and who he is.

The disciples in the boat are both afraid and doubt Jesus’ goodness. Mk. 4

To be angry is not a sin, but Paul warns us not to sin in the midst of our anger. Eph. 4

The Psalms

Eugene Peterson says about the Psalms:

“we learn language by being spoken to. We are plunged at birth into a sea of language. We swim in words. We are soaked in nouns and verbs. Gradually we realize that some of these words are directed to us - personally targeted words that name, love, and comfort. Then slowly, syllable by syllable, we acquire the capacity to answer: mama, papa, bottle, blanket, yes, no. Not one of these words was a first word. Hundreds of thousands of words, for days and weeks and months, were spoken to us before we began to answer, to speak our own words. All speech is answering speech. We were all spoken to before we spoke...Everything that a person can possibly feel, experience, and say is brought into expression before God in the Psalms.” Peterson goes on to say the Psalms teach us how to speak back to God in our fear, doubt, anger, confusion, joy, happiness, hopes, etc.⁷⁵

Calvin called the Psalter, “‘An anatomy of all the parts of the soul’ for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather,

⁷⁵ Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), chap. 2, Kindle.

the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which human minds are wont to be agitated.”⁷⁶

“Be angry and do not sin...” Psalm 4

“who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Ps. 103

“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?” Ps. 13

“...my companions have become darkness.” Ps. 88 The fact that “darkness” is the last word in Hebrew gives the reader the sense that the Psalmist feels as though the darkness has won. In Psalm 88, the church learns to feel the depth of the darkness without having to make everything okay.

God/Jesus

“But the Lord was angry with me because of you...” Deut. 3

“You shall say to them this word, ‘Let my eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease...” Jer. 14

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them...” Is. 63

“When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled...Jesus wept.” Jn. 11

While there is no mention of the Gospels of Jesus laughing, I think it is a safe speculation to say that Jesus did indeed laugh. To laugh, have joy, express happiness is part of what it means

⁷⁶ John Calvin: *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), Section III Kindle.

to be human. If we are to say that Jesus was fully human, then surely he experienced these emotions as well.

I am aware of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the statement, “There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions...”⁷⁷ I am also aware of the anthropomorphic argument that is used of God so that we can understand him to a certain degree. But the impassibility of God does not have to mean that God is devoid of emotions. And it should go without saying that Jesus had emotions.⁷⁸ He weeps. He gets angry. He has compassion. He moves toward people out of the depth of his being?⁷⁹ Is at least possible that we, as Reformed pastors, have been ignoring a vital aspect of our humanity for way too long? What if we paid as much attention to our emotions as we do to our intellect?

Emotional Intelligence

Are you suspicious of the phrase? Can emotions be trusted? “The heart is deceitful above all things,” Jeremiah says. Can our emotions tell us anything? Can they reveal to us what we value? It is a fair statement to say that PCA pastors trust more in their intellect than in their emotions. We emphasize doctrine over heart. Duty over desire. This does not mean that emotions are nonexistent in PCA pastors, it simply means we emphasize one over the other. Let me define some terms before we get into the importance of EQ. I should also add I realize this is new

⁷⁷ John Macpherson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), II.1, Kindle.

⁷⁸ Amos Winarto Oei, “The Impassible God Who ‘Cried,’” *themelios*, 44, issue, no. 2, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/the-impassible-god-who-cried/> In the abstract Oei writes, “God is impassible but not unemotional.”

⁷⁹ The Greek word is *splanchnizomai* which refers to being moved with pity and compassion. The noun *splanchnon* is the entrails or bowels. See Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 18:27

material for some of you, and it is going to take more than one lecture and retreat for you to have the time to process all of this. This is just an introduction, but I do hope it will peak your interest.

[How do we know if we are paying attention to emotional health? In *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Pete Scazzero gives 10 diagnostics.⁸⁰ They are incredibly helpful for pastors because we tend to assess how well we are doing individually by how successful our ministry is at any given time or on our outward behavior. These diagnostics require you to dig a little deeper. I will give you some time to reflect on these after this session.

- **Using God to run from God**
- **Ignoring anger, sadness, and fear**
- **Dying to the wrong things**
- **Denying the impact of the past on the present**
- **Dividing life into “secular” and “sacred” compartments**
- **Doing for God instead of being with God**
- **Spiritualizing away conflict**
- **Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure**
- **Living without limits**
- **Judging other people’s spiritual journey]⁸¹**

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the “ability to monitor one’s own and other people’s emotions, to differentiate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior...Put simply, EQ can help us to process

⁸⁰ Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It’s Impossible to be Spiritually Mature While Remaining Emotionally Immature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), chapter 1, Kindle.

⁸¹ I added this after the retreat in light of some of the feedback I received. Giving some practical ways in which this affects pastoral ministry at the beginning helps give weight to its importance.

our feelings and to address the emotions of others constructively.”⁸² Emotional Intelligence gets us to pay attention to our feelings at any given moment instead of simply ignoring them and acting as though they are not there. This is not something that we either “get” or “do not get.” Diane Chandler calls it a process: “The process of understanding, expressing and reflecting on our feelings, passions, and desires in productive ways in order to reflect the image and character of Christ and come to terms with past hurts, wounds and bondages that stymie emotional freedom.”⁸³ **[It is all too easy to operate out of unmet needs, or needs of which we are unaware. EQ helps us become aware of these needs and the root from which they stem.**

Henri Nouwen writes:

“I became deeply aware that a lot of my actions, a lot of the things I was doing came forth out of my needs, and my needs quite were related to deep, deep hurts that somewhere were hidden far away in my own history. I had a need for affection. A need for attention. A need for popularity. A need for power. And somewhere those needs were deeply rooted in my life and came forth out of moments when I might have been rejected, with or without the knowledge of those who did so.”⁸⁴

When we ignore these past hurts and wounds my counselor describes it as trying to drive with cardboard over our dashboard. We do not know how fast we are going, if we are running out of gas, or if the check-engine light is on. In not paying attention to important information, we can quickly run off the road injuring ourselves and others. An inappropriate text, an angry outburst at a staff member, a passive-aggressive comment to your spouse or children, late night internet searches, a few more hours at the office, or one drink too many are clues that point us to

⁸² John Lee West and Roy M. Oswald and Nadyne Guzman, *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 18, Kindle.

⁸³ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 20, Kindle.

⁸⁴ Henri Nouwen, *Community*, ed. Stephen Lazarus (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2021), 47.

the reality that perhaps we are not processing, reflecting, or listening to our emotions, passions, desires, etc.

When I was a young, solo pastor I got a call from an elder to let me know his son had just tried to commit suicide. On the way to the hospital I felt this huge knot in my stomach begin to emerge. I was afraid, uncertain, and incredibly anxious. What did I have to offer? What was I going to say? At the time, I knew nothing of EQ, so I did not take the time to ask myself, “What makes me feel like I have to have something good to say?” “What makes me feel like it is up to me to bring peace and hope to this family?” What makes me feel like I have to show my worth as a pastor in how I deal with this situation?” By the time I got to the hospital, the Spirit had grabbed my own heart and calmed me down quite a bit. But imagine what it would have been like for this family if I show up anxious and I am not aware of it. How does this help them? How much of a burden do I add to an already difficult situation? EQ helps me become aware of what is happening in me, and the impact it can have on others. Very few professions require “a person to manage as many emotional and spiritual burdens as are demanded by religious leadership” and if we do not learn healthy skills to manage these emotions than the weight of these burdens can become crushing.⁸⁵ If we do not grow in EQ, then these crushing burdens take on a life of their own which leads to the draining of our emotional and spiritual energy which can quickly lead to burnout and exhaustion.⁸⁶

Now of course there are two sides to this. We can become Stoic in that emotions are merely barriers that stand in our way to what needs to get done. (Imagine I walk into the hospital showing no emotion and how harmful that can be.) We have a sermon to write, a person to meet

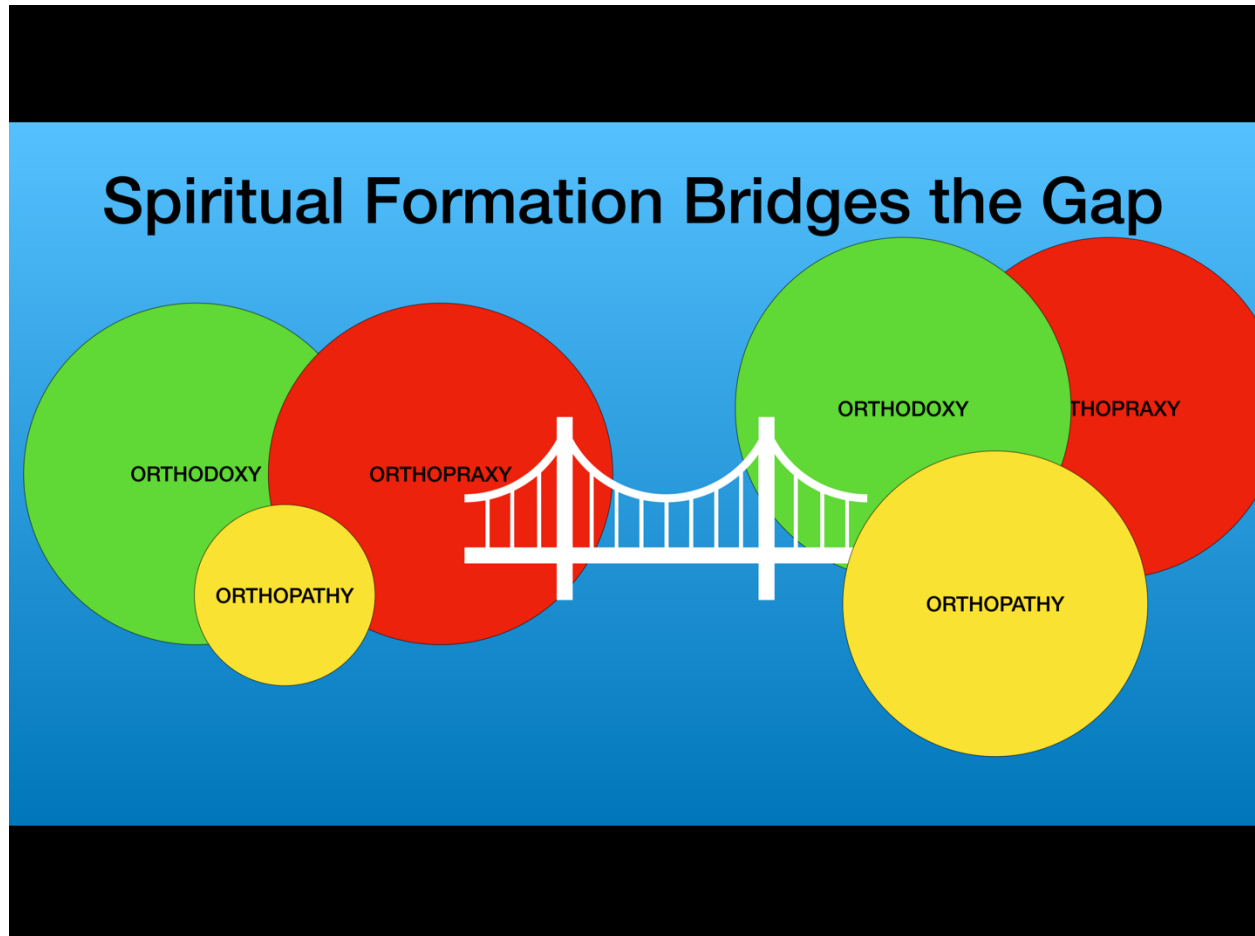
⁸⁵ West, 19.

