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Tyndale University

Strengthening a Korean-Canadian Church Leadership Team

By Developing Their Self-Awareness
and Knowledge about Communication Styles

A Research Portfolio

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

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By

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ABSTRACT

This Research Portfolio is about my leadership development via Tyndale's Doctor of Ministry program. It includes my Leadership Narrative, Philosophy of Leadership, Ministry Context Analysis and Project Report. As a therapist, I have noticed that an individual's communication style tremendously impacts—positively or negatively—their relationships. During the program and process of writing this Portfolio, I again witnessed the pivotal role that self-awareness about one's communication style can play in improving one's relationships with others and strengthening teamwork. My research project focused on the communication styles of Joy Church's (JC) key leaders and explored how their communication impacted their team building. The methodologies I drew on for this project were Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Ethnographic Research (ER). While the project was neither a PAR project nor an Ethnography, both methodologies inspired me and provided methods that I used. PAR methods helped me and the project participants to stay actively involved from the start to the end of the project. ER methods allowed me to deeply understand the group's shared culture and behaviours. I applied the insights I gained and helped the leadership team acknowledge and discern the potential drawbacks and benefits of different communication styles. I also discovered that their communication styles were related to cultural factors such as organizational hierarchy and respect for elders. Understanding JC's ministry culture and discovering its leaders' values and communication skills improved the leadership team's communication.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

This Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Research Portfolio demonstrates what I have learned and my personal growth as a leader over the last three years. There are four core sections. The first is my Leadership Narrative, which details my personal story from my upbringing until now as I approach graduation from the DMin program. This chapter was first written in 2020 in the Formation of the Leader course and updated to reflect what has taken place since then. Writing this was a great opportunity for me to observe my calling, fortes, and weaknesses as a leader, and I hope that it will provide readers with similar insights. The second section is my Philosophy of Christian Leadership, which was written in April 2022. In this chapter, I argue that people's leadership styles can vary depending on what kind of leadership philosophy they have, and I reflect on my own philosophy and leadership style. The third is my Ministry Context Analysis. This was written in 2021 and updated to fit in with the rest of my portfolio. The fourth section is my Project Report, which describes the research project I conducted with the Joy Church (JC) leadership team in 2022 and 2023. The research centred on participants' communication skills, and I followed a process based on Participatory Action Research and Ethnography. My Project Report was written

in April 2023 and was updated for clarity and accuracy during the formation of this Portfolio.

I was excited to revisit my three-year-long DMin journey and reflect on my leadership development as I compiled my Research Portfolio. I hope that readers will see how I developed and how my life journey has shaped the way that I am now. I think that my story aligns well with Authentic Leadership, a theory described in *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. In it, the author notes that “Authentic leadership is a lifelong developmental process, which is formed and informed by each individual’s life story” (Northouse 2016, 200). I learned many things in the DMin program, but one that stood out to me was the importance of awareness.

Northouse defines it as:

A quality within servant leaders that makes them acutely attuned and receptive to their physical, social and political environment. It includes understanding oneself and the impact one has on others. With awareness, servant leaders are able to step aside and view themselves and their own perspectives in the greater context of the situation (2016, 228).

Another concept that stands out to me is self-awareness. Northouse describes this as:

The personal insights of the leader [...] reflecting on your core values, identity, emotions, motives, and goals, and coming to grips with who you really are at the deepest level [...] When leaders know themselves and have a clear sense of who they are and what they stand for, they have a strong anchor for their decisions and actions (2016, 202-203).

This explains how self-awareness impacts us. It is one of the most important leadership characteristics to me, so I applied it within my counselling practice and research project. The details are provided in the Ministry Context Analysis.

People interact with one another almost all the time in leadership settings.

Accordingly, good communication is required because it inspires trust and positive change. I have noticed that self-awareness in many settings, especially in leadership roles helps prevent issues or misunderstandings. Goleman and his team mention that “great leadership works through emotions” (2013, 3). According to the authors,

The key to making primal leadership work to everyone’s advantage lies in the leadership competencies of emotional intelligence: how leaders handle themselves and their relationships (Goleman et al 2013, 6).

This message emphasizes that leaders with high emotional awareness are more effective at coping and understanding not only their own emotions but also others. Grant and Berry note that leaders who have developed an awareness of their own fortes and weaknesses as well as others are more capable of improving their leadership skills over time (2011, 37-64). Thomas and Inkson stress that leaders who have a high level of cultural awareness are more effective at team building (2009, 174-178). Lastly, leaders who have a high level of situational awareness understand their contexts and adapt their decisions to them better (Endsley 1995, 32-64). All of this reinforces the importance of leaders’ self-awareness, which is pivotal for enhancing leadership abilities such as adapting, empathizing, and communicating.

One opportunity that helped me grow in my self-awareness took place in 2015. I felt like God was giving me a new direction through this event. This new chapter began when I went through Youth With A Mission’s (YWAM) Discipleship Training School in Kona, Hawaii. This experience helped me know God more deeply. It reassured me that God has a unique calling on my life.

Furthermore, this event helped me learn about myself through many courses that included good lectures and positive interactions with people. This program combined a three-month-long program about knowing God and a two-month-long outreach program. During the former program, I was asked to draw my life map. By doing this, I revisited critical moments in my life and recognized how God shaped who I am. Writing my thoughts and emotions about what I have experienced helped me to observe more about myself such as my traits, personality, hobbies, values, skills, and interactions with people around me. In addition, one of the lectures was about how to communicate with others. I also developed greater emotional awareness by getting in touch with my negative emotions and learning how to manage them. Once I knew how to do this, I was better at navigating challenging situations and communicating more clearly and effectively.

When the learning program was over, and I was preparing to go to China with a team for the outreach program, a pastor who was a core speaker in Kona told me that God wanted to use me as a leader who awakens world leaders. At that time, I had just been accepted into a Master of Divinity (MDiv) program in Clinical Counselling, so I did not pay much attention to his message. The word leader seemed irrelevant to me. But, later on, I would come to appreciate what he said.

In 2019, I finished my MDiv and started working as a therapist. To my surprise, in 2020 God led me to enroll in the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Ministry Leadership program. I am passionate about my calling in the counselling

field and often work with authentic leaders who have “a deep-seated interest in what they are doing and truly care about their work” (Northouse 2016, 197). I noticed that they understood their values. They had a clear idea of who they were and what the right thing was to do. At that time, I did not know about authentic leadership. As I was studying the DMin program, I realized that this is what they were practicing. I found their self-awareness, compassion, and connectedness very attractive, all of which are important aspects of this leadership style.

I think God wanted me to expand my horizons and learn more about what those leaders do by allowing me to enter the DMin program. At the time, I thought, “Who would have ever thought that I would study a leadership program for my doctorate?” But even as I thought that I also thought of Isaiah 55:8: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.” (Note: All scripture references in this portfolio are taken from the New International Version.) I wondered what God’s plan for me was. I was a newcomer to the field of leadership, so almost everything was new to me. This ignited my curiosity to know more about leadership. I have enjoyed studying and had the blessing of interacting with leaders from Toronto and around the world. How did I get to the point where others could think of me as a leader?

The DMin program allowed me to reflect on my story “through the concept of vocation” as Palmer describes (2000, 11). I was a bit hesitant while I was initially writing my Leadership Narrative because my personal story, which included my hurts and struggles, would eventually be made public. Despite this fear, I decided to move forward because I believe that everyone’s story is unique

and can impact others in different ways. It was a great journey that helped me become more deeply aware of myself. I hope that my portfolio inspires readers to observe and reflect on their one-of-a-kind life journey, too. Moreover, it would be wonderful if readers become more self-aware about their communication styles and explore why they communicate and lead the way that they do. Before I move on to the rest of my portfolio here are some key terms you will encounter throughout.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Leadership:** “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse 2022, 6).
- **Ethnography:** Ethnography is “the study of people in naturally occurring settings, or ‘fields’ by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without the meaning being imposed on them externally” (Brewer 2000, 10).
- **Participatory Action Research (PAR):** PAR is “A systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives” by engaging and including participants in the research process (Stringer 2014, 1). The Action Research cycle is observing, planning, acting, and reflecting (Bramer 2017, 30).

- **Communication Styles:** Communication is “the process of conveying and taking in ideas and opinions” (Pumble 2013). There are four styles of communication: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive (Silk 2014, 83-83). These will be described in more detail in my Project Report.
- **Hierarchy:** Hierarchy is the “unequal distribution of power” (Thomas & Inkson 2009, 35).
- **Active Listening:** Active listening is “a cluster of skills used to increase the accuracy of meaning. Attending, being silent, summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning, and empathizing are the essential skills of active listening” (Shebib 2013, 116).

CHAPTER 2:

LEADERSHIP NARRATIVE

The following narrative is my leadership story: my past, present, and future. I wrote it in 2020 during the Formation of the Leader course. During this course, I had a great opportunity to reflect on my life journey over a short time period.

When I was born, I entered a world of many systems and the first system I encountered was my family of origin. Richardson talks about the powerful experience provided by our family of origin by saying,

Life in the family of origin (the family a person is born and raised in) is a tremendously powerful experience for everyone. The impact of that experience is not restricted to childhood. The way we see ourselves, others, and the world is shaped by the setting of our family of origin. The views we develop there stay with us throughout life.

At some point, most of us leave our families of origin physically, but we rarely leave them emotionally. Even if you put an ocean between you and your family of origin, or never return home again, you will continue to re-enact the dynamics of your original family in any new family you establish. (2011, 1)

As a counsellor, I have noticed that we are influenced a lot by our family members in how we think and feel, though we may not realize it at the time.

Through family members, we learn how to communicate with others as well as many kinds of emotions, values, and skills. Parental styles and personality are also related to our family of origin. These things directly impact our leadership

style alongside providing the basic skills we need to successfully live in a society. One's family of origin is a powerful influence for each person, shaping their present and future.

Alongside our family of origin, we are influenced by various aspects of our upbringing, such as our schools, teachers, friends, neighbours, and co-workers. We are constructed into the people we are by our culture, context, language, people, education, and so on. Psychosocial theories place an increasing emphasis on the idea that personality development is inherently social and flows from one's relationship with other people. Two major theories on this front are Bowlby's attachment theory and Erikson's lifespan development theory.

According to Dr. Helen Noh, who I studied under, Bowlby taught that the way we are treated and our early encounters, especially by our primary caregivers, profoundly shape our self-perception, views of others, and the world around us.

These experiences significantly form our personality and attachment patterns (Noh 2016, "Lecture 7"). Dr. Noh also taught that Erikson theorized that our personality development progresses through various stages, influenced heavily by social interactions and relationships. Significant moments we experience often shape our growth, becoming crucial milestones in our lives (Noh 2016, "Lecture 6"). Both theories explain how much our lives are affected by the people with whom we interact and what kind of events we encounter. This aligns well with J. Robert Clinton's work, which is premised on the idea that each person's narrative means something and is worth knowing. Robert Banks and his fellow authors talk about Clinton's three core components of his leadership framework: "time

analysis, process items, and patterns of response” (2016, 76). About time analysis they say:

the chronological development of a leader enables an emerging leader to see stages of development in relation to the whole, integrate experiences into a coherent picture, and help to set expectations for the future. Though each leader’s timeline is unique, the emerging patterns and overall lessons can be compared to a generalized ministry timeline, which facilitates a wider orientation and evaluation of a leader’s development (Banks et al 2016, 76).

Process items, meanwhile, refer to “how incidents that happened in leaders’ lives shape them and each leader’s story leads to a leadership journey” (Banks et al 2016, 77). Patterns of response appeared from “a comparative study of individual timelines” and there are at least twenty-five of them (2016, 78). One of them is a destiny pattern and it is “A leader’s entire lifetime and enables a person to see his or her key contributions in full perspective” (2016, 78).

I found Clinton’s leadership framework helpful as it aligned with my leadership journey. Alongside this, some tests that we had to take during The Formation of the Leader allowed me to know myself better. They were CliftonStrengths’s Top Five, which identified my talents and showed me how to leverage them, and a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Step II (MBTI) test, which accurately assessed my preference type. Moreover, the required course books written by Henri Nouwen, Parker Palmer, and Ruth Barton helped me to listen to my inner voice, observe myself as a leader and see some different perspectives. The case studies we did during the Systems Theory and Leadership course in 2020 were also useful for looking at my life journey and ministry settings and

applying systems theory to them. I will consider all of the above in my Leadership Narrative.

Finally, during the completion of this Portfolio, I added more about how I have developed as a person and leader from 2020 to 2023. Reviewing and revising this document was a great opportunity for me to see my development as a leader by reflecting on my upbringing, adolescence, young adulthood, a season of transition in Canada, and my DMin studies.

My Upbringing in South Korea

My parents were born in South Korea. I was also born there as the second of four children. My parents never dated before getting married because arranged marriage was common in their generation. My dad was the first son out of six children. Being the first son is an important role in Korean culture. One responsibility he had was to live with his parents as they aged, so I grew up in a family of eight including my grandparents. My dad was a teacher, and my mom was a housewife who had to look after my grandparents and raise her four children. My grandfather owned some farms and other properties and there were a couple of people who worked for him. Helping my grandfather's work and taking care of us kept my mom busy. In my grandfather's generation, it was common for wealthy men to have a mistress. My grandfather was one of these men; he had a mistress and they had six children. At that time, men had more power and education than women. Most women were expected to stay home, take care of the children, and do housework. Thus, my grandmother was not financially

independent and had to live with my grandfather even if she did not want to. She did not have many rights or the ability to speak up for herself. I do not even remember my grandmother talking to my grandfather. I felt sorry for her.

My grandfather was different than his father. According to my mom, my great-grandfather was well-off due to his success in the orchard business. The town called him “the rich Kang” and he was very generous to others who were in need. In those days in South Korea, there were many poor people; he regularly distributed many different kinds of grain to them. He did not monitor who came or how much grain they took just in case they were embarrassed. Thus, they could take as much as they needed. My mom told me that my great-grandfather was very generous, gentle, and warm, and was respected by others. She respected him and he liked my mom. I am not surprised that he liked my mom because she has always been my role model. My mom wanted to help the poor like my great-grandfather did. Unfortunately for her, my grandfather did not take after his father in this regard. He tended to use his money for his own needs and desires, not for others.

My father would sometimes get frustrated with my grandfather. My mom was a mediator between the two of them, and she knew how to talk with my dad and calm him down. My mom was a positive, warm, and happy person. I do not remember her complaining or talking badly about others. Sometimes my grandmother took her frustrations out on my mom, but my mom handled them well. My mom was the first child among seven. She was responsible and played a parental role for her siblings before getting married. Due to her childhood and the

environment she grew up in, she knew how to interact with people. She told me that her mom was a very gentle and warm person, too. I believe my mom's personality was similar to my grandmother, who also played a parental role for her siblings. My mom was a good cook and was almost always home preparing food at the time I came home from school, so I longed to get there as fast as possible. She created a warm and happy home environment. She also took care of some seniors who lived alone in our neighbourhood. She often had me and my siblings deliver some of the food she made to them. I remember how grateful they were when I did. I was glad to see their happy smiles and felt positively in return.

My mom has been my role model ever since I was young because she is a genuine, honest, and warm person, and she has a beautiful smile. She was also a leader. She was the president of the mother's association in addition to other groups. She was good at singing, and I loved hearing her voice. She was a good storyteller too, so I would wait excitedly for her stories at bedtime. Most of all, I respected her resilience, having seen how she often fulfilled her duties and overcame difficulties without complaining. My older sister is also thoughtful, warm, and gentle; I think she learned this from my mom. She has been my best friend since I was young, and we can talk about anything. I am also close with my two younger brothers, and we played together all the time as kids.

I have many good childhood memories even though there were some conflicts between my dad and grandfather. Most of the time, my dad reserved his emotions toward my grandfather and did not talk much. I realize now that my dad was using a passive or passive-aggressive communication style with his dad. My

dad had to respect his dad simply because he was his father, even though he thought my grandfather was wrong. This is because respect for elders is a crucial tenet of Korea's cultural morality. As a child, I could imagine my dad's frustration with my grandfather and was amazed that he still showed respect and obedience to him.

Despite my dad's unpleasant childhood, thankfully, my dad and my mom's relationship was good, and they created a safe environment for me and my siblings. My dad trusted my mom and loved her so much. He appreciated the roles she did at home, especially in balancing my grandparents' relationship. My parents were open and intimate with each other, and my dad used to say to my mom that he did not want to be like his father. Family meant a lot to my dad so he would do anything for us. However, sometimes I could see a resemblance to my grandfather, particularly when my dad was angry. Fortunately, his way of letting it out was different from my grandfather's. He tried not to show his anger toward us most of the time. When he could not contain it, we would quietly go to our rooms and wait for him to calm down. Most of the time he stepped outside and smoked or went to see his neighbourhood friends. I really did not like to see my dad upset because I felt like he was a totally different person and I was nervous, despite knowing how much he loved us. In Korean families like mine, openly expressing negative emotions like anger is discouraged because it could make people uncomfortable. Thinking about others first is considered very important. As a family, we did not mind making sacrifices for one another. When we saw any member of the family going through a hard time, we were there for them and

encouraged them, and we tried not to show our negative emotions for fear that it would add to their troubles.

Looking back on it, I think that I learned to communicate in a passive or passive-aggressive manner, just like my dad. This is an intergenerational phenomenon in Korean culture. Children and grandchildren inherit a fear of expressing negative emotions from their parents and grandparents. Despite this cultural default, I managed to learn a different way of doing things and became more assertive through my mom and books I read. However, I notice that my communication style varies depending on the situation, especially when I communicate with people who are older than me. Even though I know that being passive or passive-aggressive can lead to misunderstanding, I cannot stop thinking about respecting my elders. I believe respecting elders is a good thing/ culture, but it can be tricky if a conflict arises that should be addressed, because I don't want to offend them. Often I deliver the message indirectly to demonstrate my good manners and respect. I did not realize how much this cultural norm still influences my communication style until I reflected on my upbringing for this Leadership Narrative.

When I look back on my childhood, I was mostly a happy and positive person like my mom and responsible like my dad. I enjoyed interacting with my friends and received abundant love from my family, relatives, and others. The positive comments and feedback I received boosted my self-esteem, self-appreciation, and self-confidence. I knew that I was precious and did not have to compare myself with others. It was easy for me to talk with people—even

strangers—and I was generally curious and eager to get to know them. I felt safe because I had trustworthy parents, my angelic sister who loved me so much, and two strong younger brothers. My parents let me do things I liked, such as playing, and did not push me to do what most Korean parents wanted, such as studying hard. In retrospect, I think playing was the best way for me to study in terms of building social skills and strengthening my emotional intelligence, especially as a child. I lived in the countryside, so I had a chance to go out and play in nature with my friends. There were a decent number of house rules that I needed to follow but most of them were reasonable, so I felt comfortable. I liked my family's house rules—being on time for dinner, doing the dishes, being respectful and responsible, and so on—since there was still some flexibility. I still like to make plans with flexibility because I got used to it as a child. The motto of our home was integrity, honesty, and love; in time these became my values, too, long before I was aware of it.