⁸⁶ West, 64.

with, and a budget to balance. We do not have the time to pay attention to what is going on inside of us. I can be depressed or angry, but who cares? I need to get stuff done. Or we can become so consumed by them they end up controlling us instead of us acknowledging them and using them to help us see what is important. The result is that we are simply reacting to others without realizing how we are impacting them. We have to be careful that we do not become compartmentalized creatures in that we put one aspect of our humanity over another. Orthodoxy (beliefs and intellect), orthopraxy (behavior), and orthopathy (emotions) are all equally important.⁸⁷ I want to continue to point out I have no desire to de-emphasize the importance of orthodoxy; but rather strengthen the emphasis of orthopathy. (See figure 2).⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Kyle Fedler, “Calvin’s Burning Heart: Calvin and the Stoics on the Emotions” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Fall 2002, Volume 22, 139 and 135.

⁸⁸ Adapted from MaryKate Morse, “What Is Spiritual Formation” (lecture, Portland Theological Seminary, Cannon Beach, OR, February 26, 2020.)



Allow me to pause here and suggest why this is important. In Edwin Friedman's *A Failure of Nerve*, he argues the most important aspect of leadership is to learn how to become, what he calls, a nonanxious presence. It is the ability to not instantly react to how others express their emotions. You become differentiated enough to not take on what they are feeling in any given moment, but are still present to their critique, anger, sadness, etc. When the angry congregant comes to you, you do not become angry at them. When the porn addict confesses his or her sin, you are not surprised. To be differentiated is to be aware of what is happening in them and in you at the same time. The less anxious you are, the less anxious they become. This is important because Friedman argues that leadership is about the presence and being of the leader

and not technique, and that “all leadership begins with the management of one’s own health.”⁸⁹

[For the Reformed pastor, I would add right doctrine to technique. The congregant who is struggling needs the presence of Jesus in you, not just correct doctrine. “We are not the healers, we are not the reconcilers, we are not the givers of life. We are sinful, broken vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for. The mystery of ministry is that we have been chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited, and unconditional love of God.”⁹⁰]

In a fascinating book called *A General Theory of Love*, the authors point out what is called limbic resonance. Limbic resonance is defined as “a symphony of mutual exchange and internal adaptation whereby two mammals become attuned to each other’s inner states.”⁹¹ In other words, our emotions feed off one another. It is why a baby will react to a mother’s facial features—which are expression emotion. It is why I feel anxious when I can tell that a speaker is anxious; why I get angry and defensive when my wife is angry with me. It is why my heart races when someone is walking toward me with whom I do not want to interact. Our amygdala fires up and we simply *react*. Learning how to differentiate yourself and be a non-anxious presences requires that you learn how not to quickly react, but to slowly respond.

Think about the times someone comes to you and says, “I got nothing out of that sermon. As a matter of fact I strongly disagree when you said...” Or how about when someone says, “Why are we still wearing masks in our worship service?! It makes no

⁸⁹ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 2007), 4, 59, 234.

⁹⁰ Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994), 43-44.

⁹¹ Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 72, Kindle.

sense!” Or “You need to be more direct about mask-wearing. I saw John Smith leave his mask down for several minutes after communion.” Or “You are not preaching enough on social justice. You only care about your white privilege.” Or “Why are you only preaching on social justice? You need to preach the gospel!” My heart races just writing out these questions!⁹²

But how do you, in the moment, respond to these types of questions? Do you respond with anger? Do you give into what the person wants to hear? If you are able to remain true to who you are and what you are thinking without reacting with strong emotions yourself, then you are differentiated and nonanxious. Otherwise, you are adding to the emotionally charged situation and the conflict only escalates.

The nonanxious person is curious. They ask questions: “What specifically about the sermon was awful?” They laugh at themselves: “Oh, I thought that sermon was worse than you did!” They pursue: “Let’s get together and talk some more about these mask concerns.”

You should know we all do this, so do not beat yourself up for failing to be a nonanxious presence in these situations. Friedman points out the average person is differentiated only thirty percent of the time and that to reach seventy percent is a rare phenomenon: “it is a lifetime project with no one ever getting more than seventy percent

⁹² Pete Scazzero, “Know Yourself that You May Know God,” January 25, 2022 in *The Emotionally Healthy Leader Podcast*.

there.”⁹³ Growing in Emotional Intelligence is a life-long journey and is a tool which helps the pastor to continue to be present even in the midst of conflict.]⁹⁴

CALVIN AND WARFIELD

I wrote above that PCA pastors can be suspicious of emotional intelligence and emotions in general because they cannot be trusted. The following are some quotes that may challenge this.

Here some miserable creatures, who, though unlearned, are however impelled more by malice than ignorance, cry out that I am offering an atrocious insult to Christ, because it were most incongruous to hold that he feared for the safety of his soul. And then in harsher terms they urge the calumnious charge that I attribute despair to the Son of God, a feeling the very opposite of faith. First, they wickedly raise a controversy as to the fear and dread which Christ felt, though these are openly affirmed by the Evangelists. For before the hour of his death arrived, he was troubled in spirit, and affected with grief; and at the very onset began to be exceedingly amazed. To speak of these feelings as merely assumed, is a shameful evasion. *It becomes us, therefore (as Ambrose truly teaches), boldly to profess the agony of Christ, if we are not ashamed of the cross.* And certainly had not his soul shared in the punishment, he would have been a Redeemer of bodies only.⁹⁵

Do not miss what Calvin is saying here. If we do not acknowledge the deep feelings of Jesus, then we are ashamed of the cross. Jesus did not come to simply die for our bodies—our intellect and behavior, but to redeem every aspect of our humanity. Chandler writes, “The interplay between the spiritual, emotional, relational, intellectual, vocational and physical dimensions reflects God’s holistic design for the human body.”⁹⁶ When we ignore our fear and

⁹³ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, Inc., 2007), 183.

⁹⁴ I added all of this after the retreat in light of feedback. Wanted to connect this more to pastoral ministry.

⁹⁵ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, Esq (MobileReference), II.xvi.12, Kindle. Italics mine.

⁹⁶ Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 207, Kindle.

troubles and grief as well as that which drives them, we are ignoring a major aspect of what it means to be in union with Jesus.

Another quote:

In Calvin's treatment of faith there is nothing more striking than his determination to make it clear that it is a matter not of the understanding but of the heart; and he reproaches the Romish conception of faith precisely because it magnifies the intellectual side to the neglect of the fiducial. "We must not suppose," it is said in the Confession of Faith drawn up for the Genevan Church, either by himself or by his colleagues under his eye, "that Christian faith is a naked and mere knowledge of God or understanding of the Scriptures, which floats in the brain without touching the heart. . . ." It is quite clear, then, that Calvin did not consciously address himself merely to the securing of an intellectual assent to his teaching, but sought to move men's hearts. His whole conception of religion turned, indeed, on this: religion, he explained, to be pleasing to God, must be a matter of the heart, and God requires in His worshippers precisely heart and affection. All the arguments in the world, he insists, if unaccompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, will fail to produce the faith which piety requires.⁹⁷

These are two important quotes. First from Calvin, and then from Benjamin Warfield and his understanding of Calvin. To have reformed pastors start paying attention to our emotions is not just a hopeful psychologizing of what I think is important. But something that has a deep and rich history. And do not miss Calvin's strong words that Christ does not simply redeem our bodies, but every aspect of our being. Pastors are not just theological brains on a stick. There is more to us than simply our intellect. We all know what is arguably Calvin's most famous quote: "Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."⁹⁸ I am contending that Calvin was not referring simply to a forensic knowledge, that God is righteous and humanity is sinful in a generic sort of way, but calling us to see the depth of what it means to be human in every aspect

⁹⁷ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of God," *The Princeton Theological Review*, vii, 1909, https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/warfield/warfield_doctrinegod.html#fn01

⁹⁸ John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion* trans. Henry Beveridge, Esq (MobileReference), I.i.1, Kindle.

of who we are: intellect, behavior, and emotions. I start here because this is not necessarily the case for the present...

NEGATIVE QUOTES

What do you think about the following statement: You cannot be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.

It is probably generally true, but since spiritual maturity comes primarily through the means of grace and emotional maturity comes primarily through life circumstances they might not always match up. If our spiritual maturity is equally about becoming more like a child (unless you have faith like a child, etc.) and less like a child (when I was a child I thought like a child, etc.), *I'm not sure God cares as much about emotional maturity.* Emotional maturity is not a means of grace, it's just one of those things that adults need so that we don't act like children. I should probably read that Scazzero book again. I'm sure I'm missing something.⁹⁹

We must know God, not in order to understand our feelings, temperament, and history-again there is a place for all this-but to understand our need for God. For when we see God as he has revealed himself, "What wonderfully impressed us under the name of wisdom will stink in its very foolishness."
Know God. Know yourself. Know yourself to know your need of God. Know God to know you are not gods. That's what Calvin means. And that's true wisdom.¹⁰⁰

Of course, feelings aren't necessarily bad or sinful. God created us as humans who laugh, cry, hurt, and have emotions. The problem with feelings and emotions is that they are not trustworthy since we are sinful. Proverbs 28:26 says he who trusts in his own heart is a fool (NASB). It follows that we should be very hesitant to trust the emotions that arise from our hearts.¹⁰¹

... in a very particular way, (for Calvin) sin is emotion. Emotions are contrary to faith; they are also alien and threatening to an intellectual because they impinge upon, interfere with, try to take control of his mind. So contrary are they that Calvin automatically

⁹⁹ Question and answer from a survey that I sent out to former and present PCA pastors in Utah. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁰ Kevin DeYoung, "Was Calvin Advocating Introspection as the Way to Know God?," (blog), *The Gospel Coalition*, January 3, 2014, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/was-calvin-advocating-introspection-as-the-means-to-knowing-god/>

¹⁰¹ Shane Lems, "Feeling is not a Fruit (Or: Feelings and the Faith)," (blog) *The Reformed Reader*, September 12, 2017, <https://reformedreader.wordpress.com/2017/09/12/feeling-is-not-a-fruit-or-feelings-and-the-faith/>

distrusts them.... We can mortify the flesh in many ways, but in emotion it has a weapon beyond our control.¹⁰²

For Scazzero, however, the greatest sin appears to be a failure to be emotionally integrated or true to one's self...In turning to matters of self-integration rather than the problem of sin and our need for reconciliation with God, he strays away from the teachings of Scripture.¹⁰³

The cultivation of these God-honoring emotions happens when we are sanctified by big, glorious, magnificent truths that serve as ballast for our hearts and minds. Right thinking leads to right feeling. What I *think* about God—who he is and what he is like—is the most important thing about me.¹⁰⁴

Now granted, this quote is from an article that actually paints emotions in a good light, even from a Reformed perspective. But even here, intellect trumps emotion. The intellect is the “most important thing about me.”

SO WHAT

Calvin argues that expressing emotion is what it means to be human. In his commentary on Philippians, Calvin writes: “the dispositions which God originally implanted in our nature are not evil in themselves, because they do not arise from the fault of corrupt nature, but come forth from God as their Author.” So having and expressing emotions are both parts of what it means to be human. Calvin goes onto say, “Those who would have dispositions of this kind altogether

¹⁰² Suzanne Selinger, *Calvin Against Himself: An Inquiry in Intellectual History* (Ham Archon Books, 1984), 81, quoted in Kyle Fedler, “Calvin’s Burning Heart: Calvin and the Stoics on the Emotions” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Fall 2002, Volume 22, pp. 133-162. This quote is from page 134.

¹⁰³ Chris Ambridge, “Book Review: The Emotionally Healthy Church, by Peter Scazzero,” *9Marks*, March 2, 2010, <https://www.9marks.org/review/emotionally-healthy-church-peter-scazzero/>

¹⁰⁴ Brian Bergman, “Nothing More Than Feelings?” (blog) *Modern Reformation*, September 1, 2018, <https://modernreformation.org/resource-library/articles/nothing-more-than-feelings/> Italics mine.

subdued and eradicated, do not picture to themselves merely men of flint, but men that are fierce and savage.”¹⁰⁵ Pete Scazzero puts this in even more stark terms:

To feel is to be human. To minimize or deny what we feel is a distortion of what it means to be image bearers of God. To the degree that we are unable to express our emotions, we remain impaired in our ability to love God, others, and ourselves well. Why? Because our feelings are a component of what it means to be made in the image of God. To cut them out of our spirituality is to slice off an essential part of our humanity.¹⁰⁶

And if we mistrust, or see them as unimportant, we may be “unable to embrace the humility needed to grow as individuals.”¹⁰⁷ If what is most important is what we think and what we think *correctly*, then our ego and perfectionism can get in the way and we can harm ourselves and others. Or, if we hide behind or mistrust or choose not to see emotions as important, then perhaps we are afraid to see what is really there. But how can we ask others to deal with the darkness of their own hearts, if we are unwilling to go there ourselves? Fleming Rutledge writes, “It requires courage to look into the heart of darkness, especially when we are afraid we might see ourselves there.”¹⁰⁸ I get it. I did this for 40 years. One of the reasons we do not pay attention to our emotions is because it is safer. It is so much easier to ignore or downplay than to acknowledge and allow God to sanctify our emotions the same way he does our behavior and intellect.

¹⁰⁵ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, <https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom42/calcom42.iv.iii.v.html>

¹⁰⁶ Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 24, Kindle.

¹⁰⁷ John Lee West and Roy M. Oswald and Nadyne Guzman, *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 122, Kindle.

¹⁰⁸ Fleming Rutledge, *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 253.

So Calvin argues that emotions actually show us what is important to us and what we value.¹⁰⁹ Both what really is and what should be important. Let me give an example. I dropped my 18 year old off at the airport to fly across the Atlantic to get on a 55 foot sailboat to sail back across the Atlantic. While I watched him walk into the airport, I felt anxious, excited, and even a little jealous. Why? Because he is my son. His safety is important to me. He is important to me. My deep feelings show me this. But what about when I get angry because a car does not stop at a crosswalk when I am trying to get to the other side of the street? Why do I feel angry? Because I am convinced that my safety and convenience are more important than what is happening to the person in the car. The anger that I feel reveals that I am way more important. My time is more important. In a word, my selfishness is revealed. Now of course I could say I am angry because the driver is not following the law, but that is not really what is going on here. The depth of my anger helps me to see what is at the root of this emotion. Anger is actually pointing to my selfishness.

It is the selfishness that needs to be rooted out; that needs to be sanctified. The anger forces me to be honest about how selfish I really am, and trust that God will grow this the same way he is growing other aspects of my being. I cannot just stoically ignore my anger or hide my sense of goodness (at least I'm keeping the law by using the crosswalk!) When we ignore the reality of our emotions, or maybe better put, when we ignore the root of our emotions, we can actually become blind to what God is doing in us and in the lives of others.

¹⁰⁹ Fedler, 139.

I think Jesus' parable of the two son captures this well. The older son is so angry, and it is blinding him. He thinks the anger is justified because he has slaved away and obeyed the Father 'all these years.' Nouwen argues that we justify our anger because all too often our anger is wedded to our perceived righteousness and the desire to be good and virtuous.¹¹⁰ But he is blind to the Father's compassion to the younger son. He is blind to how deep the Father's love really is. And he is unwilling to accept the invitation to come in and celebrate the return of the younger brother. He cannot even acknowledge his own relationship with his brother: "This son of yours..."

Are you willing to dig deep and check out the roots? How do you know if this worth pursuing? Joe Novenson (PCA pastor at Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church) gave a helpful talk several years go titled, "Brokenness in Ministry." In it he describes the possibility that pastors can hide really well behind their theology or their giftedness, but are blind to what is really going on inside of them. You can be spiritually bleeding all over the place, and never know it. And instead of getting to the root of it, we stay where it is safe. We fool ourselves thinking that as long as our doctrine is okay and that our church is growing, we do not need to stop and do the hard work of paying attention to what is happening in our own hearts. "Why did I just yell at my kids?" "What is this wall between my wife and I?" "Where is this deep sense of anger and frustration coming from?" "Why did I look at that website again?" And yes, all of this points to our sinfulness, but to know ourselves is to get to the root from which the specific sins come. These are only symptoms of something deeper. As long as we keep these types of things

¹¹⁰ Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, (New York: Convergent Books, 2016), 82, Kindle.

at an arm's distance and just call it sin, it will be incredibly difficult to experience the deep freedom that Jesus offers in healing the deepest aspects of our humanity.

Joe gives us some helpful questions to ask of ourselves:¹¹¹

- Is your ministry marked by anger because your people are not responding the way you think they should?
- Are you on 'hair trigger?' Are you impatient, angry, frustrated, etc. with those that are close to you?
- Do you need constant affirmation?
- Do you become defensive, insecure, or blame shift when confronted with criticism?
- Are you making quick, reactive decisions instead of taking the time stop, reflect, and pray?

These are not just behaviors. This is digging a little deeper to address the root and not merely the symptom.

¹¹¹ Joe Novenson, "Brokenness in Ministry" (lecture, Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly, summer 2010)

“And so Calvin calls believers neither to lives of unchecked passion nor to become ‘men of iron.’ Rather, with burning heart, they are to have then entire lives, including their emotions, purified and sanctified so that they can be offered up as a pure and holy living sacrifice.”¹¹²

[With more time I would have given the participants the questions below and have them reflect individually and then pair off with someone. After reflection, I would bring everyone back and discuss as a group. This does a couple of things. One, group discussion brings up issues and questions that were not thought of individually or as a pair. Two, this gives me a sense of what I need to think through in order to make EQ more clear for future retreats.]

Reflection Questions

- 1. What are your initial thoughts regarding Emotional Intelligence? The good, the bad, and the ugly?**
- 2. How do you process Calvin’s “knowledge of God and knowledge of self?” Do you understand it as personal, theoretical, or doctrinal?**
- 3. What do you think of Calvin’s “to be ashamed of emotions is to be ashamed of the cross?”**
- 4. Fill in the blank with a sentence or two: Anger¹¹³ _____.**

¹¹² Fedler, 156.