Erik Erikson was a psychologist who developed the eight psychosocial stages (Cherry, 2022). He taught that the development of our personality depends directly on “the resolution of existential crises like trust, autonomy, intimacy, individuality, integrity, and identity” (Coles et al, 2002). I noticed that my personality has continued to develop as an adult, which also lines up with Erikson's theory (Noh 2016, “Lecture 6”). Due to the love I received from my family, I knew I could trust people and saw the world as a safe place. Because our home life was somewhat flexible, I learned autonomy. Thanks to my family's

warmth, I felt close to them. And, due to my family's values, I learned what integrity was.

During my childhood I also learned how to communicate effectively and saw how important patience is. When conflict arises, it is easy for us to say things we regret. However, my mom did not react to problems right away. She tended to go outside and cool down before talking about her concerns. Most of the time my dad was like that, too, but he sometimes showed his anger, and I found the tension this created uncomfortable. He was sometimes passive-aggressive; my mom was the one who initiated conversations and resolved issues. My dad was more educated than my mom, so he was knowledgeable, but in my opinion, my mom was the wiser person. My dad's intellect was notable, but my mom's emotional intelligence was amazing. Both had strong suits, and I think I learned both of their strengths. Conflicts and disagreements are a common part of life. I want to prevent issues before they became serious. My mom knew how to assert herself when it was necessary. I have almost never seen her upset. Rather, she showed us how to resolve issues wisely when issues arose. There are many things I learned from my mom, but her conflict resolution skills stand out to me as one of the most important.

I also learned important lessons from other parts of my childhood, such as school. I remember one time when one of my classmates, who I will refer to as H, was spreading rumours about me by saying that I was arrogant and did not care about people who were not at my level because my dad was a teacher and my mom was the chairman of the Mothers' Association. At first, I did not react to her

because it did not bother me and it was not true. However, my friends kept talking about it and I became annoyed, so I finally confronted H. She did not apologize and gave me the cold shoulder. Then we had a heated argument, after which she became left out at school even though that was not my intention. My classmates were on my side, and they decided to not talk with her. My homeroom teacher called me and asked me to forgive H and my mom even asked me to do the same thing. I was angry because I did not do anything wrong and they expected me to forgive her. My mom said H's dad passed away and H's mom, who was my mom's friend, told her that H was going through a hard time. She had always envied me, which is why she said bad things about me. H was angry about her dad's death and her poor family situation. I never knew this because we were not close. I was reluctant to forgive her, but I felt sympathy for and empathy toward her after talking with my mom, so I let it go. Then, surprisingly, my classmates started talking with H again. Later, H reached out to me and thanked me, and we became friends. It was an interesting experience that taught me that people's behaviour might be related to their personal life. Since then, I became more curious about people's behaviours and why they think and talk the way that they do. I started putting myself into others' shoes and not judging them based on their behaviours. I started actively listening to others, being empathetic, and having curiosity about others' stories. All of these skills would play an important role in my leadership later in life.

My Adolescence and Undergraduate Years

I was mostly happy during my middle school days. I loved music, art, literature, and physical education and I won some awards for piano and art contests. I was voted the class vice president a couple of times, a position and role that were most enjoyable. I liked hanging out with my friends and studying was fun so I felt like school was a playground where I could learn and play. My mom was the primary leader of the Mothers' Club in my middle school, and the teachers respected her a lot. I was proud of her, and I noticed that her leadership combined genuine empathy, active listening, awareness, trust, loyalty, and warmth. Upon reflection, I see that my mom was following the principles of Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership. According to Northouse, Bill George mentions that Authentic Leadership combines self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and a strong moral code (2016, 202). I will describe this in more detail in my Philosophy of Christian Leadership.

This model of leadership aligns with my mom's life and I learned it from her. My mom was true to her values so people could trust her, especially me. Her words and actions lined up. Most of all, my mom was aware of her emotions and her behaviours, and she was able to draw people around her because of her non-judgmental stance and active listening skills. According to Northouse, Daniel Goleman teaches that self-awareness consists of emotional awareness (understanding one's emotions), accurate self-assessment (knowing one's strengths and weaknesses), and self-confidence (understanding one's self-worth) (Northouse 2016, 28). I think my mom was modelling healthy self-awareness by

practicing each of the things Goleman describes. I have almost never seen her have issues in her relationships with family members, friends, neighbours, or even acquaintances. I remember that one of my relatives, who was very strict and notorious for being picky, even praised my mom for her good relationships, communication, awareness, and servanthood. I now realized that these became my core values before I was conscious of them since my mom was my role model.

Unlike middle school, my three years of high school were boring and tiring, and I lost interest in studying. My sister and I moved to another city to attend new schools (hers and mine were different). Living away from my parents was hard for me—they were one hour away by bus—and adjusting to the new city, school, friends, teachers, and travel to and from school were also challenging. I was confused about my identity; I felt like I was a different person than the one who was extroverted, happy, positive, and fun in middle school. I could not focus during classes, and often daydreamed. I got poor grades and was disappointed in myself.

There was a university I really wanted to go to, but I failed the entrance exam. I was again disappointed in myself. I was also unhappy with the university I eventually attended to study English Literature. I felt I did not belong there. I felt like a failure, and my ego was badly hurt. I regretted not studying hard enough to achieve my goal of attending the other university. For this reason, I did not study and was ashamed of attending the school I was in. I spent my days

partying, hanging out with friends, and wWasting my time. This lasted a couple of years. I felt like something was missing from my life and was desperate to find meaning and purpose.

In *In the Name of Jesus*, Henri Nouwen mentions three temptations that leaders face. One of them is “to be relevant” (Nouwen 1993, 15). Relevance is about thinking “do things, show things, prove things, and build things” (Nouwen 1993, 16). We are prone to this demand because society pressures us to live up to its expectations. Subsequently, many leaders experience “a deep current of despair beneath our accomplishments” (Nouwen 1993, 21). In South Korean culture, relevance is one of the most important qualities a person can have. It is a small country so there is fierce competition between people to become successful. Going to a prestigious university is the first step on this path toward success. Those who fail are perceived to be not good enough. Thus, there is an enormous amount of pressure on high school students to enter a top university. Farwaz and Lee note that,

South Korea is known to be an academic achievement-oriented society, as the result of decades of massive investment in education. In 2019, with 70% of its 25–34 age group with tertiary education, Korea was the most educated country in the world (2022, 2).

This contributes to a high suicide rate among adolescents (Farwaz and Lee 2022, 2). My parents did not put too much pressure on me to become a successful person but there was pressure from society and other people in my life who had high expectations of me. Thus, when I failed the entrance exam and was unable to

enter the university of my choice, I felt useless and was unable to find much happiness in my personal life.

Recognizing how unhappy I was, I started attending church again in hopes of finding out the purpose of life. This is when I met Jesus for the first time. I felt peace while singing Gospel songs and heard God say, “I love you the way you are.” I cried so much and believed that Jesus was actually alive. I felt like I found myself again. After that encounter, I started attending church regularly and joined the church choir as one of the lead singers. Experiencing such a deep sense of failure during university was hard but it led me to find the meaning of life through that encounter with Jesus. Furthermore, God recognized my hunger for further education and opened a new door for me.

The new door was visiting Illinois State University with my professors and classmates, which was a life-changing event for me. Travelling allowed me to see more of the beautiful world God created and I felt that one day He would show me other parts of it. I wanted to see more of the world and study English, so I decided to go to York University in Toronto, partly because I had a couple of friends who lived there. I worked to improve my English skills so I could communicate without translators. It felt good to express myself in a different language. Visiting Illinois State University and York University provided a good opportunity to open my eyes and see the world in a positive light. After returning to South Korea, I became a kindergarten teacher and started working at an academy teaching English to middle-school students, high school students, and adults. I had the opportunity to meet company executives and received good

feedback from them in terms of my teaching style and leadership skills. My parents were very proud of me, and I sometimes discussed my teaching style with my father since he was a teacher too.

When I look back now at the painful period after I failed to get into my preferred university, I see that if it were not for that failure, I would not have gone through the important period of learning I went through afterwards. Letting go of our ego is not easy. It hurts and we tend to be proud. Parker Palmer mentions that letting go of our ego and discovering our identity (our true self) is “the seed of authentic vocation” (2000, 9). There were many times in my life I tried to do things my own way and if a door was closed, I was disappointed. Now I accept that if a door is closed, there is a reason for it.

My Season of Transition from South Korea to Canada

I got married in 2006 and gave birth to a beautiful baby boy in 2007. I cannot express how happy this made me. However, shortly thereafter my dad passed away suddenly and my family and I had a very difficult time adjusting to life without him. I was angry at God because he was too young to die. The pain was so severe that I felt like I would rather die than continue suffering. This was the first time I experienced such deep and prolonged despair. Making things worse, I found out that my Canadian-born husband had a serious gambling addiction, which I had not known when we got married. I tried hard to resolve this issue with him, but it did not work out. I was angry at God as well as my husband because I had met him at church where he was the leader of a bible study. Even

though he was not Korean, I decided to marry him when he proposed, in part because of his strong faith. It was painful to see my husband's vicious cycle of addiction. My husband could not speak Korean so we could not find an addiction counsellor in Korea. My family encouraged me to go to Canada to find him one. He did not want to move there because his life was comfortable in Korea. I convinced him that we could go to Canada for a couple of years and, if his issue was resolved, we would come back. Unfortunately, he did not adjust well upon returning to his own country and we struggled emotionally, financially, and spiritually. Our relationship became worse. I felt helpless and hopeless.

Eventually, we separated. On one hand, I felt peaceful because I did not have to deal with my husband's addiction anymore. On the other hand, I felt guilty for not taking care of him. Before we separated, I enrolled in a Social Service Worker program and learned that addiction cannot be cured fully but is a lifelong battle. The reason I enrolled in this program, particularly the addiction course, was to better understand my husband and help him, in the end, I felt I was not able to help him. I decided to divorce my husband. He accused me of not being a good Christian woman because I did not stay in the marriage. I was in deep darkness at that time and tried my best to ignore my negative emotions. However, I now realize that through that hardship I learned patience and humility, which are critical components for a leader.

In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul asserts that God's power is revealed through people in their weakness, not in their strength. I specifically like verse 9 which says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ's power may rest on me." This verse resonates with me because I do not feel shame about showing my weakness to others anymore. Being patient is a critical factor in leadership but it is still one of my weakest character traits and I am continually in the process of improving in it. However, I started learning how to be more patient and understanding of others' difficulties while going through hardship. I used to make a lot of plans for the different areas of my life because I wanted a sense of achievement. However, my marriage taught me that sometimes you cannot make something work, no matter how hard you try. My father's death also reminded me of our human limitations. God is in control of everything. These two events humbled me. I could not help but surrender to Him.

Palmer states that his experience of depression led him to see how to become whole. It changed Palmer's life when his therapist helped him shift his perspective on his depression. He went from thinking of it as "the hand of an enemy trying to crush him" to "the hand of a friend, pressing him down to the ground on which is safe to stand" (Palmer 2000, 66). We tend to ignore negative emotions because we believe they hinder our journey. However, embracing both our strengths and weaknesses, the darkness and the light, is the way to find wholeness. Palmer confesses that his depression reconnected him with the community, which later made him better able to lead. I have seen many people go through similar experiences to Palmer and his understanding of good leadership touched my heart. He writes,

good leadership comes from people who have penetrated their own inner darkness and arrived at the place where we are at one with one another. People who can lead the rest of us to a place of “hidden wholeness” because they have been there and know the way (Palmer 2000, 80-81).

I learned this same thing from my own experiences. I was exhausted and did not know what to do when faced with such a dark moment in my life. Thankfully, God intervened by teaching me how to care for myself and grow spiritually after my hardship. I submitted the divorce papers, and my son and I went to the University of Nations in Kona, Hawaii for three months. Then we went on a missions trip to China for two months through a discipleship training program. It was my sister and my brother-in-law’s suggestion after they interceded for my family and finances. My family also covered my finances. While there, I started listening to God’s voice and meditated on the Bible every day. It was an amazing journey for me and helped me draw closer to God. The campus was beautiful and being so close to nature healed my pain. I met good people and felt at peace living in a Christian environment. I was motivated and inspired by them and started seriously thinking about my calling. I felt God’s unconditional love while taking courses, and my son adjusted well to the new environment, so I was very thankful. I learned the importance of practicing self-care by slowing down my pace and paying close attention to God. Deepening my relationship with Him allowed me to observe what kind of person I was and how He designed me.

When I reflect on this phase of my life, I see that I learned how to be patient and vulnerable and surrender to God. As I mentioned above, patience is still not my strong suit, but I am well aware of its importance and try to apply it to

my life. Showing or sharing my vulnerability felt odd at first, but many people engaged deeply with me. They praised God for how He worked in my life, and through this, I realized that I am a broken vessel, but God is the perfect healer. He deepened my understanding of others' broken hearts because I had been there. He gave me gifts of empathy and active listening. He made me much stronger through my difficulties, so now I know that suffering is not always a bad thing. I understand the meaning of the phrase “blessing in disguise,” and fully trust God’s plan. I often meditate on the book of Isaiah, including 55:9: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.” Now that I understand this message, I know how to let things go because I know that He has better plans for me. This helps me to stave off anxiety and feel peace.

My Master of Divinity in Clinical Counselling

In 2015, I started studying clinical counselling through the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program at Tyndale. Before that, my students would tell me that I was a good counsellor and some of them asked me to study and become one, so it was amazing to actually do so. I think God was preparing me to become a therapist long ago even though it only occurred to me at that point. Studying counselling was very interesting and it provided a good period of time to work on myself rather than others. He healed me through my studies, and I experienced what Henri Nouwen calls being a “wounded healer” (2010). It helped me realize that I had become a stronger and more faithful woman because of my hardships. Through my counselling studies, my relationship with my ex-husband improved

and we became friends again. He sincerely apologized for his addiction and its impact on our marriage. I was grateful and confessed my weaknesses as well and experienced the gift of forgiveness and reconciliation. Being healed of my own wounds made me want to help others in their hardships. I now realize that the reason God led me to study counselling was that he wanted to heal me first before helping others.

Many of my church's members reached out to me and shared their difficulties after I started studying counselling. They told me that I had traits such as care, empathy and listening skills that are essential for counselling. This recalled what some pastors with the gift of prophecy told me during my time in Kona, Hawaii. They told me that I was called to awaken leaders around the world. I had applied for the counselling program before going there and took their comments, along with those of the people who approached me in my church, as confirmation that I was on the right track. Counselling plays a significant role in awakening leadership qualities and the growth of leaders. Effective leadership starts with self-awareness and counselling helps leaders work on this by exploring their values, thoughts, emotions, fortes, and weaknesses (Shebib 2013, xiii). Counselling enhances leaders' emotional intelligence by teaching them to understand and regulate their emotions. It helps to build strong relationships, create positive environments, and resolve conflicts. Counselling also helps leaders improve their communication skills, including active listening skills and assertiveness (Patterson et al, 2012).

In Luke 5:10, Jesus says to his disciples, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” This message reflects my heart’s desire. I wanted to walk alongside people who are going through hardship as well as help them find their calling. I also believed that God was in control of everything, and, without his help, nothing could happen. Working with many clients from diverse backgrounds, cultures, values, and religions has not always been easy. So, I now follow Jesus’ approach to ministry, which is not a one-size-fits-all approach (Brown 2021). This helps me to guide others on their journey. He knew how to particularize his ministry to others by making unique statements and asking appropriate/timely questions. Because of this, people felt heard and accepted by him (Reese & Loane 2012, 182). One example of how I do this: I want to spread the gospel in my practice but am not allowed to do that, so I invite the Holy Spirit to my counselling room and let Him lead the session. I feel His presence and anticipate his healing of my clients. One of the practical effects is feeling a sense of peace and calmness.

During my MDiv, I got to do an internship at Child and Adolescent Services in Hamilton. This helped me to understand young people and how to interact with them better. Working there gave me insight into what they really wanted from life, and how important peer groups are to them. During the internship, I was able to apply the knowledge and experience I gained from raising my own son, and working with youth also helped me understand him better. After graduating, I worked as a psychotherapist at a medical clinic. I felt a sense of accomplishment and excitement in this new stage of my journey. I

mostly ran group therapy that consist of twelve to fifteen people. I co-led with another psychotherapist who was also a medical doctor. I learned a lot from him about how to lead a group and what I observed there reinforced how important human relationships are if people want to live good lives.

The clinic closed when the pandemic hit in 2020, so I was not able to see my clients in person. I asked God what he wanted me to do and which direction I needed to go. In 2015, one of my mentors from Kona gave me a standing offer to join his company. At that time, he encouraged me to study leadership, but it was not until the pandemic struck that I was convinced. After much prayer, I decided to apply for the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Ministry Leadership program. My time in the DMin program began in May 2020. I was not sure how God planned to use the program in my life, but I wanted to explore leadership. After I got accepted into the program, God opened another door for me to work as a therapist virtually. One of my peers from the MDiv program reached out to me because he wanted to open a virtual Christian clinic. I gladly accepted the position because his vision and mine aligned and we were interested in serving the same population. I was also grateful because the clinic I used to work at was quite far from my house, so I had to invest lots of energy and time to see my clients. This online clinic is where I work at the time of writing this Portfolio.

In my work there, I mainly focus on the children of immigrants. As an immigrant myself, I understand a typical immigrant's life and what challenges the first couple of generations face. My son is a 1.5-generation person who was born in Korea but moved to Canada when he was three and a half. Thankfully, my son

speaks Korean and English, but his Korean is not as good as his English. I, too, am bilingual, so we do not have difficulty communicating with each other.

However, I have met and seen many issues arise between parents and children due to language barriers and different cultural norms and values. Many parents and children at my church face these issues. When these conversations arise, I contribute my gifts, talents, and skills when I can. I believe this is a part of serving God's Kingdom and aligns with my life purpose.

The clinic's overarching purpose is to provide mental health support to people who were raised in immigrant families. Toronto is one of the world's most multicultural cities and contains a mixture of many different races, cultures, and languages. People who live in a foreign country can experience insecurity, stress, fear, anxiety, depression, and so on. In some cultures, talking about mental illness is taboo so they tend to repress their unpleasant emotions and pretend everything is okay. This negatively impacts immigrants and their children. This phenomenon is not limited to non-Christians but affects believers as well.

Unfortunately, many Christians have the mindset that they must be perfect, or at least project a perfect image to others. They believe that showing their vulnerabilities, especially mental illness, disgraces God. The saddest part is that even many church leaders have this mindset, so they tend to isolate themselves and not talk about these issues. Their level of stress is unmanageable and often leads to negative consequences. As Christian therapists, my colleagues and I do not take this issue lightly. We try to prevent this mindset as much as

possible. In order to do so, our clinic aims to impact the way that immigrant families view mental health.

My Doctor of Ministry in Leadership

There were many great courses I took during the DMin program, and I appreciated how practical they were. What I learned was applicable to my life and ministry. The last three years allowed me to understand who I am better by doing lots of reflection.