¹¹³I chose anger because this seems to be the most complicated emotion and most difficult with which to deal or acknowledge . It is easy to feel angry or its related emotions (outrage, frustration, annoyance, etc.) and not know what to do with it or downplay it. “Consider another experience that gives us pause: the common inability to become angry. Many of us have great difficulty with conflict. Eager to please, we flash uncertain smiles in the face of disagreement. Our hunger to belong works against any willingness to confront controversy. Summoning the energy

- 5. Think about the poem from the beginning of the lecture. When was the last time you were this honest with God about how you feel? How do you think Jesus would respond to you if you cussed at him like this?**

First Morning

Introduction to Morning Prayer and The Daily Office

The first time I used a prayer book was over 15 years ago with a group of pastors on a retreat very similar to this one. I was fresh out of seminary, and eager to try new things. Reading corporate prayers, participating in responsive readings, and confessing corporate sin was both new and weird. By the end of the retreat I was captivated by this ancient practice. Eventually I began to incorporate Noon and Evening Prayer because I needed multiple times throughout the day to stop and pray. It was too easy for me to have my morning devotional and then forgot about Jesus the rest of the day.

to defend our values or to address an affront seems out of bounds.” Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, *Transforming our Painful Emotions: Spiritual Resources in Anger, Shame, Grief, Fear, and Loneliness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), Chapter 3, Kindle.

This discipline has been especially helpful to me since my friend's death last August. It has been difficult to pray on my own. I need help and The Daily Office has given me the words I cannot come up with on my own. It also gives a good amount of Scripture to read through and the space to meditate on a Psalm or Gospel reading. I know this is new and may be awkward for some of you, but I hope you will give it a try...

Introduction to Session Two

Last night we talked about Emotional Intelligence and the need to pay attention to your inner lives. But how do we do this in the midst of the busyness of pastoral ministry? This morning I want to encourage you to slow down and learn the discipline of simply being still and silent in the presence of the Lord.

Lecture Two: Calvin and Silence or Be Still and Shut Up

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SgGOYn1Df0>

[The above link is a video for a Nike commercial from a few years ago. It starts with a news anchor announcing the earth has stopped spinning on its axis. The next scene is a runner getting the idea if everyone started running the same direction, the world will start spinning again. The next several seconds includes cameos of famous people exclaiming, "Let's go!" Half way through the commercial, there is one lone runner who is running against the crowd. The runner is 5'3", non-athletic looking, comedian Kevin Hart. It seems he is running the wrong way, but in reality he is the only one running the right way. Toward the end of the commercial, the news anchor announces, "Everyone is running the wrong way!" In which Kevin Hart exclaims, "I knew it!"]

What I am asking you to do is run the wrong way. Everyone is going fast. Everyone is getting things done. Everyone is fighting for success and numbers and more, more, more. I am

asking you to consider running against the ways of the world, and even the church sometimes.

Last night I asked you to pay attention to what is happening in your inner world; to become more emotionally self aware. How are you going to do that? Where do you even begin especially when everyone is telling you to keep going and get things done? Very rarely will anyone in the church make sure you are spending time in silence and solitude cultivating your relationship with the Lord.

But the Psalmist writes:

- Be still and know that I am God. 46:10
- Taste and see that the Lord is good. 34:8
- Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage, wait for the Lord! 27:14
- Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him...37:7
- I waited patiently for the Lord...40:1
- For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation...62:1
- For God alone my soul waits in silence; for my hope is from him... 62:5
- I wait for the LORD, my soul waits...my soul waits for the Lord more than watchman for the morning...130:5-6

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah writes, “The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.”

Lam. 3:25-26

Jesus calls us to abide; to remain in him. MaryKate Morse says that leaders are to follow Jesus in two major ways: going and abiding. We do a good job of going and doing, but not so much with abiding. “This [staying busy] is not hard to do because we begin to view our worth and status as emerging from our busyness, not our rest. This is why I believe Jesus publicly

announced our purpose to ‘go and make disciples’ but privately commanded his disciples to ‘abide...’ Unfortunately abiding in Christ is not as valued today as being busy for Christ.” So much of Jesus’ ministry was slow, unrushed conversations, walks, and unhurried prayer.¹¹⁴

Eugene Peterson begins his book *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* with the following words, “American pastors are abandoning their posts, left and right, and at an alarming rate...They have gone whoring after other gods. What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn’t the remotest connection with what the church’s pastors have done for most of twenty centuries.”¹¹⁵

Pete Scazzero writes, “We may have...a successful ministry. We may know a lot about God in our heads. But none of these things matter if we remain *unknown* by Christ. What matters is the genuine fruit that comes only out of a deep and surrendered connection with Jesus.”¹¹⁶ In *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Scazzero adds, “Work for God that is not nourished by a deep interior life with God will eventually be contaminated by other things such as ego, power, needing approval of and from others, and buying into the wrong ideas of success and the mistaken belief that we can’t fail.”¹¹⁷ Leaders know how to *do* a lot for Jesus, but we struggle to simply *be* with Jesus.

Peterson says that all the doing for Jesus made him like a puppy dog. “Somebody throws a Frisbee and says, ‘Get it’ and I run and get it, and come back to do it again. ‘Fetch’ was the one

¹¹⁴ MaryKate Morse, *Lifelong Leadership: Woven Together through Mentoring Communities* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2020), 54-55.

¹¹⁵ Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), Introduction, Kindle.

¹¹⁶ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 117.

¹¹⁷ Pete Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It’s Impossible to be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 32, Kindle.

word I knew really well. I did a lot of fetching, but I never learned how to sit. Eventually I learned to stop asking, ‘How can I perform better’ and to start asking, ‘How can I fit into what God is doing?’”¹¹⁸ It takes time in sitting and being quiet and listening in order to answer the question, “How can I fit into what God is doing?” In another article Peterson writes,

“I know it takes time to develop a life of prayer: set-aside, disciplined, deliberate time. It isn't accomplished on the run, nor by offering prayers from a pulpit or at a hospital bedside. I know I can't be busy and pray at the same time. I can be active and pray; I can work and pray; but I cannot be busy and pray. I cannot be inwardly rushed, distracted, or dispersed. In order to pray, I have to be paying more attention to God than to what people are saying to me; more attention to God than to my clamoring ego. Usually, for that to happen there must be a deliberate withdrawal from the noise of the day, a disciplined detachment from the insatiable self.”¹¹⁹

I want you to pay attention to these quotes from seasoned, godly pastors and ask yourself how you are going to grow in quiet, unhurried prayer to simply sit and be with your Savior. Even my atheist friend remarked how difficult it must be to be a pastor and the need to always be “on.”¹²⁰ If you are going run the opposite way everyone else is going, you have to learn to simply sit and be still and quiet before the Lord. Tish Harrison Warren wrote an article in the *New York Times* titled, “Want To Change the World? First, Be Still.”¹²¹ In it she writes,

...the practices of silence, contemplation and stillness are essential disciplines in Christian spirituality. If you survey the advice of the saints from the past two millennia, a consistent piece of advice emerges: Shut up. Be still. In the fourth century, the Syrian poet Ephrem wrote, “Let your silence speak/to one who listens to you; with silent mouth.” The 16th-century Spanish Catholic mystic St. John of the Cross said, “What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this

¹¹⁸ Eugene Peterson, “The Relationally Grounded Pastor” *Christianity Today: Leadership Journal* Spring 2015 <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2015/spring/relationally-grounded-pastor.html>

¹¹⁹ Eugene Peterson, “The Unbusy Pastor,” *Christianity Today*, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1981/summer/eugene-peterson-unbusy-pastor.html>

¹²⁰ In a breakfast conversation with the author on November 18, 2021. He made this comment to me after spending time with his parents’ pastor.

¹²¹ Tish Harrison Warren, “Want to Change the World? First, Be Still,” *New York Times*, October 3, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/03/opinion/prayer-silence-activism.html?searchResultPosition=1>

great God.” Mother Teresa said, “We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence.” Voices of the church — across racial, ethnic, denominational, national and temporal bounds — urge us to silence and stillness.

If you come from a Reformed tradition, you may not appreciate who she quotes. And if you know about Calvin, you probably know he was not a huge fan of what is commonly called “monastic practices:” the daily office, silence, solitude, etc. But this is not necessarily true.

Kyle Fedler writes,

Meditation upon God's will can "incline our hearts" by training or teaching our emotions. ... “thus pressed by poverty we shall be pricked by the arrows of care and sorrow; thus we shall be smitten by pain of disgrace, contempt, injustice; thus at funerals of our dear ones we shall weep the tears that are owed to our nature. But the conclusion will always be: the Lord so willed, therefore let us follow his will. Indeed, amid the very pricks of pain, amid groaning and tears, this thought must intervene: to incline our heart to bear cheerfully those things which have so moved it.” Calvin contends that we can train our emotions not only by meditation upon God's providence but also by meditation upon the future life— *meditatio futurae vita*¹²²

Tim Keller (a popular PCA and Reformed pastor) says that Calvin was not against monastic practices, but against the abuses of the monasteries. Calvin’s goal was to democratize the practices and save them from the clutches of the spirituality elite. Keller goes on to say that Calvin felt it takes more than preaching to form Christians. This is such an important thought coming from a PCA pastor because preaching is so central to Reformed practices. This does not, however, downplay the importance of preaching, but rather seeks to increase other practices in Christian formation. And “pastors need far more intense, on going, in-service, life time training than they are getting right now.”¹²³

Matthew Boulton argues:

¹²² Kyle Fedler, “Calvin’s Burning Heart,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Fall 2002, Vol. 22, 138-139.