Despite my busy schedule, I put aside one day for a personal retreat in July 2020 as part of the Formation of the Leader course. Dr. David Sherbino, who is a professor of pastoral ministries and spiritual formation at Tyndale University, says that the purpose of having a personal spiritual retreat is “to enable you to be free from outside distractions so you can hear what God wants to say to you” (2013, 10). Initially, it was awkward for me to slow down because I am used to a busy life with my son, work, and other commitments. However, I was also excited to spend the day with God and practice what Jesus did. The scriptures say that Jesus went to a quiet place for extended periods of time just to be alone with the Father (Matthew 4:1-11). It appears that withdrawing to places of silence and solitude like this was a regular practice for Jesus (Matthew 14:23; Matthew 21:17; Luke 22:39-46). Jesus knew who the ultimate leader of the world was and demonstrated that spending quality time with God is of primary importance in ministry. Just as Jesus did, I focused on God during my retreat. Following Sherbino’s day retreat schedule helped me to do this. This allowed me to put aside

all my concerns and worries and I was able to focus on my relationship with God and enjoy silence. I was also able to pray for others, have some time to myself, and review my life, all of which felt good.

This experience made me think of the many authors who emphasize self-care, listening to God, meditation, and prayer. In *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, Ruth Barton notes that spiritual authenticity and self-care are important for spiritual leaders (2008, 24-32). She argues that good leadership comes from the inside out and allowing God to transform us before we try to change others is the best way to lead in ministry (Barton 2008, 19). She stresses that if we do not have an intimate relationship with God, our outward success is meaningless (Barton 2008, 12-25).

Similarly, Palmer notes,

It is so much easier to deal with the external world, to spend our lives manipulating material and institutions and other people instead of dealing with our own souls. We like to talk about the outer world as if it were infinitely complex and demanding, but it is a cakewalk compared to the labyrinth of our inner lives (2000, 82).

Henri Nouwen states,

Solitude is difficult for many people because they do not know what to do in solitude. Most of us are used to being very busy and productive but in solitude, we seem to do nothing. For those who have used productivity as the basis for their self-worth, this becomes a drastic if not radical departure from their way of living. But in solitude, we are not completely alone. Christ is with us, and we are deepening our relationship with him (1981, 13-15).

Formerly, productivity was the basis for my self-worth because my culture values success, which requires being productive. This is less and less the case, and my experience on the retreat lined up with what Nouwen says. Barton also states that

solitude is the place of our own conversion; in solitude, we can find our true self. She backs this up by noting that “God spoke because Moses stopped, paused, noticed, and turned aside” (2008, 62). We usually rely on the opinions of others and when we are overtired, our discernment becomes unclear. Solitude helped me to draw closer to God and to surrender to Him rather than trying to do everything alone. This gave me peace and reduced my anxiety. This aligns with Barton’s assertion that if we are rested and attentive to God, he strengthens our souls and leads our spirits (2008, 121).

During the Formation of the Leader course, I also had a chance to take three tests to help me understand my personality and leadership better. These were the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Step II assessment, the Clifton Signature Strengths report, and a 360° Review. Self-awareness is one of the key factors in becoming an effective leader. With this in mind, we were asked to observe what patterns were revealed by these tests. These tests also helped me to improve my communication skills because I recognized which areas were my strengths and what areas I needed to improve. Knowing myself better also enabled me to work with my participants because I could observe their strengths and areas to improve. These are the patterns I observed.

First, my MBTI II result was Extroversion, Sensing, Feeling, and Judging (ESFJ), which describes someone who tends to be friendly, factful, compassionate, and sympathetic, and greatly values cooperation and harmony (Quenk and Kummerow 2017, 3-4). Even before taking this assessment, I was aware that I am that kind of person because people would use these terms to

describe me. MBTI also says ESFJs are loyal and conscientious, persevere, and get things done in a timely, orderly, and caring manner (Quenk and Kummerow 2017, 3-4). They also work to see and draw out what is worthwhile in other people. Even when there is conflict, they believe they can find common ground and harmony. They are sociable and talk things over with people (Quenk and Kummerow 2017, 3-4). I find it quite surprising how accurately this describes me. I have also found that my experience helps me solve problems, so I want to be sure that ideas, plans, and decisions are based on solid facts that I know firsthand. I prefer to pay attention to details, and I am practical and realistic. I like to have fixed routines and strategies because they help me get things done. I value consistency in myself and others. I am likely to be most satisfied in my work environment or anywhere else, such as the church, when I can work with people cooperatively (Quenk and Kummerow 2017). I have noticed that many people value the fact that they can count on me to follow through in a friendly, organized, concerned, and practical manner.

My MBTI Step II results also provided me with insight into my communication style and how to enhance my style. I noticed that in five areas my result was in the midzone, between Extraversion (directing energy toward the outer world of people, objects and activities) and Introversion (directing energy toward the inner world of ideas, memories, and experiences): *Initiating-Receiving*, *Expressive-Contained*, *Gregarious-Intimate*, *Active-Reflective*, and *Logical-Empathetic* (Quenk and Kummerow 2017, 5). About my *Initiating-Receiving* communication style, the assessment says that I am “willing to introduce people

to one another if no one else is doing so” and that I should “be sensitive to the situation when deciding whether to make those introductions or not.” Concerning my *Expressive-Contained* style, the assessment says that I “share some of your thoughts with others but not all of them” and that I should “consider which people need to know what you think, and which people don’t.” Regarding my *Gregarious-Intimate* communication, the assessment says that “how much you participate depends on how much group interaction you’ve already had” and that “when you know that you’ll need to be in a large group, try to have fewer interactions overall that day.” About my *Active-Reflective* communication style, the assessment says that I am “comfortable interacting in person or quietly observing, depending on the circumstances” and that I should “pay attention to the preferred style of those with whom you’re interacting and try to match that style.” In explaining my *Logical-Empathetic* style, the assessment says that I “may sometimes present in a straightforward manner; at other times, tactfully circle around the issue” and that I should “decide which one is likely to be more effective in that situation” (Quenk and Kummerow 2017, 7). I was glad to see these midzone results because it meant that I had balance in those areas.

The results also helped me see where I needed to enhance my communication by highlighting my tendency to be *Accommodating*, *Accepting*, and *Tender*. I already knew that I often sought to ensure harmony by being agreeable, and this test reinforced that. I almost always felt the need to agree with others’ ideas and opinions. If I felt it was really necessary to share my perspective, I approached it gently and made sure nobody felt hurt or devalued. I

had to pause and re-read the advice they gave about enhancing my accommodating style because it was so right. The report says, “be aware that people may think you have no real opinions or that you’re hiding your real view; let them know what you care about” (Quenk and Kummerow 2017, 7). Becoming aware of this helped me to be more proactive. These are things I am still working on.

My top strengths in the Signature Strengths report were Maximizer, Empathy, Relator, Arranger, and Positivity (Strengths Insight, 2020). In my 360° Assessment, people reported that my most outstanding assets were Positivity, Harmony, Resilience, Empathy and Honesty (“20/20 Insight”, 2020). This feedback seemed to align well with my Signature Strengths. People described me as empathic, compassionate, approachable, optimistic, positive, trustworthy, joyful, good at relating to people (or connecting with them), encouraging, inspiring, supportive, reliable, understanding, nurturing, caring, and kind. I am also great at recognizing and pointing out others’ strengths. In the 360° Assessment, one individual noted that one of my greatest strengths is the ability to see the best in both people and situations, which they found truly inspirational. This sounds like the Maximizer trait in Clifton Strengths: “Like a diver after pearls, you search them out, watching for the telltale signs of a strength whether yours or someone else’s” (Strengths Insight, 2020). That is true; it is easy for me to find others’ strengths as well as mine, so I tend to maximize them. I also double-checked my reported strengths by getting feedback from other people.

Rath talks about three aspects of leadership in the book called *Strengths-Based Leadership* and they are investing in your strengths, maximizing your team, and understanding why people follow. He emphasizes that being aware of our strengths helps us to lead effectively (2008, 10). He also mentions the importance of seeing each person's strengths and picking the right people to form a team rather than doing everything by oneself (2008, 23). I agree with him: I value shared leadership and appreciate diversity. A Gallup Poll shows that followers' four basic needs are trust, compassion, stability, and hope (2008, 82). In that poll, people also mention honesty, integrity, respect, caring, friendship, happiness, and love as reasons to follow leaders. I think my strengths are well aligned with these.

However, I also noticed that my strengths can also be my weaknesses. This came up in my 360° Assessment. People's comments confirmed some of my growth areas and so I knew what to work on. The areas of improvement were being more decisive and making hard decisions more confidently. One person commented that if I wanted to be a leader, I needed to be stronger and bolder rather than maintain a soft and affectionate image.

People also noted that I trusted people easily and tended to avoid setting clear boundaries regarding roles and responsibilities at the outset of a shared endeavour. Others also mentioned that I needed to be more proactive, courageous, involved, and communicative when these were necessary for the further development of the group and myself. I also appreciated that people told me to work on improving my self-confidence and to speak up more. One of the

comments in the 360° Assessment was, “Minhee refrains potentially out of fear when her contributions could be valuable to the working of the group.” This is right, I think I was sometimes afraid to speak up or contribute my valuable ideas—depending on the situation—because I afraid of making mistakes and embarrassing myself. I think this was related to my language barrier; even after being in Canada for nine years, I still felt that my spoken English was inadequate. This hindered me from standing up and being courageous and bold in public. I reflected on one piece of feedback, which was, “If Minhee speaks her mind about her vision and set out a plan for the change, it will enhance her leadership role in the ministry.” I needed to enhance my integrative thinking skills through my ministries so I could recognize change, accept new opportunities, and challenge the status quo. Maya Hu Chan describes the importance of 360° Assessments thus: “As an executive coach, one of the first things I do when working with a new client is to do 360-degree stakeholder feedback interviews to get an understanding of how my coachee is perceived by those around him” (2020, 74). I, too, found that this tool provided a good opportunity for me to reflect on myself.

If someone asks me what the most beneficial part of taking the DMin program is, I would say that it was the opportunity to know myself and others better. This makes me think of the Johari Window which is a helpful tool to understand people’s conscious and unconscious biases.

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Open	Blindspot
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

Figure 1: Johari Window (Buller 2018, 76-77)

This model was developed by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1995. It allows us to observe and increase our self-awareness and our understanding of others. According to them, there are four aspects to our self: our open self, our blind self, our hidden self, and our unknown self. Knowing these is beneficial for improving our communication skills, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, team development, group dynamics, and strengths and weaknesses. While I did not use this model overtly in my Research Project, it helps me visualize what I was trying to achieve in helping the participants grow in their self-awareness.

The DMin program made me more curious about people’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, which related to my counselling practice. God often reminded me of my call to be “fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19), which is why I think he gave me a heart for people. In order to fulfill his mission, I need to know myself and work with his people. Studying clinical counselling and leadership

enlightened my life, and it was a significant blessing because it was a great opportunity to know myself and others deeply.

In this chapter, I unpacked my leadership narrative from the time I was born until now. Doing so has helped me make sense of who I am now, and how I was shaped by the environment where I grew up, the people with whom I interacted, the events I encountered, and so on. I have shared what I have learned through each stage and how those lessons influenced me. The biggest changes that have taken place since I was a kid to now are an increase in warmth, love, care, empathy, understanding, active listening, tolerance, kindness, responsibility, patience, and joy of learning. Interestingly, these are all crucial components of being a therapist and a leader.

By revisiting my leadership narrative, I was also able to observe my leadership development and find out my strengths. Rath stresses the importance of awareness by saying, “Without an awareness of your strengths, it’s almost impossible for you to lead effectively” (2008, 10). He explains that knowing ourselves as leaders is crucial and I appreciate knowing my strengths clearly at this point. During my upbringing, I learned the importance of love and trust. They allowed me to have high emotional intelligence. I also recognized that my relationships could impact me in many different ways. Thus, knowing others’ communication styles is crucial for maintaining good relationships. I also learned that there are areas I am not in control of. Thus, now I let things go if they are not in my hands. Hardship made me a stronger person and deeper thinker and allowed me to engage with people in depth. I value patience now and remind myself of

this virtue. I practice healthy boundaries and express myself more, contributing my ideas. There are moments when I am still hesitant when I speak up, but I see some positive progress. Previously, I was almost always busy doing something; now I enjoy solitude by walking in nature, gardening, and reading the scriptures daily. By doing these I practice self-care, which gives me emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual health. As I mentioned above, writing this chapter helped me identify who I was and am. It was an important journey to know myself. Now I have figured out how my leadership style fits different situations. This was my best takeaway.

My experience writing this chapter illustrates the power of knowing one's narrative. The Bible is full of people's one-of-a-kind stories, which give us wisdom, guidance, and insight. These scriptures also tell the story of God's love for us and help us know what to think and feel about Him and His character. It is also full of different contexts that God wants us to learn about through many biblical figures and events. The next chapter is my ministry Context Analysis, which helped me identify what I needed to do for my research project, which I report on in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3:

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

The following is my Philosophy of Christian Leadership which was written in April 2022 as one of the major assignments for the Philosophy of Christian Leadership course. In this paper, I will revisit and reflect on my leadership philosophy. It aligns with the lessons I shared in my Leadership Narrative and both shaped and was reinforced by my research project. Each person's leadership philosophy can change how we see the world. I hope that readers will see what I value and how these values shape my philosophy on leadership.

Introduction

We have encountered an unprecedented period due to COVID-19 since March 2020, and many people have experienced stress, anger, and fear as a result. To make things worse, war broke out between Russia and Ukraine on February 24, 2022. This led to many innocent people dying, including children. This conflict not only affected Russia and Ukraine negatively but has had an impact all over the world. As a student who studies leadership, I cannot stop observing world leaders' leadership styles: what motivates them, and how they influence others. We see that some leaders abuse their power for their own good and it

causes many negative consequences. On the other hand, some leaders use their authority to deliver empowering messages. They help us to see things as hopeful. I find that their leadership skills shine in this unusual time; the light shines brighter in the darkness. This reminds me of the passage in which Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

As a Christian, I have often wondered how Christian leadership is different from secular leadership. The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program provided me with the opportunity to explore and reflect on this. I believe that Christian leadership begins by seeking God’s wisdom and following the example of the Trinity, as many biblical leaders did. Based on this, I think that the main principle of Christian leadership is servanthood. In this paper, I will provide a biblical reflection on leadership and refer to leadership theories that are relevant to my context in order to lay a theological foundation for the way that I practice leadership. Then, I will review a method of practical theology that contributes to my thinking, and touch on my specific calling and context alongside any other relevant factors that help in evaluating this approach. Lastly, I will critically review one leadership theory that is central to my philosophy of Christian leadership.

Critical Review of Leadership Theories and History

Postmodernism sounds good on the surface because it looks like everyone respects others’ opinions and thoughts, which leads to greater freedom. People

believe that everything is relative and that no one can assert that anything is true anymore. This actually creates chaos, not freedom. People become more selfish and I-centred rather than other-centred. They get confused because there are too many options or no clear instructions on important topics like identity. God designed His creation to be orderly, not chaotic. The Bible provides many instructions for us about how to live as Christians. These are not restraints or hindrances. Rather, they provide us with safe boundaries that enable us to walk on the right path. God knew that we could end up getting lost without his guidance, as the writer of Proverbs describes: “Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint” (Proverb 29:18). We interact with other people almost every day. It is natural for us to have communities, and we live and share things. Each person is unique and precious. Thus, the Bible encourages us to have harmonious relationships with each other by valuing others: “Rather, in humility value others above yourselves” (Philippians 2:4). This shows the importance of serving others with an other-centred mindset just like God.

Leadership literature is an expansive and complex field. Thus, it is difficult to choose a single leadership style that will effectively serve our ministry or organization. Burns explains this using the metaphor of a river. He says, “A river appears to be fixed but it is always changing and never quite the same” (2014, 93). Northouse notes that leadership is “a complex concept for which a determined definition may long be in flux” (2016, 5). Leadership is like a river. A river has many unexpected twists and turns. No wonder even scholars cannot find a common definition of leadership. There are many different leadership styles that

can help us face the many situations we confront in organizations and ministries. What determines which one a leader might choose? There are many factors, but I think one of the most important is the leader's values. We feel better about ourselves when we live by our values. We focus on the things that are important to us. People value such things as people, service, money, success, status, competence, power, and so on. All of these can shape how someone leads.

Burns lists seven common power bases first identified by French and Raven: "Position (legitimate), expert, connection, reward, coercive, referent, and information" (Burns 2014, 96). We see these in our various social arrangements. Power can be used positively as well as negatively. For example, parents need to use appropriate power over their children to guide and protect them. Within organizations, power is also needed, but it must be a different kind of power in order to be positive. When power is used negatively, it creates a big problem. Burns mentions that Machiavelli is "one of power theory's most famous observers" (2014, 96). In his book *The Prince*, the prince can do anything, even "break the people's moral laws like murder or perjury" (Burns 2014, 97). Northouse adds to this by noting that "the first three decades of the 20th century emphasized control and centralization of power with a common theme of domination" (2016, 2).

One leader who fits this description is Adolf Hitler. He abused his power, and we can see the negative results of that abuse. Many innocent people were killed, which created anger and frustration. In any leadership setting, power exists. However, "power without love can lead to tyranny" (Burns 2014, 97).

Hitler is a good reminder of how leadership styles impact our lives. People behave based on what they believe in and value. This shows the importance of a leader's philosophy of leadership. This, in turn, made me curious about what theories and approaches were common in the past.

In the early Twentieth Century, the Trait approach entered the spotlight. This approach concentrates on “the innate qualities and characteristics” possessed by great leaders such as Catherine the Great or Abraham Lincoln (Northouse 2016, 19). Many people believe that leaders are born with certain traits that make them inherently good leaders. According to this perspective, there are five major leadership traits: “intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability” (Northouse 2016, 19). Emotional intelligence (EI) is important for being able to nurture these traits (Northouse 2016). EI is the ability to discern, address, understand, reason with, and utilize emotions so they can be effectively managed within oneself and interpersonal relationships (Northouse 2016, 28). Northouse credits Goleman with expanding on EI since he proposed that it includes personal and social competencies (Northouse 2016, 28). He describes personal competency as consisting of “self-awareness, confidence, self-regulation, conscientiousness, and motivation” and says that “social competence consists of empathy and social skills such as communication and conflict management” (Northouse 2016, 28). One of the many reasons for EI's importance in developing leadership traits is that people who are more emotionally sensitive understand how their emotions influence them and can therefore be more productive leaders (Northouse 2016, 28). The Trait approach is interesting and has many strengths,

but it focuses narrowly on a leader, not the followers or situation. This means that the best application of Trait Theory is that by “using trait information, managers can develop a deeper understanding of who they are and how they will affect others in the organization” (Northouse 2016, 32).

The Trait approach was challenged in the mid-Twentieth Century via the Situational approach (Northouse 2016). From this perspective, someone who is capable of leading in one situation might not fit in another. This perspective assumes that leaders are changed by their social situation. Stogdill’s conducted two surveys and the first supported this view, leading Northouse to conclude that “The traits that leaders possess must be relevant to situations in which the leader is functioning” (2016, 20). However, Stogdill’s second survey indicated that “both traits and situational factors were determinants of leadership” (Northouse 2016, 21). Regardless, his findings show that situations deeply influence leadership.

Like the Trait approach, the Skills approach focuses on the leader, but it emphasizes a leader’s skills and abilities rather than personality characteristics (Northouse 2016, 43). Northouse credits Katz with identifying three categories of skills required by leaders: technical abilities (dealing with things), human abilities (dealing with people), and concept abilities (dealing with ideas) (Northouse 2016, 44-45). This theory claims that the proficiencies of problem-solving skills, social judgement, and knowledge result in effective leaders and allow them to achieve their goals.

The Behavioural approach focuses on “what leaders do and how they act” (Northouse 2016, 71). According to this approach, there are two types of behaviours: task behaviours and relationship behaviours (Northouse 2016, 71). The main objective of the Behavioural approach is to understand how leaders’ behaviour influences followers so they can reach a common goal (Northouse 2016, 71). This approach is not a theory but a broad framework for assessing leaders by evaluating their behaviour in regard to tasks and relationships (Northouse 2016, 91).

In the early 1980s, Transformational Leadership emerged and immediately grabbed people’s attention. Transformational Leadership is “a process that changes and transforms people” and is interested in “emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals” (Northouse 2016, 161). It focuses on “intrinsic motivation and follower development” (Northouse 2016, 161) instead of emphasizing only the leader. James Burns considers Mohandas Gandhi a good example of Transformational Leadership because Gandhi boosted the dreams and requests of his people, and this action changed him (Northouse 2016, 162). The four major elements of Transformational Leadership are “idealized influence (Charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (Northouse 2016, 167). Nelson Mandela is a good example of idealized influence because he was considered a leader with high moral qualities and presented a vision for the people of South Africa. Inspirational motivation describes the need for communication and teamwork because a leader must motivate their followers. Through intellectual motivation, leaders can motivate

followers to act by creating an inspiring vision. Individualized reflection enables leaders to play the role of coach or adviser, and they try to get their followers to grow (Northouse 2016, 169). Thus, empowering and nurturing followers is crucial to transformational leadership.

Control and power are always a part of any social context. However, in the early Twenty-First Century, the most prominent discussion surrounding leadership was related to the individual's influence on a group. What kind of person is ideal for leadership? Are people born to be leaders, or made into them? The Trait perspective holds that some people have "special innate or inborn characteristics or qualities that make them leaders" (Northouse 2016, 7). In contrast to this, the Process perspective presents "leadership as a phenomenon in the context of interactions between leaders and followers, so leadership is available to everyone" (Northouse 2016, 8). The evolution of how people define leadership is also related to this increasing awareness that leadership is a social phenomenon linked to one's context.

In the 21st century—particularly in Western countries—leadership theory is more focused on "the process of leadership, whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, rather than developing new ways of defining leadership" (Northouse 2016, 4). There are four leadership theories that emerged in this period. They are: "authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership" (Northouse 2016, 4). Among these, I find Servant Leadership most interesting, in part because it aligns with my ministry context.

These days, Servant Leadership is gaining attention among those who wish to lead ministry organizations effectively because workers perform better in environments where they are served instead of being micromanaged by their supervisors (Northouse 2016, 233). Advocates of this philosophy also tell us that solo work is not effective anymore; we need community and cooperation. Each person should have at least one role that allows them to feel like they belong and contribute. According to Gane, one of the servant leader's roles is to identify each person's talents and build on them so that they can have "a community with a shared mission, values, and ideas" (2014, 251). 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 supports this idea, teaching that there are "different kinds of gifts [...] different kinds of service [...] different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." Christian leadership comes from the Triune God, and He works through His people. We are completing His mission by serving others, developing them, and positively influencing them. Thus, spirituality, people, development/influence, and service/servanthood are highly valuable in Christian leadership. These play a big role in my philosophy of Christian leadership.

Robert Greenleaf is the one who pioneered the concept of Servant Leadership. He was inspired by Herman Hesses' journey to the East (Greenleaf 1970, 115). The story is about people on a journey with their servant Leo. The group functioned well because of Leo's servanthood. Then Leo left without notice. As a result, the group collapsed. Leo was the servant of the group, but later everyone realized that he was also the head of the group. About this, Greenleaf writes: "The servant-leader is servant first—as Leo was portrayed" (1970, 116).

How do we normally view servants? We think of them as weak, powerless, submissive, and lacking a voice. However, these negative connotations are challenged by Servant Leadership. It does not view vulnerability as a weakness. Rather, it connects people and helps us understand others better. This is a good reminder that perspective matters. There is no perfect leadership style but one thing that I believe strongly is that bottom-up management is more effective than traditional top-down leadership. Therefore, it is important to become good at Servant Leadership, while complementing its weaknesses with other leadership styles if necessary. No person or leader is perfect, so we need community and integration. Greenleaf claims that the servant leader is a servant first and foremost (1970, 116). This begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve others. Then a conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The result is that the servant leader wants to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served first (Greenleaf 1970, 13-14).

Alongside Servant Leadership, I think that Authentic Leadership fits in with my own leadership, as I briefly mentioned in my Leadership Narrative when I described the lessons I learned from my mom. Figure 2 illustrates five dimensions of Authentic Leadership, which are "purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline, and heart." These align well with my leadership model and philosophy. The figure also "illustrates each of the related characteristics [...] that individuals need to develop to become authentic leaders" (Northouse 2016, 197).

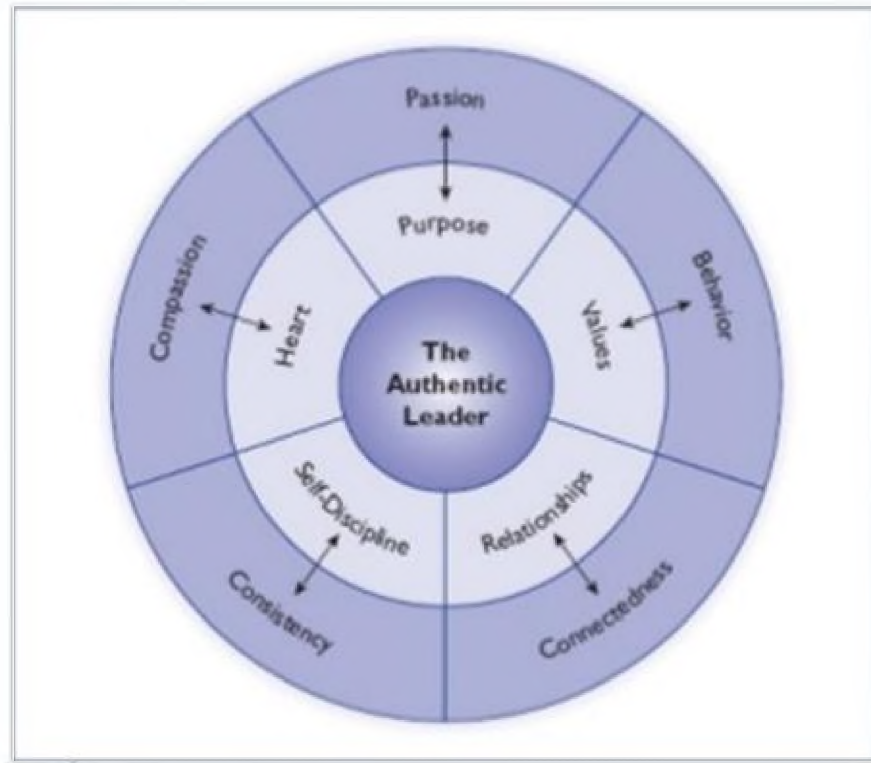


Figure 2: Authentic Leadership Characteristics (Northouse 2016, 198)

In describing this diagram, Northouse explains that authentic leaders:

Have a real sense of purpose [...] have a clear idea of who they are, where they are going, and what the right things is to do [...] have the capacity to open themselves up and establish a connection with others [...] are able to listen to their inner compass and can discipline themselves to move forward, even in challenging circumstances [...] [and] can develop compassion by getting to know others' life stories, doing community service projects, being involved with other racial or ethnic groups, or traveling to developing countries (2016, 197-200).

Authentic Leadership combines many elements of leadership that I value and are helpful as I lead others. I especially appreciate its focus on three broad aspects of leadership: intrapersonal processes, interpersonal processes, and developmental processes. Bell notes that “the first tenet of a biblical theology of leadership is a community, and relationship is implied by the community” (2014, 378).

Leadership is relational, and the Bible shows that God leads through relationships. Bell stresses that leadership is “a relational process undertaken within a community of servants and friends” (2014, 381). God’s leadership is relational because he exists as the Trinity (God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus). God also leads us relationally through our prayer life, which is shown by many leaders in scripture. For example, in Genesis 18:23-32, when God heard His people’s outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah, He decided to go down and see the bad situation in person. Abraham asked God if He would sweep away the righteous with the wicked. He asked God how many righteous people would need to be in the city for him to spare it. He started by asking after fifty people, then progressed to forty-five, thirty, twenty, and in the end to ten. Unfortunately, the cities were destroyed because there were not even ten righteous people in them. In this story, we see that Abraham tried hard to intercede to save the people. He did not think about himself but his community. This is because he had received love, care, empathy, and trust from God when he cried out to Him. Even if we fail at our mission, trying our best by serving others is a Christian attitude. Malphurs and Mancini note that Jesus equally emphasized “a healthy relationship (community) and productive task (cause) in his followers” (2004, 81). To focus on healthy relationships means prioritizing the morale of the group. This approach is person-oriented, and centres on concern for the individual or the group. To focus on productive tasks requires the opposite—it concerns itself with the accomplishment of given tasks over the quality of individual or group relationships (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 81).

Citing Robert Clinton, Gibbs also states that “Leadership largely consists in making connections, connecting the dots between isolated pieces of information and bringing together people who have the combined resources to address the challenge” (Gibbs 2011, 43). He also defines a Christian leader as “a person with a God-given capacity and the God-given responsibility to influence a special group of God’s people toward God’s purpose for the group” (2011, 25).

Each theory I mentioned above has its own merits and weaknesses. They can also be practiced differently from individual to individual and from context to context. For example, my personality type, which I described in my Narrative, aligns with Servant Leadership and Authentic Leadership, which require active listening, empathy, understanding, open communication, and building genuine relationships.

Biblical Reflection

Leadership has been a hot topic for a long time, and it looks like leadership is becoming even more of a conversation topic these days. The Ottawa truckers protest in 2022 raised questions about leadership. During the chaos, My p it was hard to identify ideal leaders. Despite this, the event showed that even secular leaders can lead based on their values; what about Christian leaders? Christians must hold to key principles of Christian leadership to impact the world.

Andrews University identifies Christian leadership as: “a dynamic relational process in which people, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, partner to achieve a common goal - it is serving others by leading and leading others by

serving” (The Christian Leadership Centre 2022). This approach to leadership is similar to Authentic Leadership because they both emphasize relational dynamics, service, and pursuing a common goal. The phrases, “relational process,” “the Holy Spirit” and “serving others by leading and leading others by serving” stood out to me in this definition. This tells us that we are not leaders who decide things ourselves but rather lean on the Holy Spirit’s direction and guidance. This lines up with 1 Corinthians 11:1, which teaches that A Christian leader is someone who leads others and encourages them to follow the example of Christ. It is a relief to know that there is a higher power who is in control.

Thus, we do not have to be anxious or worry about the situations we face. Philippians 4:6-7 supports this idea: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” God has power but He uses it for the good of others. In Doukhan’s chapter, “The Creation Narrative,” the author describes God’s leadership as full of “grace and generosity” because He practiced “lead[ing] to serve” (2014, 37). He created the world for human beings, which was different than how other nations understood their gods (e.g., the Ancient Near Eastern myths). Most gods wanted humankind to supply things for them, but God created plants, animals, fish, etc. for us. Furthermore, He gave us the Sabbath day in order to have an intimate relationship with Him. His creation is purely beneficial for us; this other-centred creation act shows servant leadership.

This approach to leadership is also reflected in God's nature and attributes. Each person in the Trinity is in an eternal loving agreement with the others. Our triune God reveals his work of creation via scripture and shows us what Christian leadership is. Banks and his fellow authors note that:

Christians consider the Bible authoritative for life. The Bible affirms a God of history who revealed himself to humanity and established a foundation for being, purpose, mortality, and community. So we come to know by faith, by reason, and by experience—all guided by the biblical narrative. This foundation informs our efforts to understand leadership and acts as a filter for many research findings (2016, 17-18).

Additionally, Colossians 1:17-18 says, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy." Also, Proverbs 21:1 in the Message says, "Good leadership is a channel of water controlled by God; he directs it to whatever ends he chooses." These verses show that Christian leadership begins by recognizing the headship of God and sharing His values. Then what does God value most? James During one of our DMin lectures, Brown cited Lawrence as saying that "neither success nor status defines Christian leaders, service defines Christian leaders" (Brown 2021).

Moses is one of many biblical figures who practiced servant leadership. Servanthood is not about only serving others by trying to meet their needs or empowering them, it also involves centering people on God's wisdom, love, and will for his people (Banks et al 2016, 22-23). Moses had compassion, love, and concern for God's people. We can observe this in Exodus 18:13: "Moses took his

seat to serve as a judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.” His father-in-law thought it was too much for Moses to handle by himself so he suggested sharing his work with others: “The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice. [...] Select capable men from all the people-men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens” (Exodus 18:21). Moses listened to his father-in-law instead of insisting on his way of resolving issues. This shows me that an important aspect of servant leadership is the delegation of responsibility. In this way, Moses also helped to form the next generation of leaders.

Moses cared about God’s people, and he tried to do his best to lead them with love and compassion. However, while he was on the mountain to get the covenant law from God, the people became impatient. So, they gathered and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us” and they “made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf” (Exodus 32:2) and worshipped it. When Moses saw God’s people dancing in front of the idol, he was furious and threw the tablets (Exodus 32:19), because their idolatry was against God’s will. Even though Moses was raging, he asked God to forgive the Israelites’ sin (Exodus 33:32). Instead of agreeing or serving others aimlessly, Moses had a clear sense of purpose and exercised boundaries while practicing the servant leadership that he learned in the desert. He interceded on behalf of others when they had fallen into serious sin. He was not a perfect leader, as all humans have weaknesses, but he was still a good leader who showed compassion and forgiveness and provided direction so the

community could stay healthy. His story shows that Christian leadership originates from God and that valuing what God values is essential.

The Bible shows that Jesus also served others, especially marginalized people. In Mark 10:45, Jesus states that he came to the world “to serve” rather than “to be served.” He had a clear vision and mission for his time on Earth. Mark 9:35 is another passage that supports servant leadership. In it, Jesus says if we want to be the first, we must be “the very last” and “the servant of all.” Jesus is the Son of God and had everything, but he emptied himself and served people. In so doing he was practicing servant leadership. Jesus also invested three years in developing his disciples, showing that he put people first in his ministry. We see in Matthew 4:19 and Mark 1:17 that Jesus called his disciples to be “fishers of men.” As we saw in Moses' example, Jesus showed servant leadership by delegating responsibility to his disciples and preparing them to be the next generation of leaders. According to Gane, one of the servant leader's roles is to bring each person's talents and build on them so that they can have “a community with shared mission, values, and ideas” (2014, 251). Jesus also acknowledged the importance of teamwork and valued each person's contribution. Doing so allowed Jesus to transform His community.

Christian leadership is about individuals and communities being transformed through the process of sanctification. Servant leadership comes through sanctification as our values and behaviour grow over time. The biblical model of servant leadership is relevant for us today. Many contemporary leaders and organizations have embraced the values of servant leadership. Banks et al cite

Max De Pree as drawing on Genesis' idea that all people are made in God's image and saying that servant leadership involves:

Serving, which involves making oneself vulnerable to others' point of view and criticism, abandoning one's ego, and depending on the expertise of others; creating environments in which people can grow and develop; and communication in a way that invites input and involvement. (Banks et al 2016, 69).

Serving one another is innate to humans because God created us, and we are His children. This reminds us that our identity "is not based on winning, and your calling should be about seeking 'first his kingdom and his righteousness'" (Brown 2016, 70). I think servant leadership aligns with my field, including its emphasis on compassion, love, humility, gratitude, forgiveness, empowerment, authenticity, direction, and meaning. I also appreciate servant leadership because this is what my mom practiced throughout her life, and I learned it from her. Most of all, this model fits in well with Christian values as demonstrated by many biblical figures including Jesus.

My Practices and Practical Theology

What is practical theology? Root notes that even practical theologians have a difficult time defining what practical theology is. He says "The field is too dynamic, too much in flux and motion to allow for its capture in a comprehensive definition" (2014, 1). Before considering its history, it is helpful to know who the founder of practical theology was. Grab notes that Friedrich Schleiermacher is "the founding father of practical theology as one of the disciplines of theological studies" (2005, 181). He came up with the notion that theology is a practical science which involves reflecting on the commands of Church leaders. This was

grounded in a greater theory of how Christianity interacts with all other theological disciplines within modern society (2005, 181).

Root then presents a framework for practical theology first developed by Robert Banks in his book *Revisoning Theological Education*. Banks' framework centred on a "practice-theory-practice" understanding of theological reflection (Root 2014, 85). He was a professor of the ministry of the laity, and he had experience teaching theology and was involved in the house church movement. He believed that theological reflection should be for "faith formation and such formation can only happen where experience leads to theological reflection and then back again to action" (Root 2014, 86). I agree with this statement. After studying at the seminary, I think I had enough knowledge about theology and counselling theories and techniques. However, I did not have much practice with them in my life. Once I started my internship in child and adolescent services, my knowledge was activated and increased, and I could it to my practice. During this process, I could reflect on my coworkers' and my cases. This allowed me to practice empathy, active listening, empowerment, awareness, and a sense of development and influence. I sometimes felt stuck since many of the situations I encountered were new to me. The more I reflected on what God was doing and what He wanted to do in my practice, the less doubt I had. Eventually, I found peace in the knowledge that God is at work all the time.

Branson's book *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* describes an evangelical approach to practical theology. Root notes that Branson explores how the voice of ethnic congregations

is heard through practical theology (2014, 8). He views practical theology in the local community as “a catalyst, permitting greater forms of human interaction” (2014, 8). He mentions that we are invited into new ways of uncovering curiosity and insight. This allows us to reflect on better ways of doing ministry. Branson valued missional engagement in ministry and one of the tools he used was Appreciative Inquiry. This allowed him to identify people’s narratives and then direct them to focus on a positive and hopeful future (Branson 2004, 30). I believe everyone’s story has the power to change other people and sharing our stories allows us to connect with one another. I experience this power in my practice with clients as well as in small group meetings with my church. Storytelling is a good tool for reflecting on what God is doing in one’s life. Storytelling also forms the community because it contains culture, tradition, and shared experience. It can bring people together and create a sense of belonging and identity.