¹²³ Tim Keller, “Calvin’s Company for Pastors Today,” The Gospel Coalition, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/211581520>.

for Calvin, Christian doctrine is properly conceived and articulated in the first place for the sake of Christian formation, particularly the immersive, embodied, restorative training that may take place, God willing, by way of the church's disciplinary treasury. At every turn in Calvin's work, he sought to clarify the intellectual conditions of this pedagogical, practical life in God, and today's Protestant theologians, I contend, should do the same.¹²⁴

And one more. This one from *Calvin's Company of Pastors*:

Geneva's ministers were expected to perform baptisms, catechize the young, unite couples in holy matrimony, conduct household visitations, discipline the wicked, and comfort the sick and dying. To be sure, these pastoral responsibilities required attentiveness to the life of the Spirit, to spiritual meditation and prayer.¹²⁵

I am probably beating a dead horse here, but Manetsch is helping me prove my point.

You cannot be attentive to the life of the Spirit without taking the time to sit and be still and actually listen to the Spirit. Disciplined, rhythmic times of solitude and silence energize our hearts to do the work of ministry in the same way taking a day off from running energizes and refreshes aching muscles.

Calvin is calling us to take the time to sit with what is happening in our own hearts as much as he is to be faithful in our day in/day out pastoral responsibilities. He is talking about the spiritual formation of the pastor.

"Emotions are not arational sensations, but are intricately connected to what we will (or desire) and what we believe. This is why orthopathy is so important for Calvin. It reflects having right beliefs and right desires. And because emotions are derivative of belief and desire, Calvin contends that emotions can be intentionally modified or developed by the use of certain exercises, practices, and modes of thought—in other words, by the use of reason and will... Calvin repeatedly implies that human beings can train their emotions by meditating upon God's work. Calvin calls upon believers to meditate on three themes in order to train the emotions, namely meditation upon God's providence, upon the future life, and upon the cross."¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Matthew Myer Boulton, *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), Introduction, Kindle.

¹²⁵ Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 4, Kindle.

¹²⁶ Fedler, 138.

How does meditating on these great themes of Scripture happen apart from silence and solitude? Notice some of the key words here: desires, developed practices, training. Calvin is referring to the practices of the spiritual disciplines which begin to take shape in our spiritual formation. While it is both good and right to practice the discipline of “preaching the gospel to yourself,” the mind, body, and heart are changed and formed through the practices of prayer, silence, solitude, meditation, rest, etc. To think one can change and be formed into the character of Christ without these practices is akin to think one can run a marathon simply by thinking they could do it. Training, growing, developing, and disciplines are vitally important. This is the bridge of spiritual formation.

Here is a great definition of spiritual formation: “Our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the [whole] likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world.”¹²⁷ This last part is worth pointing out because this is not just for the sake of “me and Jesus.” Without the discipline of abiding in Jesus, the emotional bandwidth for the demands of ministry shrinks little by little and it feels like you are trying to do ministry with one arm tied behind your back. Think about the rhythms of Jesus. There are times when he completely gives of himself for the sake of the crowds; but there are also times when he gets away, just by himself, to be in communion with his Father. Jesus’ ministry was not either/or (doing or abiding), but both both/and. Doing ministry must flow out of abiding with Jesus or else the branches wither and die.

The disciplines of Spiritual Formation guide us through the weaving in and out of the demands of ministry and the need for coming into the presence of God. If we only go but do not

¹²⁷ Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010), 24.

abide then we are in much danger of exhaustion and burnout at best¹²⁸; affairs and suicide at worst. If you just keep doing, but ignore abiding and do not slow down long enough to pay attention to what is happening in your hearts and minds and desires, then it is not going to end well for anyone. It feels good because you are so busy, and you are “doing God’s work,” but you will eventually wear yourself out. In an essay titled “On Doing Less,” Eugene Peterson writes:

Being Christians means letting God take care of us, totally. We usually begin by trying to find out what we can do to help, expecting as we go along that we will take on more and more responsibility, getting busier and busier in the Lord’s service. What we find, though, is that as we become practiced in the practices of prayer and worship and trust and love, we are more and more *receivers* and our lives are experienced as gifts, as grace... There is a paradox here: the less busy we are, the more free we are to do the essentially Christian acts. The less we hassle ourselves and one another with jobs, lists, and endless moralistic housecleaning, the more focused we become for truly productive lives of creation and vocation... The less we do, the more we find our Lord the Spirit doing in and through us.¹²⁹

If I could sum up one way in which I have grown these past years due to the discipline of silence, it is the reality of how much I know I am loved—a love that is freely given even when I am sitting and doing nothing. Not how well my sermon was received. Not how big my church is. Not how busy or important I am. But loved even as I simply sit.

Granted, it takes time to drown out the noise of doubt and accusation, but there are times when I hear the voice of my Savior so clearly. Nouwen prays this at the end of “Prayer and Silence” in *With Open Hands*¹³⁰:

¹²⁸ Kate Shellnut, “The Pastors Aren’t All Right: 38% Consider Leaving Ministry,” *Christianity Today*, November 16, 2021 https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/november/pastor-burnout-pandemic-barna-consider-leaving-ministry.html?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=article&fbclid=IwAR1ZUULc5ITccows0i3pRzd3q3dIYYYG1bqvB6ocrKj8eEZkJgieS80n2M0.

¹²⁹ Eugene Peterson, *On Living Well: Brief Reflections on Wisdom for Walking in the Way of Jesus* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2021), 42.

¹³⁰ Henri Nouwen, *With Open Hands* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2005), chapter 1, Kindle.

Dear God,
 Speak gently in my silence.
 When the loud outer noises of my surroundings
 and the loud inner noises of my fears
 keep pulling me away from you,
 help me to trust that you are still there
 even when I am unable to hear you.
 Give me ears to listen to your small, soft
 voice saying:
 “Come to me, you who are overburdened,
 and I will give you rest. . . .
 for I am gentle and humble of heart.”
 Let that loving voice be my guide.
 Amen.

Let's return to the parable of the two sons for a second. Would anything have been different if the older brother would have gone off by himself and sat still with his anger and brought it before the Lord? Would he have been so unmoved by the Father's compassion and by his brother's repentance? Could he have seen more clearly his own, desperate need for the invitation of the Father? And of course I know this is only speculation; and I know this is not the intent of Jesus' parable. But I am asking you to stop long enough and be quiet enough to see what is happening in your own heart, so that you might see more clearly what is happening in those whom you pastor. If there is a wall between you and your own heart, how can you possibly see into the depths of another?

I know that silence is a threat. I know there are all sorts of voices that are so much more clear and loud than the voice of God. Sunday afternoons were often the worst day of my week. “Why are you a preacher? That sermon made absolutely no sense. That illustration was awful. You completely missed what that passage was saying. Why do you even bother? No one is paying attention to what you have to say!”

It is no wonder we are addicted to our airpods. We will do whatever it takes to shut out the noise. Silence feels more like a threat than a grace. Nouwen writes, “When there is no one to

talk to or to listen to, an interior discussion may start up—often noisier than the noise we just escaped.” It is no wonder sitting in silence is so difficult. When you first start doing this, the volume of the voices of accusation, shame, and guilt feels like the volume is cranked up as loud as the stereo can go.

I heard a comedian tell the story of sitting in his car waiting on his child to come out of school. He absent-mindedly turned off the radio and just sat there. Within minutes, he was weeping because he did not know what to do with himself. The audience responded with nervous chuckles because they did not know what to do with it either. However, there are possibilities that come out of the silence as you fight through the threat:

But whenever you do come upon this silence, it seems as though you have received a gift, one which is “promising” in the true sense of the word. The promise of this silence is that new life can be born. It is this silence which is the silence of peace and prayer because it brings you back to the One who is leading you. In this silence you lose the feeling of being driven and you find that you can be yourself along with other people.¹³¹

What if you did ministry out of a deep communion with the “One who is leading you” versus being driven? Driven by fear, driven by inner and outer expectations, driven by comparison and competition. What if you lived your life more out of being the Beloved and less out of being a driven performer? The first time I met with my counseling supervisor, I was expecting him to give me feedback. I had met with my first client as a counseling intern, and I was eager to hear what I did well and very hesitant to hear where I needed to improve. I sat down with my supervisor and the conversation went something like this:

Supervisor: I listened to your counseling session.

Me: (With a hopeful expression) So, what did you think?

¹³¹ Nouwen, *With Open Hands*.

Supervisor: I only have one question for you to think about.

Me: Really?! (thinking I did an incredible job and he only had one small area where I could grow)

Supervisor: Yeah. Think about this for me: Why do you feel the need to perform?

Me: Shit

That was over 15 years ago, and it was the very beginning of learning how to simply sit and and start wrestling with the questions I had been avoiding for so long. Performance would follow me into ministry in some very sinful and unhealthy ways. Sitting in the silence has been teaching me how much I am loved because when I am simply sitting, I am not doing anything. I am not performing in any way. If you are willing to go on this journey, know two things: First, it is difficult and slow going. There is no arriving. Second, God will meet you. You will not be able to explain it or put words to it, but you will know his presence and hear his voice in a very real way.

Boulton writes in *Life in God*,

“For Calvin, the "knowing" that induces pietas (or formation) is akin to a kind of "sensing," an intellectual and also quite personal, tangible, and familiar knowledge analogous to the way in which a child "knows" the manifold benefits she receives from her parents. She does not only know about them. She knows them. She senses them. She is intimately familiar with them, intellectually, emotionally, and physically, and this familiarity...”¹³² It is also a human cry, human confidence, human groaning, and in this sense prayer is humanity's dialogue and *intercourse* with God. Indeed, at the outset of the Institute's chapter on prayer, Calvin describes the dialogue as "a communion of men with God," an intimate association "by which, having entered the heavenly sanctuary, they appeal to him in person concerning his promises in order to experience, where necessity so demands, that what they believed was not in vain" (3.20.2). In other words, for Calvin, God grants the *communion* of prayer precisely so that disciples may personally, consciously *experience* a taste of God's kindness, the fulfillment of God's promises, and thereby be assured that their trust is well placed.¹³³

¹³² Boulton, *Life in God*, chapter 3, Kindle.

¹³³ Boulton, *Life in God*, chapter 9, Kindle. Italics mine

Did you hear some of the words? Personal, tangible, familiarity, intercourse, communion, experience, intimacy. These are not common words in our Reformed vocabulary. We understand “intellectual,” but Calvin is calling us to a deeper, more robust understanding of what it means to know and be known by as we learn to sit and be still and know that he is God.

Since we just spent a half an hour talking about silence, I want you to go and experience it. Find a comfortable spot and simply sit. Set a timer for at least ten minutes, and just be. Do not fight the thoughts and voices that come. Bring them before the Lord and allow the Spirit to do what the Spirit will. After sitting quietly I want you to read pages 2-4 of the booklet titled “Creating Space for God,” and start the first two exercises. You do not have to complete them; simply start them and take as much time as you need. If sitting quietly becomes too difficult for you, then take a walk and reflect on Henri Nouwen’s question from *With Open Hands*, “Why do I avoid silence?”¹³⁴ When we come back together, I would love for you to share your experiences. What was good? What was hard? What you sensed from the Lord, etc?

[From here the participants were led through a couple of exercises found below.¹³⁵ I chose these exercises in light of the lecture on silence and these exercises are helpful for those who are new to this discipline as well as those who have been doing this for a while. I asked them to read the quotes, and then take their time through exercises one and two. I really wanted more time for this. I felt rushed to get all three sessions completed before a couple of guys had to leave. This is one of the many reasons to have three full days. In the future, at least two hours will be given after each session for reflection and discussion.]

An Invitation

“Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. He mourns that we do not draw near to him. He grieves that we have forgotten him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence.

¹³⁴ Henri Nouwen, *With Open Hands*, (Notre Dame: ave maria press, 2005), 46,, Kindle.

¹³⁵ Donovan Graham, “Creating Space for God.” This is not a public document, but the author was given permission to use. Dr. Graham is a retired college professor, chaplain, and missionary. He now leads retreats for exhausted educators, pastors, and missionaries on furlough.

And he is inviting you—and me—to come home, to come home to where we belong, to come home to that for which we were created. His arms are stretched out wide to receive us. His heart is enlarged to take us in.

For too long we have been in a far country: a country of noise and hurry and crowds, a country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation.

We do not need to be shy. He invites us into the living room of his heart, where we can put on old slippers and share freely. He invites us into the kitchen of his friendship, where chatter and batter mix in good fun. He invites us into the dining room of his strength, where we can feast to our heart's delight. He invites us into the study of his wisdom, where we can learn and grow and stretch . . . and ask all the questions we want. He invites us into the workshop of his creativity, where we can be co-laborers with him, working together to determine the outcomes of events. He invites us into the bedroom of his rest, where new peace is found and where we can be naked and vulnerable and free. It is also the place of deepest intimacy, where we know and are known to the fullest.” (Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home, Richard Foster)

A Perspective

“The Celts had a way of seeing God that fed off a passion that crystallized in what the Welsh called *gorfoleddu*, “ecstatic rejoicing.” The word is more than praise, and it is certainly more than prayer. In fact, it is a kind of compulsion that caused the worshiper to seek Christ with utter abandon, which was driven by a mind frame of zealous worship. It is *gorfoleddu* that prompts our need to pray, and it is its absence that causes us not to pray.

Most evangelicals I know want to achieve power in prayer . . . what is often lacking in their prayer life is a genuine passion that wants to be with God for the sake of union with Christ (the *gorfoleddu* of their own eager spirits).

Those who speak of achieving ‘power in prayer’ are generally seeking it for petition and intercession. Those most eager to talk to God for the sheer pleasure of being in his presence are serving their inner exuberance of loving God for no end in mind except the joy of being in his presence. Genuine prayer rarely emanates from how-to sources. It is always born from the hunger and the passion that rises from the believer’s hunger for a relationship with the Almighty.

. . . if, throughout our lives, we have only gone to God in prayer asking him for ‘stuff,’ we shall find ourselves very quiet, not knowing what to say when our asking season is over. This *gorfoleddu*, this ecstatic rejoicing speaks of the uncontrollable joy of being in his presence. It is a word that speaks of the high romance of prayer. Those who come to know it, realize that it’s a word that is too delirious with love ever to measure its propriety. It is like lovers separated by war and distance, when they approach the time of reunion, are not to be held accountable for wild joy. In such moments, the lovers have no lists of needs they wish supplied. The moment is the gift. Togetherness is the prize of life.” (Calvin Miller, *The Path of Celtic Prayer*)

Entering Solitude and Silence

“Although the discipline of solitude asks us to set aside time and space, what finally matters is that our hearts become like quiet cells where God can dwell, wherever we go and whatever we do. The more we train ourselves to spend time with God and God alone, the more we will discover that God is with us at all times and in all places. Then we will be able to recognize God even in the midst of a busy and active life. Once the solitude of time and place has become a solitude of the

heart, we will never have to leave that solitude. We will be able to live the spiritual life in any place and any time. Thus the discipline of solitude enables us to live active lives in the world, while remaining always in the presence of the living God.” (Henri Nouwen, *Making All Things New*)

“Silence means rest, rest of body and mind, in which we become available for God. This is very threatening. It is like giving up control over our actions and thoughts, allowing something creative to happen not by us but to us. Is it so amazing that we are so often tired and exhausted, trying to be masters of ourselves, wanting to grasp the ultimate meaning of our existence, struggling with our identity? Silence is that moment in which we not only stop the discussion with others but also the inner discussions with ourselves, in which we can breathe freely and accept our identity as a gift. “Not I live, but He lives in me.” It is in this silence that the Spirit of God can pray in us and continue its creative work in us. . . Without silence the Spirit will die in us and the creative energy of our life will float away and leave us alone, cold and tired. Without silence we will lose our center and become victims of the many who constantly demand our attention.” (Henri Nouwen, *Training for the Campus Ministry*)

Beginning a Conversation with God

“[A Celtic perspective on prayer] has the power to excite within you a nobler understanding of the nature of talking with God. (Notice I did not say talking to God.) Prayer, at best, is a conversation of lovers, and when either side starts only talking to and quits talking with all real conversation is over. But the conversation is the point. Those who only talk to God to talk him into things have generally made God their lackey who is constantly subject to their feelings of need and want. Those who seek him for the joy of being in his presence have been motivated by a passion for his presence. When this becomes the hallmark of our devotion, then our lives are spent as a kind of rehearsal for heaven.” (Miller, *The Path of Celtic Prayer*)

A conversation with God involves both speaking and listening. It is a dialogue, not just a monologue of requests. Asking for things may well be included, but that is not the main focus of a conversation between two who love each other. They want to share and hear what is on each other’s hearts.

1st exercise—looking inward

Settle into a comfortable position in your body and sit quietly for a few moments, breathing deeply, paying attention to your inhaling and exhaling.

Sit quietly at the base of the tree that is your life and begin to notice what is true about you these days. Don’t rush or try to make anything happen. Let your soul venture out and say something to you that perhaps you have had a hard time acknowledging: Is there a particular joy you are celebrating? A loss you are grieving? Are there tears that have been waiting to be shed? A question that is stirring? An emotion that needs expression?

Sit with what comes into your awareness, becoming conscious of God’s presence with you in that awareness. Don’t try to do anything with [this] except be with it. . . Feel the difference between trying to fix it and just being with it. Feel the difference between doing something with it and resting with it. Feel the difference between trying to fight it and letting God fight for you. What does it mean for you to be still and let God fight (or work) for you in this particular area. (taken from *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton)

Listening to God

2nd exercise— encountering Jesus in a biblical story

As you allow yourself to encounter Jesus in a story or parable, quietly read and reflect on the incident, placing yourself in the middle of the scene. Notice what is around you, the look on Jesus' face, the reaction of those involved, his tone of voice, and your own emotions as you hear and see him telling this story.

Apply this process by putting yourself in the place of Bartimaeus—Mark 10:46-52. Move from what you have observed concerning what is true about yourself in exercise 1 to an awareness of your deeper longings. As Jesus comes by your longings can no longer be contained. How do you get his attention? What do you say to him? What do you feel? As Jesus stops and you are brought face to face with him he asks “What do you want me to do for you?” As you answer that question, give both the question and your answer all the time they need. After you have expressed your desires listen for Jesus' response.

Other possible passages to encounter Jesus as you face your longings:

John 4:1-42 woman at the well

Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha

Luke 22:54-62 Peter denies Jesus]

Introduction to Lecture Three: “Calvin and Pastoral Communities or You Cannot Know Yourself By Yourself”

If I had to give a title to this third talk it would be “You Cannot Know Yourself By Yourself.” We need others in order to help us know ourselves better, and it needs to be other pastors who get the unique challenges and burdens of pastoral ministry. We also need others who hold us accountable to spiritual disciplines. For me at least, it is so difficult to displayed on my own. With this in mind, I’m going to start with a video...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XOt2Vh0T8w>

[The above video is a skit from Saturday Night Live in which it comically shows the need for men to have “Man Parks.” Man Parks are similar to Dog Parks in that it gives men the chance to meet other men and learn to be friends with them. In the skit men talk about Marvel, sports, Vin Diesel, and there is even a keg set up for a fresh IPA. One of the more telling quotes is, “It’s not their fault that masculinity makes intimacy so hard.” It is a funny skit, but the following quote picks up on the reality of it: “This is a great skit but seriously we need this. The more and more I really talk with my guy friends I realize that the wall we put up is crumbling.”¹³⁶]

We laugh, at least a little, because this is true. Men tend to struggle with relationships, vulnerability, etc. My sense is that it is even more so for those in leadership. Edwin Friedman wrote, “Leadership through self-differentiation is not easy; learning techniques and imbibing data are far easier. Nor is striving or achieving success as a leader without pain: there is the pain

¹³⁶ A quote from the comment section on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XOt2Vh0T8w>

of isolation, the pain of loneliness, the pain of personal attacks, the pain of losing friends. That's what leadership is all about."¹³⁷

Several years ago a book titled, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Thriving and Surviving* was released detailing seven years of research with pastoral cohorts. In exploring the aspects of the social well-being of pastors, the authors write:

All leaders-and pastors in particular-can experience deep loneliness. A summit participant shared, "I've found that the times in my life I've been isolated the most are when I'm a senior pastor." Another assessed, "I am dangerously isolated." In order to counteract the loneliness of ministry leadership, pastors must be intentional in developing relationships... Everyone in the summit agreed that there is, as one person put it, "a certain loneliness of the pastor, and it goes with the territory."¹³⁸

When I sent out a very unscientific survey to former and present PCA pastors, one of the questions I asked is, "What are some of the unique challenges to ministry in Utah?" Several answered how lonely and isolating it can be. Obviously, this is not unique to this particular place; it is more common than maybe we want to admit. A poll conducted by Baptist Press found that 55 percent say that "being in pastoral ministry makes them feel lonely at times."¹³⁹ What is helpful to know is that this article was written in 2011! If I had to guess, I would imagine the percentage is much higher in 2021.