Kevin Vanhoozer and his fellow authors define everyday theology as a “faith-seeking understanding of everyday life” (2007, 23). They stress that faith-seeking understanding means interpreting “not only biblical texts (the Word) but also everyday life (the world)” (2007, 22). To do this, we need to observe what is going on in our lives and surroundings and try to understand how factors such as culture and social trends affect us.

For example, according to Vanhoozer, in the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church only encouraged priests to learn the Bible, not the lay people (2007, 22). This enabled some malicious leaders to fool lay people into thinking that indulgences could forgive their sins and save their souls. The medieval

church also taught people that their sins could only be forgiven if they repented in front of priests. This was the cultural trend—what they valued, believed, and loved—at that time. However, Martin Luther thought differently than other priests. He observed the context where he belonged. He saw indications that the lay people were suffering. He recognized that this was because the lay people could not access the Bible, so they had to believe what priests taught them even if they were wrong. Luther believed that the Bible was something everyone should have access to, including lay people, because God valued them equally. He also claimed that our sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ, not through priests. He wanted to teach people that God is not strict or mean, but rather caring and loving. This would lead him to translate the Bible into German. As a result, anybody could read the Bible and interact with God directly, not via priests (Vanhoozer 2007, 22). Luther’s story shows that theology cannot be separated from the living expression of faith. Practical theology is doing theology as Luther did it. It is a dynamic process that involves work and activity. It starts with reflecting on the ordinary experiences of our lives in the church and the world and leads to action. This also aligns with Appreciative Inquiry. While it and practical theology arise from different disciplines and contexts, their approaches to understanding and engaging with lived experiences is similar.

Because of this, it is worth asking, “How do we know what we know?”

We want data and tools to help us with this task. In order to meet this need, *Qualitative Research* by Tim Sensing provides advice on how to write a Doctor of Ministry research project. The book includes tips on observation (Sensing 2014,

99), taking field notes (180), questionnaires (113), interviews (102), questions (86), and consent forms (235-236). This resource is valuable because it provides specific methods for collecting qualitative data. I also found one of the methodologies it describes useful for practical theology: ethnography (Sensing 2014, 93). I defined this in the introduction and described it in detail in my Research Report. Ethnography uses observation, field notes, questionnaires, and interviews in a participatory manner.

In his book *Church, World, and the Christian Life* Nicholas M. Healy notes that,

In general ecclesiology in our period has become highly systematic and theoretical, focused more upon discerning the right things to think about the church rather than oriented to the living, rather messy, confused and confusing body that the church actually is (2000, 3).

As a community made up of human beings, the church is imperfect and sinful, but it is still God's church. Healy asks the question, "how we should go about ecclesiology on the other, bear upon one another so as to determine the kinds of things we can and cannot say about the church" (2000, 1). The answer is that it should be "a discipline that is working with the empirical church" including its "theological, normative perspective and foundation" (2000, 33). He tries to understand the church as a part of God's story because the identity of the church is not fully realized until it appears in the end times with God (2000, 34). Healy observes how God acts in relation to the church and the world. He finds that God acts via human action in the Bible. Matthew 18:20 supports this idea: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." God does not want His

people to only focus on faith but put it into practice in their fellowship. This shows that God encourages practical theology. Swinton and Mowat define practical theology as “a contemplative discipline that has at its heart the desire to enable people to love God more fully and to enjoy God forever” (2013, 3). All of this helps us understand how we know what we know. Practical theology, authentic leadership, and servant leadership emphasize values, authenticity, and integrity. They also prioritize the importance of purpose, meaning, relationships and community.

Another methodology that is useful for practical theology is Participatory Action Research (PAR), which I described in more detail in my Research Report. Stringer defines PAR as “A systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives” by engaging with participants in the research process (2014, 1). PAR emphasizes shared leadership, including in determining the meaning of research, which reflects the conviction that the participants’ role is equally important to the leaders’.

Nelson’s book *Borderland Churches: A Congregation’s Introduction to Missional Living* provides a good analysis of the current ministry environment and teaches how to communicate within that context. Nelson thinks it is necessary for borderland churches to accept the new norms of our culture in order to succeed in ministry (2008). The author supports this idea by looking at Jesus’ ministry as an example. Jesus demonstrated the value of missional engagement with others by socializing with “borderland people even though he was always

criticized for doing so. The religious establishment was incensed but he lived alongside them anyway” (Nelson 2008, 9). Practical theology is a movement between action and reflection, and I think Jesus was constantly seeking ways to engage to God by fulfilling his calling.

The book *Building Leaders* describes some helpful ways to develop others but in my opinion the most helpful resource is Jesus’ approach to leadership development (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 72). His leadership training steps are Recruitment, Selection, Training, and Deployment. The authors note that Jesus used two types of recruitment techniques. One is the “rabbi-disciple relationship” which is when “A pupil who desired to train with a particular rabbi would ask to be allowed to follow him” (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 68). The second is when Jesus would invite people to follow him. I find it interesting that leaders sometimes need to recruit “those who come to us on their own initiative and express a genuine, God-given interest in our giving them leadership training” (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 69). In the selection step, Jesus selects the people who he wants to train to be leaders. Matthew 4:18-20 shows that Jesus chose two disciples, Simon and Andrew, while they were fishing, and made them to be “fishers of men” (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 69). The authors mention that Jesus intentionally walked beside the Sea of Galilee and chose both, even though, to others, it appeared as if He was just walking by the sea. This teaches us that intentionality is imperative when we select people. The authors also emphasize the importance of training, arguing that “leadership training was vital to the success of his ministry during his time on earth and later” (Malphurs and Mancini

2004, 70). Jesus trained his disciples first before sending them to their ministry settings. Lastly, in the deployment step Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to the world to spread the gospel. The authors stress that “the leaders of today’s churches must not only win lost people to Christ but train them as well, especially those with leadership potential, and see that they are deployed in ministry” (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 72). Some leaders finish their job on the third step, training; the authors note that the final stage, deployment, is “the key to seeing disciples become involved in leading a particular ministry” (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 72). I think Jesus showed what practical theology was by taking actions and reflections. Jesus knew how to develop his disciples because he understood his disciples’ life with backgrounds, cultures, and etc.

Osmer suggests that there are four tasks required by practical theological interpretation: the empirical task (priestly listening) (2008, 32), the interpretive task (sagely wisdom) (2008, 68), the normative (prophetic discernment) (2008, 105), and the pragmatic task (servant leadership) (2008, 139). Understanding and interpreting the cultural context and the congregational context is important (Osmer 2008, 142). Branson and Warnes state that “the missional church movement is a renewal movement in our time” (2014, 9). They are working to make church planters more aware of missional theology. They stress the need to find out what God is doing in a particular context, which begins with engaging with one’s neighbours (2014, 10). All of these resources provide wisdom on doing theology in a particular context, which is important for engaging in practical theology.

Personal Reflection on Christian Leadership

I have often reflected on the methodologies Jesus used in his ministry. He reached out to people first rather than waiting for them to come to him. Taking this approach ties in with my interest in self-awareness and communication styles because how we approach people influences how leaders communicate with and understand their teams. I think leaders who take the initiative to engage with others view them as deserving of attention. They aim to show care, curiosity, and concern and know other's perspectives. This approach can be a good way to know others' strengths and areas of improvement. On the other hand, people who reach out to the leaders are seeking guidance or assistance from them. This can shift the kind of attention that the leader gives them.

The conversation with the Samaritan woman who came to draw water is a good example. The conversation starts with Jesus asking her, "Will you give me a drink?" The Samaritan woman says to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman, how can you ask me for a drink?" Jesus replies to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." She asks, "Where can you get this living water?" Jesus answers, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst" (John 4: 7-14). Jesus also asks the Samaritan woman to bring her husband, but she says, "I have no husband," and Jesus replies to her, "You are right... the fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband" (John 4: 16-18). It seems to me that Jesus used ethnographic skills in this situation. He almost

appears to be conducting a one-on-one interview and engaging in participant observation. He also acts as a spiritual guide for the Samaritan woman. One thing is clear: Jesus understood the context that he was in and communicated the gospel effectively in that context.

How can we approach people around us then? The methods Jesus used are helpful for observing our own contexts and allowing us to gain a deep understanding of people's culture and behaviour. I think it is important to understand a social phenomenon first. In order to transform people, we need to acknowledge how people are formed. Our actions are formed by "heart habits" (Smith 2016, 85). That means that we need to understand what people love to promote change. To determine how to minister to people, we must acknowledge the context they are in because it has many layers such as personal factors, family, dynamics, and community norms. These various layers are crucial to understand and impacting people.

However, we need to work on knowing ourselves first. We live in a busy world which demands much from us. Society pushes us to constantly become busier and more competent. Busy schedules define our daily life and sometimes we cannot even spend time with our loved ones as a result. This preoccupation with worldly affairs can get in the way of personal spiritual disciplines. This is why I enjoyed my DMin spiritual retreat so much, as described in my Leadership Narrative. Initially, it was awkward slowing down because I am used to a busy life with my child, work, and other commitments. But in the end it helped me reflect in the middle of a busy schedule and freed me from outside distractions so

I could hear what God wanted to say to me. This inspired me to spend more time with God by practicing what Jesus did. The Bible says that Jesus regularly went to a quiet place for extended periods of time just to be alone with the Father (Matthew 4:1-11). It appears that withdrawing to places of silence and solitude was a regular practice for Jesus (Matthew 14:23; Matthew 21:17; Luke 22:39-46). Jesus knew who the ultimate leader of the world was and demonstrated that spending quality time with God is the first step in ministry. The retreat helped me to experience this same thing. It gave me the chance to put aside all my concerns and worries and focus on my relationship with God. It also helped me appreciate silence, pray for others, take some time for myself, and review my life. It made me think of the many authors who emphasize self-care, listening to God, meditation, and prayer. Here, too, ethnographic methods were helpful. These techniques are not only limited to understanding people around us but can also help us understand ourselves. My retreat was a good opportunity to observe myself, ask myself questions, and write journal entries, which resembled field notes. This, too, seems to follow Jesus' example.

My training as a therapist helps me listen to other people's stories carefully and observe their behaviours and interactions. Flanike argues that leaders must "spend time with their followers, understand their needs and abilities, ask their opinions, and seek their input" if they want to serve their followers (2006, 3). I value the integration of theology and counselling. This theological foundation I have now has impacted my practice. My clients are not all Christians, so I am limited in my ability to spread the gospel. I am not allowed

to share my religion in my practice unless a client asks or talks about it. But the way I put my theology into practice as a therapist does not require explicit conversations about faith. I know that God is with us, and He is the one who works in my ministry. Thus, I pray before starting a session and invite Him into my workplace. Holeman notes that,

Provided that theologically reflective practitioners remain grounded in God, seek to be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and conduct their work in a manner that is God-honoring, client-respecting and ethically appropriate, then the Holy Spirit can do what the Holy Spirit does best—help people more fully embody the image of God in their daily lives (2012, 77).

In keeping with this, my approach to leadership is about the combination of theology and counselling. I let the Holy Spirit lead a session, and I try to empower and develop clients by expressing humility, acceptance, trust, and stewardship. These characteristics are related to servant leadership. If a client is a Christian and wants to talk about God, we can reflect on how to live as a Christian. I also engage with my Christian supervisor and colleagues by reflecting on our work theologically and acting faithfully. I value the discussions we have because their comments and feedback help me grow and get closer to God. During these conversations I can slow down, pay attention, and see what God is up to, which teaches me what He is like. This lines up with what the sources I read say about doing practical theology, which needs a process of reflection and action. This creates changes in us and others. I think reflective processes like ethnography and counselling fit in very well with that way of thinking.

My Calling

I was called to reconcile people who go through difficulties with God by helping them connect with him. King notes that “understanding one’s place and purpose requires sensitive discernment to the personal call” (2016, 65) and God granted this discernment to me. Observing and understanding my upbringing, education, marriage, and the many relationships God gave me helped me understand my calling. I learned to be a peacemaker from my mom. She always listened to people’s heartbreaking stories, empathized with them, cared for them, and shared things with them at the right time. Growing up in this environment shaped me to think that serving people is rewarding. It taught me to value active listening, empathy, care, love, compassion, and relationship building. I was not a Christian at that time, but God already had a plan for me to become a therapist. He allowed me to learn what service/servanthood means while I was still young. My father was a vice-principal at school, and he taught me the importance of knowledge and education by encouraging me to read newspapers and books and earn degrees. Others taught me the value of teaching, coaching, and helping people develop. I earned a Bachelor of Arts and Masters in English Literature in South Korea. I was a teacher for almost ten years before moving to Toronto in 2011. While I was a teacher, many students came to me and shared their concerns about relationship issues, difficulties with their studies, or concerns about their direction in life. Some of them told me that I was not only a teacher but also a counsellor to them. I did not know I would become a therapist when I came to Canada. Becoming a therapist was not a part of my plan but as I have reflected on

how I became one I realize that it was in God's plan, partly because he let me meet the right people at the right time.

We tend to ignore negative emotions because we believe they hinder our journey. However, embracing both our strengths and weaknesses—the darkness as well as the light—is the way to find wholeness. Palmer confesses that his deep depression reconnected him with his community, and which helped him lead better later on (2000, 56-72). I have seen many people experience something similar to him and was moved when I read his description of leadership. Palmer writes that:

Good leadership comes from people who have penetrated their own inner darkness and arrived at the place where we are at one with one another. People who can lead the rest of us to a place of “hidden wholeness” because they have been there and know the way (2000, 80).

Palmer illustrates what this looks like by describing Nelson Mandela's 28 years in prison. According to Palmer, Mandela's experience strengthened “his inner leadership instead of drowning [him] in despair” (Palmer 2000, 81).

I have also experienced the value of being vulnerable in my practice. I find that it helps my clients to be more comfortable and open up about themselves when I disclose something about myself to them, (only when appropriate, of course). As a psychotherapist, I find Henri Nouwen's observations about leadership helpful and want to remember that “true ministry is mutual” (Nouwen 1993, 44). Thankfully, God works through our weaknesses so being vulnerable might be a sign of weakness to society but not to God. Therefore, we need to be patient and trust God's promises and purposes when we face difficulties instead of

focusing on things outside of ourselves. Then, He will give us hope and show us the way. As a Christian leader, I feel that we must fully rely on God.

Rah explains that recognizing each person's values is crucial in the formation of corporate identity (2010, 130-136). Sharing our stories reveals our personalities, emotions, feelings, and identities. As a therapist, I hear my client's stories every day and thus get to see these aspects of who they are. Storytelling is also a great tool for understanding one's culture, values, and perspective. I try to empower my clients; the main goal of counselling is to help clients stand on their own feet, eventually. I also guide them to learn skills and techniques to better cope with their issues. This process aligns with Lewin's Change Management Model: unfreeze (determine what needs to change), change (communicate often), and refreeze (anchor the changes in a positive direction) (Hussain 2018, 123).

I believe that counselling is my calling. The reason I believe this is that my strengths are aligned with what therapists require. Most of all, I have compassion toward the broken so have a desire to bind up their wounds as one scripture says: "He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). Many of the immigrants I work with are broken-hearted—children and parents alike—and they are struggling. I yearn to share God's love with them through counselling. His love and compassion are in me, and it is natural for me to apply it to my practice. I talked about my principles of Christian leadership earlier in this chapter; as I said there, I find that Authentic and Servant Leadership align with counselling. These are also approaches to leadership that line up with my values and gifts, so I feel like I am on the right track. I am happy where I am, and I

continue to serve my clients as Jesus loved, served, and taught the people he ministered to. I know that there is room for me to improve in building relationships as strong and communicating as well as Jesus, but I think I am good at these skills despite that.

I am not proud of my divorce but am no longer ashamed of it. My upbringing, education, marriage, and community—including my family, friends, classmates, professors, neighbours, and even authors—were assets in my leadership journey. I have learned and experienced a lot through them, and I became a Wounded Healer (Nouwen 2010). Now I know that God uses broken hearts. He loves me the way I am, and He was, is, and will be always with me. This fact helps me not fear the circumstances I face anymore; I am aware of His presence. My triune God is with me, and the Father, Son, and Spirit's relationship shows me the importance of engaging with people in a healthy manner. I can attest that God works through people, so community means a lot to me. My calling is reinforced by my theology. I want to serve my clients by practicing servant leadership like Jesus did. For this reason, I practice self-leadership. Self-leadership and self-awareness are intertwined concepts that reinforce each other in personal development. Self-awareness is the cornerstone of self-leadership because it involves understanding one's values, strengths, weaknesses, and biases. Self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence and makes it possible to lead oneself.

Applications Within my Philosophy of Christian Leadership

Servant Leadership is an appropriate leadership theory for my context because of the importance of caring for people's needs in healthcare settings. This is why it is central to my thinking. In our society, most people consider great leaders to be those who are successful and powerful. Unfortunately, this idea has been accepted within the church, and we are pressured to pursue success and power as well. This increases our anxiety and makes it hard to wait for God's good timing. Instead, we prefer to finish our tasks as soon as possible using our own abilities. As a result, we get tired easily and are overwhelmed at how busy and complicated life is. This causes problems in our relationships with others. The competitive nature of our society has definitely impacted how we lead in the church. As leaders we are fearful of being vulnerable and transparent with others because this is seen as a weakness in society, so we feel pressured to be perfect.

Holeman shares a vignette that is helpful for counselling (2012, 63). While he was counselling Cynthia, a single woman with a thriving professional life but a complicated personal life due to bulimia, she noticed that Cynthia tended to "yes, but" a lot. Holeman knew that if she did not improve her "therapeutic alliance" with the client, she would drop out of therapy. Thus, Holeman asked God to help her see Cynthia with His eyes and empathize with her. The prayers were answered. Once Holeman built a therapeutic relationship with Cynthia, she could feel that she was accepted as she was. This gave Cynthia a sense of safety and she grew past her low self-esteem. How could Holeman accept her client the way she was without any judgment? Because she had the theological foundation of God's

unconditional love. She knew that God loves us the way we are. Scripture supports this fact: “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Holeman credits Michael Lambert with identifying four components that explain therapeutic changes positively. They are:

(1) Factors that are unique to the client over which the therapist has no control (40%), (2) factors related to the therapeutic alliance (30%), (3) client expectance or hopefulness (15%), and (4) the specific school of counselling employed by the clinician (15%) (Holeman 2012, 63).

This shows that the most important advantage is the relationship between the counsellor and client. This reflects God’s relational nature as the Trinity.

Heifetz and Linsky argue that every human being needs to have “power and control, affirmation and importance, intimacy, and delight” (2017, 184). They stress that knowing our hungers first and managing them is essential in leadership. I see and hear many exceptional leaders who know how to manage their organizations and churches, but they fail in their lack of self-leadership. Heifetz and Linsky provide the Balcony metaphor to illustrate that “seeing the whole picture requires standing back and watching even as you take part in action being observed” (2017, 53). They note that “the hardest task is to see yourself objectively” (Heifetz and Linsky 2017, 54). If we do not know ourselves and are not constantly changing back and forth between acting as a participant and observers in leadership, we can become narrow-minded and unable to see the bigger picture.