I'm curious. Does anyone know the real you? Is there someone in your life that gives you the space to not be "on?" Is there someone who pastors you? Nouwen writes *In the Name of Jesus*, "I am convinced that priests and ministers...need a truly safe place for themselves. They

¹³⁷ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 2007), 233.

¹³⁸ Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), chapter 6, Kindle.

¹³⁹ David Roach, "Poll: Many Pastors feel lonely, discouraged," *Baptist Press*, October 20, 2011, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/poll-many-pastors-feel-lonely-discouraged/>

need a place where they can share their deep pain and struggles with people who do not need them, but who can guide them ever deeper into the mysteries of God's love."¹⁴⁰

Who guides you deeper into God's love? Who encourages you? Gives feedback? Shares wisdom? Offers forgiveness? It needs to be someone who will confront you as well; someone who will point out potential deception. When was the last time you asked someone you trusted, "How do you experience me? What am I not seeing about myself that I need to address?" One prominent PCA pastor told me the story of his struggle with panic attacks. He did not feel he could tell anyone. "My wife does not need one more man-child. My elders do not need to worry. My staff cannot lose confidence in me as a leader." He called a well respected psychiatrist and the pastor was asked, "Who have you told about this?" "Well," he answered, "I have not told anyone." He goes on to list his reasons for not telling anyone. The psychiatrist's response was, "Well that is stupid. How do you expect to get help if you do not tell anyone?" "I was hoping," the pastor answered, "you would give me a good book to read." Notice the primacy of the intellect here: If only I get the right information, I can get better. The psychiatrist's response was so good: "So you are going to read your way of of this?!" The pastor started meeting with other pastors because, he said, "We cannot live on an island. We need others to share our burdens, to know that we are loved. We need encouragement and perspective because we can stay in our heads and believe lies that are both flattering and condemning. We need others to help us see who we really are because we are so good at self-justification and self-deception."¹⁴¹ The

¹⁴⁰ Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994), 50.

¹⁴¹ George Robertson in a phone call with the author, December 10, 2019. George is a former PCA pastor and much respected throughout the denomination.

problem with deception is that you do not know if you are being deceived. We need others to point it out.

In *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Pete Scazzero writes, “In this journey of emotionally healthy spirituality, we are talking about radical change at the core of our being. At least two critical forces hinder such a profound shift. First, the pressure of others to keep us living lives that are not our own is enormous. And second, our own stubborn self-will is much deeper and more insidious than we think. The possibility of self-deception is so great that without mature companions we can easily fall into the trap of living in illusions.”¹⁴²

[A parenthetical point to Scazzero’s “the pressure of others to keep us living lives that are not our own is enormous.” When I first started the research process, I met with several stakeholders who are local church leaders including pastors, staff, and college campus ministers. One of the more profound questions that came from this time was, “What if our congregation does not want their pastor to be open and honest about their weaknesses? What if they are content to continue to put him/her on a spiritual pedestal because to see the leaders’ weakness would force them to see their own?” If this is true, and I think it is, then this puts tremendous pressure on pastors to live out the life that is not their own. This is all the more reason for why they need other pastors who do not have this same expectation of them. We desperately need those who allow us to be ourselves, but the difficult reality is that it probably cannot be members of the congregation.]

To Scazzero’s second point, I think of Nathan with David. Calvin warns us of how easy it is to deceive ourselves when it comes to our sin. “We do not imagine that David, during this

¹⁴² Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It’s Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature While Remaining Emotionally Immature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 63, Kindle.

interval, was so wholly deprived of the sense of religion as no longer to acknowledge the supremacy of the Divine Being. In all probability he continued to pray daily, engaged in the acts of Divine worship, and aimed at conforming his life to the law of God... Well may we tremble to contemplate the fact, that so holy a prophet, and so excellent a king, should have sunk into such a condition!”¹⁴³

Derek Kidner adds that Nathan’s confrontation opens up a “new self-knowledge” within David, and that David comes to the stark realization his affair with Bathsheba “was no freak event: it was in his character...”¹⁴⁴ It has been at least a year before Nathan confronts David, and David is completely unwilling to take a hard look at himself. If Calvin is right, and I think he is, David just goes about performing (and probably performing really well) his kingly duties, but does not seem to acknowledge his inner life. This is exactly why it is so easy for guys to be “successful,” grow big churches, sell books, and lead retreats, but have no idea what is going on inside of them.

I have talked a lot about self-awareness and knowing yourself, but you cannot know yourself by yourself.

Tim Keller, in his talk “Calvin’s Company of Pastors” wonders out loud, “I’m not sure how we [pastors] are going to survive as the culture becomes more hostile. We are going to see more and more people whose ministries seem to be going well go down; just fall away; or fall into doctrinal error; or succumb to various temptations...”¹⁴⁵ He goes on to say how important it

¹⁴³ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries on the Psalms*. Christian Classic Ethreal Library.

<https://ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom09/calcom09.xvii.html>

¹⁴⁴ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 190.

¹⁴⁵ Tim Keller “Calvin’s Company of Pastors Today.” Vimeo, 2017. <https://vimeo.com/211581520>

is for pastors to get together in groups for mutual encouragement, accountability, sermon feedback, etc. He suggests these pastoral groups, modeled after Calvin's Company of Pastors, is one way in which pastors will survive the hostile culture.

In the introduction to Calvin's *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, Elsie McKee writes, "[F]or he was convinced that no Christian is a Christian apart from the rest of the body. Spirituality for Calvin was therefore never individualistic. It was personal, without question, but it was personal in the context of the community of faith, whether that community was immediately visible or not."¹⁴⁶

In Geneva, that community was quite visible. Once a week the Genevan Pastors would gather to hear one another preach, discuss pastoral case studies, and to encourage and confront one another. This "Company of Pastors" was the forerunner to Presbytery Meetings. But it went deeper than church, business meetings. Once a quarter, the pastors would gather for Censure meetings in which each pastor was examined in character and personal holiness.¹⁴⁷ Calvin recognized the need for other men who would walk with him throughout the joys and challenges of pastoral ministry.

"Over the years, a deep bond of friendship and trust was forged between the two men, due in large part to their shared labors for the gospel, their common concern for France, and Beza's unflinching loyalty to his spiritual mentor. 'I would be very cold-hearted,' Calvin noted, 'if I did not care deeply for Beza, who loves me more than a brother and honors me more than a father.'" Clearly, Calvin became for Beza what Bucer had once been for Calvin: a spiritual father, a theological mentor, a trusted friend, a guide who helped him discover his pastoral vocation."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ John Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, ed by Elsie Anne McKee (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), General Introduction, Kindle.

¹⁴⁷ Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013,) 62, Kindle.

¹⁴⁸ Manetsch, 38, Kindle.

Maybe I am beating a dead horse, but we desperately need one another. The Biblical witness is that two is always better than one; from creation on. You know that within the 12, Jesus had the 3. When he sent them out, it was always by two. Same within the early church. I cannot think of a time when someone started out to do something on their own. And of course, Paul always had a companion with him.

Christian life is inherently about relationships. The Jesus Creed is simple: LOVE GOD AND LOVE NEIGHBOR. At no time in Jesus's ministry did he have only one disciple. He came into the community of the people of God, and he expanded that community beyond Israel. He taught about relationships—loving enemies, forgiving offenders, and serving others. Nothing in his teaching or practices suggests that Christian life is something that can be experienced fully in the absence of other people...it is only in the furnace of relationships that we can fully obey most of Jesus's instructions. Relationships become the place where our obedience is most deeply challenged. Relationship systems, whether family or church, consistently challenge our spiritual and emotional maturity. In so doing, they shape our character.¹⁴⁹

Is it possible that us Reformed type care more about our scholarship than we do character and community? We will continue to limp along in our emotional and spiritual ignorance if we do not engage one another on levels deeper than making sure our doctrine is correct. I want to continue to stress that I am not saying that scholarship and doctrine are unimportant. We must, however, put more emphasis on our character and our need for community.

Think about the way we conduct our ordination exams in our presbytery meetings. We spend ninety-five percent of the time examining the candidate on bible knowledge, theological precision, and church polity. We spend very little time asking them about their marriage and parenting(if they are married), financial habits, how they lead, common temptations, their social media presence, and how they interact with those whom they disagree. We are warned and encouraged by many who have gone before us.

¹⁴⁹ R. Robert Creech, *Family Systems and Congregational Life: A Map For Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 101, Kindle.

Benedict “warns us against is the avoidance of community and the excessive emphasis upon private spirituality that precludes the support of Christian community.”¹⁵⁰

Bonhoeffer said that he who is alone in his sin is utterly alone. James writes, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” (James 5:16) Bonhoeffer continues:

Sin wants to remain unknown, especially in the life of the leader. What will our elders and our congregation think of us if they find out how sinful we really are? “In confession the light of the Gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart. The sin must be brought into the light...If a Christian is in the fellowship of confession with a brother he will never be alone again, anywhere.”¹⁵¹

Eugene Peterson was once asked, “What practices refreshes your soul as a pastor?”