Summary

Writing this paper allowed me to explore my philosophy of Christian leadership. I have shared the theological foundation that is the foundation of my thinking. I reflected on what the Bible and leadership theory has to say on Christian leadership. I considered the importance of practical theology and methods that help us learn from our experiences and apply our faith. And I shared about my calling and how I put the ideas I shared into practice as a counsellor. All of this is rooted in the way that Jesus practiced in his leadership. His selfless serving of others should be our main principle as Christian leaders. We should continue to integrate our faith and practice so we can maximize the effectiveness of our leadership and be used by God to brighten the darkness people face, just like Jesus.

CHAPTER 4:

MINISTRY CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Context matters. Understanding environmental factors such as culture, demographics, ethnicity, age, gender, values, meanings, worldviews, and so on helps develop self-awareness about one's leadership. The following is a context analysis of Joy Church (JC) and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) where it is located. I started attending the JC after I got accepted into the MDiv program. As the result of my studies, I think I started observing people's thoughts and behaviours more actively. Furthermore, I paid more attention to JC's members, including its leaders. This context analysis was written in light of those observations in 2021 as a forerunner to my research project and edited in 2023 for clarity and accuracy as part of creating my Research Portfolio. It contains background information about JC, including its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and problems.

This helped me understand that knowing myself is a precursor to being able to understand my context accurately. Writing my Leadership Narrative helped me grow in my self-understanding, and then I had the opportunity to observe JC as a context. I did so as a layperson and collected all the information I needed for this analysis and the project that followed. This process of writing this analysis helped me appreciate the importance of knowing my context and led to a

more accurate understanding. JC was the main context I analyzed in this chapter because I was curious about the leadership team's communication as a layperson under their leadership. Their decisions affected me and therefore so did their communication. Moreover, I belonged to this community, so I wanted to serve it well. Also, I knew I might eventually do a research project with the leaders.

Before describing JC, I described myself and my work. As a therapist, I have learned how important communication and relationship building are, and I thought that it would be helpful to apply these ideas to my own life since I am a part of my context. This reinforced my conviction that without a good understanding of our context, we are limited in our ability to analyze issues, which can lead to misunderstanding and create conflicts.

Context as a Therapist

As I explained in more detail in my Leadership Narrative, I am an Asian, Christian, middle-class woman, in my mid-forties, and was born in South Korea. I married a Canadian in 2006 in South Korea and have a fourteen-year-old son. I earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master's Degree in English Literature in South Korea. I was a teacher there for almost ten years. We moved to Toronto in 2011 and got divorced in 2015. I felt ashamed because of this. I felt like I disgraced my family and lost my community's respect.

One of the most difficult aspects of my marriage was the different communication styles. When a conflict arose, we reacted differently. Neither of us knew how to discuss and deal with conflicts together. As an Asian female, I

tended to express my thoughts and opinions passively or indirectly. On the other hand, my White Canadian husband tended to express things directly. This major difference in communication often created an issue when we encountered disagreements. In those moments, I used a passive-aggressive communication style. On the other hand, my husband often used an aggressive communication style. There were many moments when I hoped he would recognize my unspoken rules, ideas, and thoughts. At the time, I did not realize that expecting him to figure out my unspoken rules, ideas and thoughts could lead to misunderstanding. Once I learned this lesson, I understood my clients better when they dealt with communication issues with their parents. They often talked about their parent's unspoken rules that were hard for them to figure out. Similarly, my 1.5-generation son sometimes reminded me to speak directly, rather than expecting him to read my unspoken rules.

God graciously led me to pursue a Master of Divinity in Clinical Counselling from Tyndale. During my studies, my broken heart slowly healed and my understanding of communication and conflict resolution improved. I also learned that understanding a person's cultural background was crucial for communicating well and building strong relationships. Between my education in counselling and experience as a therapist, I became more aware of communication styles and the role they play in our lives. This has helped me to have healthier conversations with people, including my ex-husband.

I am currently working as a therapist and studying for a Doctor of Ministry from Tyndale. The clinic I work with specifically focuses on children of

immigrants. My clients' families come from all over the world including China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Nigeria, and others. Most of them are children of immigrants and came to Canada when they were young or were born here. The principal issues my clients face are:

1. Mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, imposter syndrome, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, attention-deficit disorder, suicidal ideation, and panic attacks.
2. Identity issues, including exploring and accepting their LGBTQ+ identity.
3. Challenges stemming from neurodiversity such as being on the autism spectrum.
4. Relationship issues, such as broken relationships and difficulties with interpersonal connection.

I interact with some clients who are LGBTQ+, but this area is the most challenging for me. First of all, some of their desires go against my core beliefs as a Christian. Secondly, I do not have any friends or acquaintances in this population. Thirdly, I have zero experience with this population outside of the clinic. This is relevant to my church context because a few years ago, JC had an internal conflict regarding LGBTQ+ issues. As a result, more than one-third of the church's members left. It is a sensitive topic and I know that there are issues in theology and anthropology that cannot simply be resolved through good communication. However, we need to address this debate through conversations and mutual understanding rather than being silent about the issue. As a therapist, I do not want to refuse to see clients in this population because that is not fair to

them. God created us in His image, and He loves everyone despite our preferences, ethnicities, or gender differences.

Context as a Layperson in JC

JC is a large Korean congregation located in the GTA. The church is predominantly made up of people of Korean descent, but most people value diversity and pray for the revival of each ministry. When I arrived, the church had just been through a leadership transition. The former leader had served there for more than a decade and had overseen a great deal of church growth but had to resign due to health issues. The congregation was concerned about whether they would be able to find a new leader like him. My understanding is that during the process of searching for a new pastor, there was some disagreement about how the process should take place, and who was responsible for what during that process. In the end, the people involved submitted to the senior leader out of obligation, rather than agreement, and his preferred candidate was hired. In theory, the succession process was not one specific leader's decision, it required the leadership team's thoughts and opinions as well. Kotter notes that,

I can imagine a day not long from now when succession at the top of firms may no longer be an exercise in picking one person to replace another. Succession could be a process of picking at least the core of a team (1996, 164).

This supports the importance of teamwork in leadership succession processes.

Unfortunately, the person who was hired did not perform well and the ministry suffered. The same senior leader who advocated for him then insisted on him being let go. Since then, the ministry has struggled and there are ongoing tensions

between the church's leaders. If they had handled succession as a team instead of letting one individual make the decision, these struggles and tensions might not have emerged.

Furthermore, as I mentioned, JC experienced a conflict regarding LGBTQ+ issues. This created tension between the leaders and the congregation. When they tried to resolve the problem, it did not turn out well. As a result, some leaders and church members left JC. Many people said that one of the main reasons they left the church was the leaders' lack of clear communication on the issue.

As a result of these two situations, JC's leaders have experienced a lot of heavy emotions, pain, burnout, and psychological stress, as did the rest of the church. At the time of writing, people are still affected by this as they participate in the church. They experience negative emotions such as confusion and distrust towards the leadership.

Korean Culture

Cultures are an enduring phenomenon. Because of this, it takes time to change people's mindsets and behaviours. Culture has many layers, and it is also experienced differently by every individual. Some elements of Korean culture, such as hierarchical relationships between people of different age groups, offices, languages, levels of education, and so on, are prevalent in church ministry. This is not the same as respect in filial relationships, which involves valuing each other's worth and contributions. On the other hand, hierarchy refers to ranking.

Tudor notes that Confucianism has had a tremendous effect on Korean culture:

Perhaps its most powerful effect on Korean culture is to be found in the sense of hierarchy that pervades the five Confucian relationships that can exist between people. Regarding the relationship between ruler and subject, the latter had to show absolute loyalty. [...] Language reflects the age hierarchy in other ways. Korean has different levels of speech, based on the degree of respect required for different situations. *Banmal*, the most basic, exists for friends and social equals. After *banmal*, there are then six degrees of honorific speech, classified as *jondaemal* (2018, 47- 49).

Explaining this further, he writes:

In Confucianism, relationships between people have certain rules. There are five relationships in all: those between ruler and subject, father and son, older and younger, husband and wife, and two friends of similar status. The last relationship is the only one in which equality prevails. In all of the others, the former party is superior, and the latter inferior. The superior partner should act with a duty of responsibility and benevolence to the lower, who should respond in turn with loyalty and obedience. Confucians believe that a society run along these lines will be harmonious and orderly (2018, 43).

Tudor adds that:

The relationship between older and younger is also of great importance. When two people meet for the first time in Korea, one of the first questions that will be asked is, “How old are you?” Once it has been determined who is older, the younger person will be expected to act with a degree of deference. Special titles emphasize this hierarchy: a younger man will call on an older male friend *Hyung*, and a younger woman will call on an older female friend *Eonni*. [...] Still the young owe the old a certain amount of respect. [...] Language reflects the age hierarchy in other ways. Korean has different levels of speech, based on the degree of respect required for different situations (2018, 48-49).

Finally, he describes the role that education plays in Korean society:

The main way of getting ahead was via education. South Korea’s desperate state led to the realization that the only true resource the country had was the brains of its people—which, as Confucianism taught, could, and should, be improved via education (2018, 50-5).

All of this shows that culture can impact many areas of our lives. In the case of my context, a sense of hierarchical structure that stems from Confucianism plays a big role in JC, promoting values such as obedience and respect.

Personally, I like one of the aspects of Korean culture that Tudor mentions: “The superior partner should act with a duty of responsibility and benevolence to the lower who should respond in turn with loyalty and obedience” (2018, 43). This is how my relationship with my parents worked, and I appreciated their responsibility and benevolence toward me. I like the idea of respecting elders and have practiced it my entire life. I am also fond of learning things and staying curious, so achieving a higher education appeals to me. However, strengths can be weaknesses in certain situations, and I do not want to downplay the negative impact of this hierarchical approach to relationships. I saw it affect the intergenerational relationship in my family of origin. I have noticed that how it plays out varies in different contexts. Some aspects of culture may be better if limited to certain relationships, in contexts where they are understood and balanced by other values. For example, I think traditional gender roles in Korean culture have influenced leadership dynamics both within the church and in broader society. Due to the patriarchal framework of Confucianism, women tend to be marginalized in leadership roles, especially in church. I never imagined myself being in a leadership role in church, but it didn’t bother me because I felt it was a man’s role. There have been shifts and efforts to promote gender equality in recent decades, but there are still limits in terms of women’s opportunities to lead or occupy high-ranking positions. The good news is that JC started valuing female

leadership more, which was reflected in their willingness to let me lead my research project.

Another important aspect of Korean culture is *Chemyon*, or face (meaning communal respect). As I mentioned in my Leadership Narrative, at one time I felt like a failure because I could not go to the university I desired. It hurt my ego (face) badly. I felt like I disgraced my parents even though they did not blame me for anything, because I was well aware of the social expectations. Tudor stresses that “the most important way in which face is gained or lost is in education” (2018, 115). I am not sure I agree with him a hundred percent. I do not believe education is the most important way to gain face, even though there is some truth to what he says. Education is a means to acquire other sources of respect including position, money, and power. Tudor himself supports this idea in the earlier quote I included that says that Confucius looked to education as a means of improving people’s minds, which are society’s most important asset. Alongside earning face, saving face is important to Koreans. Tudor explains this well:

In South Korea, people are usually careful not to publicly criticize others. Harsh words, when needed, should be either delivered in private or cloaked in a veil of respectfulness. [...] The reason for this discretion toward and respectfulness of others’ public image is the importance of preserving face, or *chemyon*, in Korean society. *Chemyon* is considered something of an old-fashioned word, and one that encourages stereotypes. Part of the classic image Westerners have of East Asian society is the notion of people doing anything to avoid a loss of face. [...] The perception of others that one did not meet expectations was grounds for deep shame—a loss of face (2018, 112).

This helps explain why many Koreans tend to communicate passively. Saving face stems from one’s desire to protect one’s social dignity and image to others,

as well as maintaining a good self-image. For example, yelling makes people react negatively because people interpret shouting as a sign of immaturity and a lack of respect. Thus, many Koreans want to maintain harmony, avoid confrontation, and respect authority. This cultural phenomenon is crucial to understanding traditional Korean leadership and communication styles. Failing to account for this need to save face might result in challenges, misunderstandings, or even conflicts. In my opinion, passive communication has strengths and weaknesses. On one hand, it is less confrontational and thus results in fewer conflicts. It also makes it more likely that people will listen to one another carefully before responding. However, it sometimes prevents people from sharing great ideas and can create misunderstanding in the long run. People might have difficulty reading complex unspoken ideas or interpret them inaccurately. I have found that this communication style affects Korean communities differently depending on the situation. Elders tend to like it because the young know their place, so they tend not to challenge them. On the other hand, younger generations prefer to be assertive rather than passive, especially those who grew up in Canada. Assertive communication is clear and direct, and this reduces miscommunication. It leads to issues being resolved more effectively and reduces stress. Most of all, they believe that assertiveness respects both their needs and others' needs as well. These are some of the reasons they prefer to communicate assertively.

I am curious how many readers of this portfolio are aware of these cultural differences. I also wonder how people can build solid teams without knowing them. Intercultural awareness is crucial in any setting, especially for the leaders.

We need to be aware of the differences between people groups while being careful not to assume that individuals share the problems of their culture without getting to know them first.

The biblical story of Job's three friends who said Job's sufferings were a result of his sins is a good example of how people judge others (Job 5, 8, 11). Job's friends are a good example of what we should not do: judging others without understanding their context, including their culture, life experiences, values, history, etc. (Das 2016, 22). Job's friends did not show empathy toward Job's suffering. Rather, they jumped to conclusion about Job's suffering was a result of his wrongdoing. They showed lack of humility and active listening. Furthermore, they exhibited contextual ignorance because their advice was disconnected from the Job's reality and his relationship with God. Job's friends' approach is a good example of trying to lead without fully understanding the situation. This aligns with one of the principles of situational leadership which is assessing the situation before taking action. Job's friends assumed his suffering was a direct consequence of his sins instead of conducting an objective assessment of the situation.

Therefore, we need to be aware of our context and values and how they compare to others. In *Many Colors*, Rah introduces individuals who are from various ethnic backgrounds and shows how differing cultural values play out in a church. Rah claims that today there are more challenges facing the church in building a biblical community than before. The author stresses that developing intercultural intelligence is a core part of that, and some foundational work needs

to be done to fulfill God's vision (2010, 21). Otherwise, well-meaning individuals can negatively impact the community because of cultural insensitivity. Some churches, like JC, are more monocultural than others. This, too, can lead to misunderstanding and conflicts because people tend to assume that everyone will communicate the way they do.

Intercultural differences and communication styles can also be influenced by changes across generations. As generations shift and societies evolve, many factors can impact how people from different cultures communicate. For example, cultural norms and values can play a big role because they can influence how people perceive the world and how they interact with it and one another. Language, slang, and expressions can be impacted by generational changes. Without a shared language, misunderstandings can arise between different generations. Older generations might be more comfortable with face-to-face communication, but younger generations might be more comfortable with digital communication and social media. These changes across generations are evident at JC. It can have detrimental effects when people interact inappropriately with those from other cultures. I think one of the ways to promote good intercultural communication is being aware of these differences, being open-minded, and trying to adapt to different communication styles.

Rah notes that,

In order for authentic communication and connection between different cultures to happen, we need to understand and affirm how and why someone from a different culture behaves and responds to a particular situation. We need to understand that another culture's software program may run differently from ours and allow for a degree of incompatibility

between the programs as well as allowing for the legitimacy of that software compared with our own.

Furthermore, cultural intelligence requires creating an environment that allows for connection and understanding to occur. It is the willingness to seek understanding from a perspective beyond one's limited worldview. By engaging in relationships across the cultural divide and learning from others, we create the possibility of expanding our cultural worldview (2010, 84-85).

We express our thoughts, emotions, and these are often expressed in our behaviors. Unfortunately, we have our own assumptions, biases, and prejudices without knowing them. These can negatively influence how we interpret others' cultures. Rah notes that

culture does not operate on one level, but on multiple levels. The complexity of dealing with culture is that often what is important is buried underneath the surface. Think of how much of an iceberg you can see above water-not much- and apply the metaphor to culture. What we see above the surface of the water are the external aspects of culture that are easier to measure and to quantify: literature, paintings, music, foods, rituals, gestures, and so on. Below the water are a culture's internal aspects: concepts of personal space, ideas regarding modesty and beauty, concepts of leadership, beliefs about how children are raised, concepts of fairness, values, and understanding the truth. [...]

We can easily change behaviors based on conscious values and beliefs in order to adapt and accommodate to the situation. We can even modify our acknowledged beliefs and values with some intellectual reasoning and reflection. Most cultural clashes happen on the internal unconscious level. [...] To be interculturally sensitive, we need to examine the internal instinctual part of our own culture. This means revealing unconscious values and thought patterns so that we will not simply react from our cultural instinct. In the church context, it is imperative that the church leadership and community develop a level of cultural intelligence. Rather than merely changing their personal level of cultural intelligence, the ethos of the church must be transformed (2010, 86-87).

Rah's message shows the importance of observing the spectrum of cultural expressions. The following are five areas in which people differ across cultures, which we should be aware of as we interact with one another.

Table 1: Individual vs. Group Orientation (Rah 2010, 89-90)

Individual	Group
Takes individual initiative	Act cooperatively
Makes decisions individually	Make decisions as group
Nonconformist	Conform to social norms
Puts individuals before team	Put the team before individuals

Table 2: Motivated by Guilt vs. Shame (Rah 2010, 91-92)

Guilt	Shame
Responsible for individual sin	Responsible for corporate sin
A result of individual action	A result of identity
You made a mistake	You are a mistake
Absolved by confession	Absolved by a change in status

Table 3: Prefer Equality vs. Hierarchy (Rah 2010, 93-94)

Equality	Hierarchy
Self-directed	Directions from above
Individual initiative	Leader controlled
Flexible roles and expectations	Firm roles and expectations
Freedom to challenge	Does not challenge authority
Offer own opinion	Respect status of leaders

Table 4: Direct vs. Indirect Communication (Rah 2010, 94-96)

Direct	Indirect
Focus is on what, not how it is said	Focus I on how it is said
Engage in conflict	Avoid conflict
Short, direct questions	Importance of being friendly
Focus on information	Focus on feeling
Express opinions in a frank manner	Express opinions diplomatically

Table 5: Task vs. Relationship Oriented (Rah 2010, 96-98)

Task Oriented	Relationship Oriented
Focus is on keeping good time	Focus on building relationships
Goal: provide accurate information	Goal: create feel-good environment
Define people by what they do	Define people by who they know
Tends toward logic orientation	Tends toward feeling orientation

The spectrum of cultural expressions has a significant influence on how people communicate. This means we need to be aware of these differences if we want to communicate effectively with one another, especially leaders who deal with different cultures. The left columns of these charts represent how Canadians tend to function and the right columns align more with Korean culture that all Canadians operate according to the left columns and all Koreans function like the right ones. Each one accepts and adapts their culture differently. However, I think it is crucial to be mindful of the norms that exist in each context. This made me think about JC's leadership and intercultural dynamics, such as their tendency towards indirect communication and hierarchy. By being aware of these important cultural differences, leaders and different generations can understand one another better. In preparing my Research Project I was mindful that the five areas mentioned above could be useful for enhancing JC leadership.