One of the things that made a huge difference in my life was I gathered the pastors in my neighborhood every Tuesday for two, sometimes three hours to have lunch together. We did it in my study. They weren't all Presbyterians. I just invited everybody in the county. It was not a large county, and we had about 17 or 18 pastors. If they were in the community and they were pastor of a church, they were there. Borrowing a phrase from Calvin, we called ourselves "The Company of Pastors." And we had an agenda: to help each other get ready to preach on Sunday. But if something was going on or somebody was having a divorce or a church fight or someone was just depressed, we dropped everything and talked. Talked and prayed. And that group was life-giving for all of us. At the end of the academic year, we went on an overnight retreat together where we celebrated the Eucharist at the conclusion. And that group is still going on.¹⁵²

Notice the question, “What *refreshes* your soul?” Peterson’s answer to that is being vulnerable with a group of other pastors. I know that it can sometimes be difficult to be with others in ministry. We struggle with comparison and competition. We can feel jealous and shameful if we do not think we are as “successful” as other pastors. For years, General Assembly

¹⁵⁰ David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010), Introduction, Kindle.

¹⁵¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community* trans. By John W. Doberstein (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1954), 110-113.

¹⁵² Eugene Peterson, “The Relationally Grounded Pastor,” *Christianity Today*, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2015/spring/relationally-grounded-pastor.html>

brought more shame to me than almost anywhere else. I felt as though I never measured up. When I shut down my church plant, I thought I was the biggest failure in the denomination. The turning point for me was when an older pastor whom I knew of and respected came up to me, and asked me how I was doing. In a moment of honesty, I said, “I feel so ashamed to be here right now.” He said this, “Do you know how many guys in this room struggle with the same thing? Do you know how much I struggle with it?” You should know this guy went on to be the moderator at the next General Assembly. This was a life changing moment for me because I realized I no longer had to hide. I no longer needed to posture. I no longer needed to try to be someone I was not. This was one of the many conversations that started taking me down this path.

Another moderator¹⁵³ told me in a phone interview that he thought younger pastors are hungry to hear the stories of older pastors who go below the surface. They need to see “repentance below the waterline modeled.” Imagine an iceberg where the majority of it is hidden below the water. He has been in a group with other pastors for over 30 years, and they continually help one another do this. Do not lose sight of how deceptive we can be. We need others to help us look below the surface. What he means by “below the waterline” is having someone help us to see what is below the baseline feelings, or what we are feeling in the moment. What is underneath the terror? What is really behind the sadness?¹⁵⁴ This is why we have to start with Emotional Intelligence because it helps us see what is below the waterline. If we spiritualize or downplay our baseline emotions, we will never get below the surface and

¹⁵³ I mention two moderators of our denomination’s General Assembly because these are experienced, respected, and well-known men throughout the PCA. Their thoughts carry a lot of weight for those in the denomination.

¹⁵⁴ Joe Novenson in a conversation with the author, December 10, 2019.

become aware of our true selves. Chris Bruno, a counselor to pastors, says, “One of the superhuman gifts for pastors is to be able to read the faces of others, but maybe now it’s time for pastors to learn to read their own...Sometimes we can hide behind our ability to read others and use it to protect ourselves from getting to know ourselves.”¹⁵⁵

What do you think hinders you from taking the time to get below the waterline? **[I want to end with some encouragement with the reality of the gospel. I want you to keep in mind the gospel does not demand you get your life together so that you can be effective in ministry. The gospel frees you to be a mess and still be effective in ministry. God’s power is made perfect in weakness, not in how well you can keep yourself together. The gospel frees us to be honest about every aspect of our being. The good, the bad, and the ugly. The gospel reminds us we are so deeply loved despite how messed up we are. The gospel says we no longer have to hide from ourselves, from others, or from God. Part of what it means to be human is to know and embrace our brokenness and weakness, and to bring our shame, guilt, weaknesses, etc. to the cross. In doing so we discover how much we are loved and delighted in. Jesus loves and delights in you. The real you. Not the you you present on Sunday. Not the you you wish you were. But the real you with all of you weakness and brokenness. With all of this mind I want you to take some time in solitude and reflect on the following questions:]**¹⁵⁶

Who in my life knows the real me?

When was the last time I asked my wife, “What is it like living with me?” What do you think she will say?

¹⁵⁵ Chris Bruno, “Emotional Health for Tired Leaders,” March 4, 2021, in *Everything Just Changed*, produced by Bryce Hales and Brad Edwards, podcast.

¹⁵⁶ I am embarrassed this was not part of the original lecture. I need to be careful that I am not just giving guys one more thing to do, all of this is done in light of the gospel.

What difference would it make in my church if I “repented below the water line?”

Ask Jesus, “What do you want me to see about myself that I have avoided looking at for some time?” Spend some time with this question in silence. Know that you are loved by your Savior, and everything he says come from this reality. Any attack or accusation is not from Him. Allow Him to go deep.

[Again, with an extra day I would have given a couple of hours for individual reflection and group discussion.]

Retreat Evaluation Discussion

The following are highlights from an hour long discussion evaluating the prototype retreat:

Retreat Evaluation

7. What, if anything, do you hope to take with you from this retreat? New thoughts, practices, things to read, explore, etc?

- More time to explore the subject of silence
- Add more time of prayer during the day and be more intentional about extended times of prayer daily, weekly, and monthly
- Be more intentional regarding friendships
- Think through how to make pastoral relationships
- Most confusing piece was session 1 “I didn’t follow. I would have like more time on this.”
- Take the time to think through emotional intelligence and having a clearer idea of what healthy emotional intelligence looks like
- Loving my family better (I wish I would have give more space for this. It would have been good to ask for specifics)
- It was helpful that I came with specific subjects to discuss

- The intensional structure to the retreat was really good

8. What do you wish we had more time to do? What could be done without?

- More discussion/Q&A than lecture
- An hour after lecture in order to process as group in order to go deeper with subject matter
- Shared content is important but could be given ahead of retreat
- More time to hang out one on one
- Individual time is good, but then go and pair up and process things together
- One of the participants thought two days was a perfect length of time, but the others thought three days would be better.
- Having retreat during the middle of the week was good as well
- Important to plan these retreat far enough ahead to free up schedule
- Location that is 1-2 hours away is ideal for one of the participants
- More time for solo reflection and silence

9. What is your honest feedback regarding the content? What was helpful? What was unhelpful, even disturbing? Where do I need to do more research?

- “I appreciated the download of all the different things”
- Send out a copy of resources for folks to have
- One of the participants is not a big reader and asked for audible resources
- The three sessions felt a little “disjointed”
- “My favorite line was ‘you can’t know yourself by yourself’ and this could be the overarching narrative that ties all of the content together

- The connections of the session was somewhat counterintuitive and hard to process at one time
- It might make sense to have an entire retreat centered around each topic. So instead of giving all the info regarding Emotional Intelligence in one session, it could be spread out and made the topic of an entire retreat.
- Maybe the content on silence does not even be given. But just provide times of silence throughout the retreat
- Give a set of questions at the beginning of retreat that can set up what is coming throughout the retreat
- Give time to talk through pre-retreat questions. It would be a great starter, and a way for guys to get to know one another if they do not already (this helps me think through schedule)
- Provide follow-up material so that this is not a “one and done”

10. Is this something to which you would invite other folks in ministry? Why or why not?

- Yes. Because it is good to get out of regular role of preaching/teaching/pastoring and be a normal Christian for a little bit and be pastored by someone else
- The group also wanted to free me up from have to do everything. They wanted to take a proactive role in recruiting and even cooking
- Vital for spouses to be a part of this
- How do you provide childcare for this?

- One asked for a clarity for what this is all about within the bigger picture of things and how it fits into larger picture of ministry in Utah—how does this fit into building relationships, slowing down in ministry, etc?
- “You brought together all of the content in a great way—even for someone who is a little less hesitant to buy into emotional intelligence
- Yes. Because there is the need for being with other people who “get it”
- If our monthly gatherings start to look like Calvin’s Company of Pastors (best practices, case studies, sermon feedback, etc.), then we have to spend time together and get to know one another, and retreats foster this
- Yes. Because healthy churches begin with healthy pastors

11. How many times a year (if any) would you be willing to attend a retreat?

- All committed to at least once a year.
- Four of the five committed to two with a strong probability of two from the fifth
- A couple suggested that the second should include spouses

12. Is this something you think your church would be willing to invest? Would your church/leadership consider giving at least \$500 a year toward a “retreat pot?” Why or why not?

- All the churches committed to at least this much because this is a good way to support the health of pastors

Throughout the discussion I was encouraged to pursue these types of retreats with other pastors.

A couple of the guys were still a little skeptical regarding Emotional Intelligence, but asked for more resources. One said he wanted to explore it further. “I am your audience. I am a typical PCA guy who does not pay attention to my emotions. I want to at least explore “the bridge” even

if I do not cross it.” Another still does not “get it” which encouraged me to continue to work on this in such a way that he will continue to explore. Part of the resistance is because this new subject matter that was never emphasized in seminary, the ordination process, or touched on in Reformed circles. I think time and reflection are the keys here. This particular pastor, when we first started meeting together three years ago, once said, “I do not want or need more friends. Nor do I have time for group therapy sessions.” Yet, here he is at a retreat and is encouraged to be more intentional about pursuing pastoral friends. He also seemed willing to read *Emotional Intelligence for Religious Leaders*. As I write this, I realize I need to make this part of the retreat longer so there is more time to process and have them think through practical application. This was part of the feedback as well. They wanted more time to discuss and reflect individually, in pairs, and as a large group. When I do this for three full days, there will be more time dedicated to this. The additional time for reflection is so vital because they need the time to process this. It is a lot to take in during one lecture at one retreat. Being able to interact with others is key to helping articulate both their grasp of the subject matter, and/or understanding some of their resistance.

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