The Great Toronto Area (GTA) and What it's Like to be a Korean Canadian Living There

Toronto was founded in 1793 and it is the capital city of the province of Ontario. The city began to grow due to immigration in the Nineteenth Century and now it is the biggest multicultural city in Canada, where people from many

different cultures live. Cultural diversity created vibrant traditions, languages, and cuisines. Economic growth also took place because many immigrants with skills and education contributed to various sectors of the economy. Immigrant communities brought their arts, cultural practices, and festivals, which led to cultural exchange and enrichment.

According to Wikipedia,

The Greater Toronto Area, commonly referred to as the GTA, includes the City of Toronto and the regional municipalities of Durham, Halton, Peel, and York. In total, the region contains 25 urban, suburban, and rural municipalities. The Greater Toronto Area begins in Burlington in Halton Region to the west, and extends along Lake Ontario past downtown Toronto eastward to Clarington in Durham Region.

According to the 2021 census, the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Toronto has a total population of 6.202 million residents, making it the nation's largest, and the 6th-largest in North America. However, the Greater Toronto Area, which is an economic area defined by the Government of Ontario, includes communities which are not included in the CMA as defined by Statistics Canada. Extrapolating the data for all 25 communities in the Greater Toronto Area from the 2021 Census, the total population for the economic region included 6,711,985 people. [...]

The Toronto CMA also has the largest proportions of foreign-born residents (46 per cent) as a share of the total population out of all metropolitan areas in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Toronto region is also unusually diverse in the composition of its ethnicities. The four largest foreign-born populations of Toronto only constitute 15% of the total foreign-born population. This is opposed to the four largest foreign-born populations of other metropolitan areas such as New York and London, where they make up 25% of their respective foreign-born populations.

This diversity often forces people groups like Koreans to interact with others and become more aware of their own cultural norms. This was true for me. As the result of living in the GTA, I made some good friends who are from different countries with different cultures, including domestic Canadians. One difference

that quickly stood out to me is the Canadian communication style. Unlike Koreans, who tend to speak indirectly, Canadians address things directly. As a therapist, now I appreciate this, but at first, I felt uncomfortable because of how unfamiliar I was with low-context communication. On his consulting website, Garry Knight explains low-context communication and the reason I felt that way. He notes that,

Canadians, therefore, tend to be quite direct; they tend to say what they think and think what they say. They don't rely very much on non-verbal cues. [...] Unlike in high-context cultures (Japan, China, S. Korea) people do not place a huge emphasis on saving face, keeping harmony and protecting feelings (Knight 2022).

Most of my clients' issues are linked to their family of origin. Many of them come to me for counselling because of relational problems caused by miscommunication, including cultural differences. Humans are complex and I often think of them as onions that have many cultural layers. When conflicts arise, it is often unintentionally escalated and aggravated by not knowing how to deal with these different layers. Most people start conversations with good intentions, but the outcomes are often negative. One of many sources of conflict that I encounter is people being unable to read unspoken rules, deal with the silent treatment, and so on. This has taught me that if we improve our communication, our relationships improve too. In order to understand others, we need to know others' backgrounds and how that affects our communication with them. Mark Johnson stresses the importance of knowing others' backgrounds and notes that effective communication can bridge gaps and foster empathy (2018, 125-142). He also highlights that an open communication environment creates mutual

understanding (2018, 125-142). In my experience, mutual understanding is more likely to emerge when people communicate openly than otherwise. However, I do not think this is a perfect rule; rather, it is a general principle.

My clients' situations and my personal experiences with communication difficulties remind me of the movie called *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, which explains the different dynamics of the two families. The bride's family is big, with many aunts, uncles, and cousins. They are loud, lively, interactive, and conversational. On the other hand, the bridegroom's family is small, and they remain silent rather than interacting with each other. According to Rah, primary culture is related to tribal culture, so people who are in a primary culture prioritize other people (2010, 103). These cultures are group-oriented, including prioritizing extended families, and they tend to prefer indirect communication. On the other hand, secondary culture is formed mostly of post-nuclear families such as single parents, blended families, and other non-conventional family structures. This tends to occur in industrialized cultures and people in these contexts are more likely to be "impersonal, with priority given to objects over people" (2010, 103). In order to navigate this kind of culture, knowledge about secondary cultural norms is required. For example, in this culture, communication is direct, task-oriented, and individual-oriented. Secondary culture is prominent in North America, and as such people tend to communicate efficiently, but the immigrants who come from primary cultures tend to focus more on relationships. I have observed this in my context, including JC, which focuses on relationships over tasks. Despite having industrialized today, primary culture is still influential

among Koreans because of deep-seated Confucian-influenced values that emphasize respecting authority and maintaining hierarchical social structures.

Before coming to Canada, I did not think much about cultural differences because I was surrounded by other Koreans. However, living in the GTA and interacting with people from other backgrounds opened my eyes to different perspectives and how to communicate across these differences. I think my experience with other Koreans might differ because I speak English, am educated here, and interact actively with Canadians. This helps me to adapt and see different cultural views more easily. However, some Koreans face language barriers, so they tend to interact with only Koreans. This can hinder them from adapting to multiculturalism. Because of this, Korean culture still lines up with Rah's description of Primary Culture.

What does normal life tend to look like for Korean Canadians? The Korean population in Ontario is 75,220 according to the 2021 Census (Statistics Canada 2023). Noh, Kim, and Noh explain the history of Korean immigrants in Canada. According to them,

Very few immigrants came from South Korea in the 1960s. It was only after 1973 that Canada received larger flows of Korean permanent migrants as it was in 1973 that the Canadian embassy opened its doors in South Korea. [...] By 1975, the South Korean government revised their emigration policy to restrict the movement of wealthy Koreans, that is, persons owning properties worth more than US \$100,000, military officers, retired generals, and high-ranking government officials. [...] More than 26,000 Korean immigrants came through two primary avenues: as sponsored family members; and via the independent class with their educational and occupational qualifications. [...] The majority of Korean immigrants arrived under the business-class program during the first half of the period until the mid-1990s. [...] Post-2003 arrivals are highly educated and relatively young, and there has been a shift back to those

with management experience versus professional work experience (Noh et al 2012, 7-13).

People whom I know in the GTA who are in their fifties to seventies often have a business such as a convenience store, dry cleaning facility, café, or restaurant. This is mostly due to language barriers, and the fact that they were not educated in Canada—the education many of them had in Korea (often bachelor's degrees or higher) was not recognized by the government here when they arrived. On the other hand, younger immigrants tend to have professional jobs in the technology industry, educational sector, health professions, large companies, and so on. This is because they can speak English fluently and are well-educated by Canadian standards. Statistics Canada says,

People with Korean origins living in Canada are much more likely than the rest of the population to have a university degree... Canadians of Korean origin are also twice as likely as other Canadians to have a post-graduate degree... In 2001, 21% of university graduates of Korean origin had degrees in specialties including engineering, applied science, mathematics, computing, and the physical sciences, compared with 9 % of all Canadian university graduates.

Young people of Korean origin are also considerably more likely than other young Canadians to be attending school. In 2001, 77% of Canadians of Korean origin aged 15 to 24 were enrolled in a full-time educational program, compared to just 57% of all Canadians in this age range. [...] Canadians of Korean origin are also more likely than the overall workforce to be employed in sales and service jobs, as well as in professional positions in the natural and applied sciences (2007).

Bae and Rosel explain the core reason Koreans moved to Canada based on a study that said,

Korean immigrants move to Canada to fulfill their dreams of living abroad, improve their quality of life and escape from Korean's stressful lifestyle. Once on Canadian soil, they face barriers like language problems, cultural differences and racial discrimination. During the process of overcoming these barriers, immigrants can suffer physical,

social, psychological and economic dilemmas. In spite of such hardships, they try to adapt to their new lives in Canada by compromising, sacrificing, seeking information and finding comfort in family and religion. In the end, they usually become assimilated and comfortable with their lives, and they express satisfaction and hope for their future. Those immigrants who are not successful in adjusting experience regret and homesickness, so they wish to return to Korea (2010, 472-473).

Koreans whom I know in Canada tend to integrate and adapt to Canadian norms but some of them live in tight-knit communities that retain Korean cultural norms.

Part of this stems from the fact that they also form tight-knit religious communities. According to Statistics Canada,

The majority of Canadians of Korean origin report they are either Protestant or Catholic. In 2001, 51% of the Korean population said that they belonged to either a mainline Protestant denomination or another Christian group, while 25 % reported that they were Catholic. At the same time, another 4% said that they were Buddhists. A relatively large proportion of Canadians of Korean origin, though, say they have no religious affiliation. In 2001, 20 % of people of Korean origin reported they had no religious affiliation, compared with 17% of the overall population (2007).

Korean culture emphasizes filial piety, which is the respect shown by children towards their parents and elders. Elders are often highly respected and tend to make important family-related decisions. There is no doubt that this traditional Korean value influences family dynamics. Korean society values collectivism, so usually the need of one's family and group desires come first over individual needs. In the past, men typically played the role of breadwinner, but gradually this is changing as more women pursue careers. Younger generations tend to be more individualistic and challenge traditional views. Balancing traditional views and new emerging views with awareness is an important task for leaders.

Opportunity Analysis

JC is full of first-generation and 1.5-generation immigrants from South Korea. Church members brought their traditional Korean-style services when they came to Canada, which includes prayers at dawn, Bible studies, small group meetings, and so on. JC has prayer times at dawn 365 days a year, services every Wednesday, services every Friday, and an evangelism time on Saturday morning during which church members go out on the street to spread the Gospel. JC is active and many of its members participate in all of the available services. People also enjoy fellowshiping by having food and beverages together after services. The second-generation members—those who were born in Canada—attend the English service because they are less fluent in Korean and do not share many of the older generations' cultural assumptions. Despite some intergenerational challenges, both the Korean service and English service are growing steadily and there's a positive energy at JC.

JC's motto is to get all three generations in the church to work together and connect with people from different cultures. This encourages congregants to connect with others and focus on missions. JC has sent many missionaries all over the world and supports them with prayer, finances, and sending teams to help them. Many groups of youth visit mission sites for short or long periods of time. Some parents go on mission trips with their children to experience it alongside them and teach them how God works in mission fields. It is an amazing opportunity for church members to engage with others and deepen their love for God.

Every Saturday, the church provides free Korean classes to people who are interested in learning the language. Many children who were born in Canada are not fluent in Korean and it often leads to miscommunication or a lack of deeper understanding between parents and their children. By taking this program, children become more confident in speaking Korean and also understand their culture better. This improves their relationship with their parents. This program is not only limited to Koreans; people from other backgrounds can participate as well. I noticed that Korean music, drama, and culture has slowly gained popularity in non-Korean communities, and people will come to Korean classes to learn our language and culture. At first, I only saw Korean children in the program but now there are White, Black, and Middle Eastern children too. It is great to see these classes becoming diverse and people from such different backgrounds doing fun activities altogether.

JC also runs a bazaar twice a year and invites neighbours to come get food, activities, clothes, and so on. Many church members donate stuff, and the proceeds help people who are in need or are out in the missions field. People help with the bazaars with thankful hearts and a desire to connect with the community so that the Gospel spreads. There is lots of laughter and happiness during these events. People do not seem to mind sacrificing a bit if necessary. I believe this is because they understand the love of God.

Despite these many strengths, JC has some weaknesses as well. As I mentioned earlier, many church members left because of issues surrounding the succession of a leader and a debate about LGBTQ+ issues which led to many

congregants concluding that the church was too progressive. These topics are elephants in the room that need addressing. However, I think people have left for more reasons than just this. Speaking of the church in general, Kester Brewin notes that,

People left the church because it was unconnected to their experience not because of personal holiness. [...] We know that personal change alone will not do, and that root and branch corporate reform is needed (2007, 20-23).

I agree with his analysis and think it applies to JC. Many of JC's members mentioned disconnection. Disconnection is a major issue among people today. In order to interact with others, we need good communication skills. I have noticed that even Canadians, who value direct communication, are often hesitant to talk about sensitive issues. Korean leaders tend to avoid communicating about issues directly and talking about them openly. I believe this is part of the reason that people are leaving but also cannot know for sure because people do not share why they are leaving. Brewin also notes that "top-down" leadership makes people leave but "bottom-up" leadership preserves people's essential freedom (2007, 24). When I read this, it reminded me that Koreans typically develop their communication skills within a hierarchical structure. I thought that this might be one of the root causes of people leaving the church. I also wondered what role this formation played when leaders of different genders, ages, and statuses were required to work together and communicate effectively. I was curious whether the leaders' differences caused issues to arise when they met together. My sense was that Koreans' passive approach to authority and conflict has hindered their ability

to lead as a team. The specific goals I came up with as a result of these observations were to help JC's leaders become more aware of how they communicate with one another, and to become more aware of how cultural factors affect their communication styles and impact their team dynamics. This all contributed to what I decided to do for my research project.

Potential Project

Brown notes that Jesus is “the bridge” and he is “the great high priest who bridges the gap between humanity and God” (2015, 151). As I was preparing my research project it was important for me to follow the example of Jesus, the servant who bridges gaps and loves others. I wanted to play a similar role in my ministry setting. However, I was not sure how to best serve and strengthen JC and its leaders. There were some potential projects in my head. They tended to focus on helping the leaders communicate, because some members and leaders in the church had mentioned that those at the top struggled with this. I asked myself, “What is needed to help the team building of JC’s key leaders?” “I have found improving communication helpful in my counselling work, but will it apply to the JC leadership as well despite the different settings?” “If the key leaders understand their communication styles, will this help them resolve conflicts?” “What about a coaching program about resolving conflicts?” “Will teaching conflict resolution strengthen their team leadership?”

As a layperson, I had the opportunity to play this kind of role with the leadership team because I had neutral relationships with the senior pastor, vice

pastors, elders, and other leaders. Thus, I was not concerned that my relationship with them would negatively influence the outcome of my research. It also helped that I understood both Korean and Canadian cultures. Over the twelve years that I had lived in the GTA, I had experience navigating cultural differences and the misunderstanding they can create. I also work as a therapist, so I have some knowledge of the human psyche. Additionally, since I was a counsellor, leaders knew I would respect their confidentiality if they shared their issues with me. I was introduced to the methodology of ethnography, which is related to counselling practice in its use of close observation, field notes, and one-on-one interviews. Lastly, I had participated in communication skills workshops that were personally helpful. I thought that all of these experiences would allow me to bridge gaps between leaders. I hoped that if I conducted this research and shared what I found with JC's leaders, they would grow in their communication and conflict resolutions skills because of their increased understanding, which would in turn benefit the ministry. However, I was not sure how the leadership team would view my potential project because some of them might feel uncomfortable learning about these things. It could be a challenge for them to change even if they recognized some of their weaknesses. Lencioni mentions that "people like to have safe and predictable things. [...] They want to avoid subjective conversations that can become emotional and awkward" (2012, 7). This indicates that people do not like to change, so they resist when change happens. I was worried I could encounter this in pursuing a research project at JC.

Summary and Conclusion

One aspect of Korean culture that plays a significant role in the challenges facing JC is the notion that younger people must respect and obey their elders. When younger people raise any issues, the elders assume that it is a challenge to their authority and that the younger people are being disobedient. Sometimes, older leaders address issues unclearly and this creates misunderstanding. Steinke mentions that Family Systems Theory focuses attention on how interactions influence both parties, and how these interactions become repeated patterns (2006, 5). This applies to a church organization as well. For example, in JC some leaders want to keep the traditional, authoritative leadership style, but others would like to change it.

My observations of Korean Canadian culture and the culture at JC led me to focus on communication styles in my research project. I felt equipped to do this in part because it was something I dealt with as a therapist. Thus, the following Project Report is about JC's leaders' communication styles and how I sought to grow their self-understanding on this front.

CHAPTER 5:

PROJECT REPORT

In my leadership narrative, I explained how I grew in my self-awareness. In my context analysis, I described how it could benefit Korean Canadian leaders like those at JC to become more aware of their communication style. In this chapter, I will explain the project I led in order to help them do so.

Introduction

In any organization, including the church, misunderstandings can occur because we do not think about our and others' communication styles. If we are aware of our own tendencies, it is easier for us to understand others, and this can help to decrease and de-escalate conflict situations. My project aimed to enhance the team dynamics of my church's key leaders. My plan for this research project was to identify their communication styles and explore how they impacted their teamwork. As part of this process, I sought to understand whether their communication styles were related to cultural factors or not. I thought that enhancing their understanding of how JC's leaders' culture shaped their values and communication styles would help the team grow. As explained in the Context Analysis section, the Korean traditional leadership style, including its focus on hierarchy, had previously impacted JC negatively. Each member's communication style also influenced the team differently. A lack of open

communication among the team had hindered past leaders in some key areas. Thus, I hoped that exploring JC's leaders' communication styles would help them become more aware of their own styles and others' as well.

Context

As described in my Narrative Leadership, I learned from my family of origin to communicate indirectly. This is common among Koreans, who tend to employ passive or passive-aggressive communication styles. Since JC is mostly composed of Korean Canadians, this affects how the members and leaders communicate with one another. Indirect communication is ideal when we need to address an issue publicly, since then it is a good idea to soften our language and employ manners. This shows respect and can save face for anyone affected by the issue we are calling attention to. Like most Koreans, this is especially important for me when I am communicating with elders, and I was taught to respect them from a young age. Unfortunately, my indirect communication style often negatively impacted my marriage because my husband did not communicate in the same way. I have also noticed this communication style affected the children of immigrants and their parents in my counselling practice and church. It has also had a negative impact on JC as described in my Context Analysis, because of their indirect communication, the church experienced misunderstanding followed by a brief description of the conflicts that took place previously. According to Northouse,

Effective leader-follower relationships are marked by high-quality communication in which leaders and followers demonstrate a high degree

of mutual trust, respect, and obligation toward each other. [...] This results in strong leader-member relationships, greater understanding, and higher productivity (2016, 199).

This shows how important it is to know our communication styles. This is why I chose to study the communication styles of JC's leaders.

Supervision, Permission, and Access

In order to get permission to conduct the research and gain access to participants, I was accountable to Tyndale University, the Research Ethics Board, and JC's pastors and elders. I asked for approval from each before commencing this project. The research began on the third week of June in 2022. In order to reduce the risk to my participants, I got participants to sign a consent form that included their personal information, distribution of collected data, and storage. In order to reduce my personal biases, I tried to maintain a non-judgmental stance while listening to each participant.

My counselling training and experience allowed me to approach the project and interactions with participants with a more objective, non-judgmental view. I also had no dual role because I was a layperson in the church and none of the participants accessed my counselling services before or during the project. This meant that I did not have to balance roles and could focus solely on conducting the research. The fact that I was a counsellor and not a church leader seemed to help people feel safe to be involved in the project. However, I was concerned about the fact that since the participants were my pastors and church leaders, it might create a problematic power relationship between us. Thankfully, this concern was not a major issue during this research because I knew that they

would respect me as a researcher and treat me nicely, so I did not feel they would misuse their authority over me.

As a layperson, I was not responsible for leading any ministries and could proceed with my proposed project without concern about how it might affect anything I was leading. However, my project had implications for the wide breadth of ministry responsibilities held by the key leaders. I hoped that my project would have the effect of improving their communication skills within their ministry contexts and as they carried out leadership functions, which would have a positive effect on their ministries. I obtained permission to conduct this project primarily through the senior pastor and church board. To identify and manage my participants' expectations, I provided a description of what to expect at the beginning of the project and collected data about their expectations during the Context and Assessment Phase.

Models and Other Course Material

There are many different ways for leaders to lead their organizations and ministries. These different approaches are broadly referred to as leadership styles. What are these leadership styles composed of? One of them is a leader's values or principles. Rah explains that recognizing each person's values is crucial in the formation of corporate identity (2010, 32). When we share our stories it reveals our personalities, emotions, feelings, and identities. Our values influence what leadership style we prefer. We feel better about ourselves when we live by our values. Thus, we tend to be more focused on the things that are important to us.

Some people value such things as money, success, status, competence, power, and so on. Others value self-awareness, communication, relationships, servanthood, and character. I prefer the latter.

Because of this, there are two leadership styles that appeal to me and inform how I view ministry leadership in general: Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership. According to Northouse, Authentic Leadership focuses on “whether leadership is genuine and real [...] and it is about the authenticity of leaders and their leadership” (2016, 195). Palmer notes that “the power for authentic leaders is found not in external arrangements but in the human heart. Authentic leaders in every setting—from families to nation-states—aim at liberating the heart, their own and others so that its powers can liberate the world” (2000, 76).

Northouse describes Servant Leadership as

an approach focusing on leadership from the point of view of the leader and his or her behaviours. Servant leadership emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of their followers, empathize with them, and nurture them. Servant leaders put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities (2016, 225).

Spears describes ten attributes of servant leadership from Greenleaf’s original writings, and they are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (2002, 1-16).

Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership line up with how I want to lead. Thus, I will describe them in more detail in my Philosophy of Christian Leadership that my commitment to Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership

shaped how I designed my project. For example, one of my convictions is that ministry leadership should be shared leadership, as exemplified by Jesus Christ. One of the good examples of this is the Last Supper, at which Jesus engaged with his disciples, talking to them and providing them with important insights. He explained the meaning of the bread and wine. Then he encouraged them to practice humility and empower others the way that he does (Luke 22:19-20). In this moment, I think that Jesus modeled team leadership by sharing his wisdom of how to engage, interact, and serve people.

Paul attributes the same kind of leadership to Jesus in Ephesians 4:11-13, which says, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” God himself is also relational, as enshrined in the doctrine of the Trinity, which says that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible also shows other faithful leaders prayerfully focusing on their relationships. For example, in 1 Corinthians 13, the apostle Paul talks about the importance of love and how it should guide believers’ relationships. This passage talks about the roles people had within the church community. Certain individuals were given the responsibility to teach, guide, and nurture others for the purpose of unity and spiritual growth. It emphasizes the idea that leaders are appointed not only for their own benefit, but to serve others for the greater community.

Understanding each other’s communication styles is important if we are to lead relationally as well. Understanding each other’s communication styles is a key aspect of both authentic and servant leadership. Authentic leaders value interpersonal connections where people feel comfortable expressing themselves. Servant leaders focus on serving and understanding different communication styles, which is important in my context.

As I described in the Resources and Cases section, Paul and Barnabas worked through their conflict in a manner that lines up with Assertive communication. In order for us to communicate well, it helps to understand the different ways that people communicate. The following chart breaks this down well enough that I use it in my counselling work:

Table 6: Four Communication Styles (Randy Paterson 2022, 25)

	Passive	Aggressive	Passive- Aggressive	Assertive
Behavior	Keep quiet. Don’t say what you feel, need, or want. Put yourself down frequently. Apologize when you express yourself. Deny that you disagree or feel differently.	Express your feelings and wants as though any other view is unreasonable or worthless. Dismiss, ignore, or insult the needs, wants, and opinions of others.	Fail to meet the expectations of others through “deniable” means: forgetting, being delayed, and so on. Deny personal responsibility for your actions.	Express your needs, wants, and feelings directly and honestly. Don’t assume you’re correct or that everyone will feel the same way. Allow others to hold other views without dismissing or insulting them.
Nonverbal	Make yourself small. Look down, hunch your shoulders, avoid eye contact. Speak softly.	Make yourself large and threatening. Eye contact is fixed and penetrating. May use loud or icy cold voice.	Usually mimics the passive style.	Body is relaxed, movements are casual. Eye contact is frequent but not glaring.

	Passive	Aggressive	Passive-Aggressive	Assertive
Beliefs	Others' needs are more important than yours. They have rights; you don't. Their contributions are valuable. Yours are worthless.	Your needs are more important and more justified than theirs. You have rights; they don't. Your contributions are valuable. Theirs are silly or wrong.	You're entitled to get your own way, even after making commitments to others. You're not responsible for your actions.	Your needs are those of others are equally important. You have equal rights to express yourselves. You both have something valuable to contribute. You're responsible for your behavior.
Emotions	Fear of rejection. Helplessness, frustration, and anger. Resentment toward others who "use" you. Reduced self-respect.	Angry or powerful at the time, and vindicated when you win. Afterward: remorse, guilt, or self-hatred for hurting others.	Fear that you'd be rejected if you were more assertive. Resentment at the demands of others. Fear of being confronted.	You feel positive about yourself and the way you treat others. Self-esteem rises.
Goals	Avoid conflict. Please others at any expense to yourself. Give others control over you.	Win at any expense to others. Gain control over them.	Get your own way without having to take responsibility.	Both you and others keep your self-respect. Express yourself without having to win all the time. NO one control anyone else.

This model explains the four different communication styles that I applied to my research project. There are four communication styles: Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, and Assertive. It includes behavior, nonverbal, beliefs, emotions, and goals for the different styles of communication. Figure 2 explains each communication style well. For example, a Passive communicator tends to keep quiet, avoid eye contact, consider themselves less important than others, fear rejection, and avoid conflict. An Aggressive communicator tends to attack other opinions, look threatening, see their needs as more important than others', and control others. A Passive-Aggressive communicator tends to be sarcastic, think

that their needs come first but that they can't express them openly, be resentful of people's demands and power, and try to arrange things so they go the way they want without taking responsibility. Lastly, an Assertive communicator tends to expect others to be equally open and honest as they are. They tend to look relaxed and have comfortable body language. Their needs are equally important as others' and they feel positive about themselves. Most of all, they keep fair boundaries based on mutual respect. The four communication styles are often influenced by an individual's personality traits, preferences, and comfort levels in social interactions. Someone who is naturally quiet may lean toward a more passive communication style because they might prefer listening than speaking and have a more reserved manner. This doesn't necessarily imply a lack of confidence, just their comfort with a different approach.

Communication style influences how conflicts are approached and resolved. Being mindful of the impact of one's communication can significantly affect conflict resolution. Many clients come to me for counselling because of relationship problems that stem from a lack of good communication. Even with good communication skills and understanding, conflict will occasionally arise. When such conflict arises, it is often unintentionally escalated and aggravated by not knowing how to deal with it. Because of this, conflict resolution skills are also pertinent to leadership development, so I sought to integrate it into the research project.

Many people do not know how to address or resolve issues. This can be especially hard for Christians because the Bible teaches us to love, forgive, and

reconcile with each other. People apply these teachings in a way that discourages healthy conflict resolution. They put others first and are hesitant to express their needs because they believe they need to serve others as Christians. However, Jesus asks his followers to “love your neighbours as yourself” (Mark 12:31). We are all important, so we need to set healthy boundaries. People who do not know how to set boundaries tend to simply respond or react in the way that they learned from their parents, caregivers, or others. Due to unresolved issues, people cut off their relationships with others, hold grudges against them, or live with uncomfortable emotions. Learning about and applying communication skills can help them carry out their learned conflict management skills in a healthy way. If they have unhealthy communication practices, they need to become more self-aware and address these.

Lencioni says, “Conflict is not a bad thing for a team. [...] Rather, it is what I call productive ideological conflict, the willingness to disagree, even passionately when necessary, around important issues and decisions that must be made” (2012, 38). De Dreu and Van de Vliert explain that,

some conflict may be beneficial to performance in groups and organizations, and that avoiding and suppressing conflict reduces individual creativity, decision quality in teams, product development, and communication between work groups. Moreover, a case can be made that stimulating conflict sometimes enhances individual, group organizational performance (1997, 10).

Jackson and Bosse-Smith describe conflict as “an inevitable reality of human life and particularly in the context of relationships” (2008, 98). They add that “regardless of what your communication style is, you will experience conflict

with your team members, family members, and friends. The goal is not to eliminate conflict but to manage it in a way that sustains healthy relationships” (2008, 98). Their message is aligned with my project. Often groups organically create conflicts whether or not the communication is effective between group members. Thus, it is crucial for leadership teams to learn how to handle conflict well through effective communication.

Korean culture traditionally values hierarchy and respect for authority. This hierarchical structure within groups, including JC, can sometimes stifle open communication. Indirect communication often involves avoidance and implicit messages. Disagreements or tension might appear subtly through non-verbal cues or tone. This indirectness can lead to misunderstanding or misinterpretations, and it can escalate conflicts. As a Korean Canadian, I hope to simultaneously affirm some Korean values while discovering how they contribute to JC’s leaders’ communication styles, so the leaders can address conflict in a way that is healthy and culturally appropriate. The following resources helped me understand that and apply it to my research.

Other Resources and Cases

The first resource I consulted was Stringer’s *Action Research*. He defines Participatory Action Research as “A systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives” by engaging with participants in the research process (Stringer

2014, 1). The Action Research cycle involves four stages observing, planning, acting, and reflecting (Stringer 2014, 1). My project followed these four stages.

The second resource I used was “Acts: Christ At Work Through His Church” written by Deffinbaugh. Deffinbaugh talks about conflicts and confrontations between Paul and Barnabas regarding parting paths (Acts 15:35-41). He talks about the “characteristics of this conflict” by providing specific examples of how Paul and Barnabas understand and view the situation:

- Paul and Barnabas kept the problem on a personal level
 - They did not take the problem personally
 - They saw the matter through to a resolution
 - They both did not act out of self-interest
 - They acted in accordance with their own spiritual gifts and calling
- (Deffinbaugh 2004)

This passage is a good example of how leaders can resolve conflict wisely and communicate effectively. As Deffinbaugh notes, they tried to understand each other even if they had a disagreement (2004). This was helpful for my project because it portrays a biblical example of conflict resolution and understanding each other’s communication styles.

The third resource I referenced was Ross’ *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*. This book explains the influence that culture has on conflict resolution. Ross notes that conflicts occur in specific cultural settings and that,

viewing conflict as cultural behaviour helps explain why disputes over seemingly similar substantive issues can be handled so dissimilarly in different cultures. The culture of conflict refers to a society's specific norms, practices, and institutions associated with conflict. Culture defines what people value and what they are likely to enter into disputes over, suggests appropriate ways to behave in particular kinds of disputes, and shapes intuitions in which disputes are processed. In short, a culture of conflict is what people in a society fight about, whom they fight with, and how they go about it (1993, 21).

This gave me some insight into what I needed to focus on in terms of cultural factors in my project. Culture affects conflict behaviour and communication styles on many different levels. Ross states that "Since the ethnographic evidence shows the great variation in levels and forms conflict can take, we are still left with the question of how to understand the conditions under which conflict occurs" (1993, 19-20). Thus, seeking to understand this underlying variation is a main focus of my research.

I also consulted three different resources on culture and communication, and they yielded similar insights. The fourth resource I drew on was *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church* by Rah (2010). In it, he addresses the necessity of understanding and developing cultural intelligence "to seek ways to honour the presence of God in different cultures" at churches (2010, 29). Thus, they can better manage multicultural and cross-cultural issues. For this to take place, Rah says a paradigm shift is needed from "all good or all bad" to "a process or journey of discovery, exploration, and development" (2010, 12). He mentions that if we consider all cultures as God-ordained, we see them as equally valuable (Rah 2010, 21). As mentioned in my Context Analysis, he also argues that cultures can be divided into "Primary" and "Secondary" cultures, with the

former focusing more on relationships and the latter focusing more on tasks. According to him, tribal cultures tend to be primary cultures, so they prioritize people. Thus, primary culture is more common among immigrants, many of whom focus on relationships and indirect communication (Rah 2010, 102). Some immigrant cultures are direct communicators, however. Since each church has its own internal culture, Rah emphasizes being aware of each culture's tendencies, which is a part of cultural intelligence (2010, 107). This self-awareness is key to understanding people from other backgrounds, languages, traditions, genders, ages, statuses, etc.. Developing cultural sensitivity is a lifelong journey.

The fifth resource I used was Sarah Lanier's book *Foreign to Familiar*. In her book, she divides cultures into "hot climate cultures and cold climate cultures" (2000, 13). According to Lanier, hot climate cultures are relationship-based and use indirect communication, but cold climate cultures are task-oriented and use direct communication (2000, 16-17). In her book, Lanier talked about the terms "high context" and "low context" to explain cultural differences. High-context cultures have a communication style that relies on nonverbal cues, body language, and tone of voice (2000, 102). These cultures value harmony and relationships (2000, 102) and employ indirect communication to avoid confrontation (2000, 102). On the other hand, in low-context cultures communication tends to be direct and explicit (2000, 102). People value clarity and individuality (2000, 102). I think all of this shaped my research project understanding better because understanding our tendencies helps to understand others.

The sixth resource I relied on is Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein's book, *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*. In it, they provide a list of what should be included in all field notes, and I followed their advice by including:

1. The date, time, and place of my observations
2. Specific facts, numbers, and details of what happens at the site
3. Sensory impressions, including sights, sounds, textures, smells, and tastes
4. People's responses to the fact that I was recording fieldnotes
5. Specific words and phrases, summaries of conversations, and insider language that was used
6. Questions I had about people or behaviours at the site for future investigation
7. Page numbers to help keep my observations in order (Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein 1997, 73)

The last source I consulted was *Qualitative Research* by Tim Sensing. It describes how to write a Doctor of Ministry research project and advises that "qualitative methods are preferred for DMin projects" (2011, 62). There are various qualitative methods that Sensing introduces in his book; I found that ethnography fit well with my project. This is because it is similar to my counselling process, as I explained before. This resource was valuable to my research project because it provides specific methods for collecting qualitative data, including information about ethnography (Sensing 2011, 93), observation

(99), taking field notes (180), questionnaires (113), interviews (102), questions (86), and consent forms (235-236).

Project, Methodology, and Methods

This project took place in Mississauga, Ontario, from July 2022 to March 2023. The project participants were JC's key leaders including the senior pastor, three vice pastors, and six elders. All participants were born in South Korea, and they moved to Canada in their twenties, thirties, or forties. The senior pastor served a church in Germany for four years before coming to JC. At the time of the project, he had been serving JC for twenty-seven years. Most participants did not speak English fluently, but they could carry on basic conversations. Their ages ranged from mid-forties to the late sixties. All of the participants except one were male. The woman was a vice pastor and spoke English fluently. However, she decided not to participate beyond the initial one-on-one interview due to her tight schedule. Another vice pastor also dropped out of the project after taking the questionnaire because he had to move to South Korea due to family matters. Two of the church's six elders could not join the project because of personal matters such as illness and tight schedules. Thus, six people participated in the full project, including the senior pastor, a vice pastor, and four elders.

These participants were involved in my project voluntarily. I asked them to sign a consent form when I conducted the initial one-on-one interviews, and verbal consent was sought during future meetings. My relationship with these individuals was good and they showed interest in participating in my research

project. The project explored the questions, “Are JC leaders aware of their communication styles and others’ communication styles,” “How do JC’s leaders communicate when an issue arises,” and “What would help them to communicate in a better way so problems can be solved?” The project aimed to help participants better understand their and others’ communication skills. With this in mind, throughout the project, the participants were asked to share their experiences communicating with their fellow leaders. I respected their need for confidentiality, and I did not assume the project would have a lasting effect on every participant. I hoped that my research would be relevant to other Korean Canadians and ministry contexts.

My project was approved on June 24th, 2022. I explained to JC’s senior pastor that I wanted to study the church’s leaders’ communication and conflict resolution skills. He was concerned that including conflict resolution skills could call unwanted attention to fights that had taken place in the church and harm some of the leaders’ reputations. On July 29th, I reached out to him to address these concerns. We agreed to revise the project and focus on strengthening the JC leadership team by helping each leader discover and understand their communication style. This would be done primarily via a workshop that I would design to respond to the information I collected during the study. I was satisfied with this, because knowing ourselves and being aware of our individual communication style is the first step to understanding others and not taking their differences personally. After this discussion, it was agreed that we would proceed with this project along with JC’s other leaders. With the senior pastor’s

permission and the REB's approval, I sent an information letter and consent forms to potential participants.

Methodology

There were a handful of methodologies that shaped how I conducted my research, although I did not follow any of them closely. The first process that inspired me was Participatory Action Research (PAR). I followed the recommended stages of PAR to design and evaluate the communication workshop. I also regularly sought feedback from participants, although I made most of the decisions unilaterally or with only the senior pastor, which was out of step with PAR. Out of the ten original potential participants, six would go on to complete the process. There are four stages in PAR: Observation, Planning, Action, and Reflection (Bramer 2017, 30). The goal of the Observation Stage is to identify the issues that participants are experiencing at that time. I did this through interviews and a questionnaire. The goal of the Planning Stage is to discuss what was shared during the first phase and then to plan a project. I did this through a focus group in which participants discussed their communication barriers and helped plan a workshop. The goal of the Action Stage is to implement the plan from the second phase, which, in the case of my project, involved trying to improve the participants' communication through the workshop. The goal of the Reflection Stage is to evaluate and refine the plan for the future. I did this by interviewing participants and having them take the questionnaire again. By listening to the participants' experiences during the project, I could understand

them better. I collected data in each stage of the process which I could then code and analyze.

The second methodology that I drew on—but did not follow—was ethnography. According to Brewer, ethnography is “the study of people in naturally occurring settings [...] by methods [...] which capture their social meanings (culture)” (Brewer 2000, 6). By integrating insights from ethnography, I hoped participants would understand and improve their relationships with God, themselves, and others. This is because I thought that ethnographic methods would enable participants to engage with others in a respectful and empathetic manner. It was also helpful for uncovering communication patterns within a group and lead to personal growth. In addition, ethnography has some similarities to counselling, so it was a good tool that related to my context and experience. Ethnography involves methods that are similar to counselling techniques, such as observation (which I use in couple or family therapy), field notes (which are similar to counselling session notes), one-on-one interviews (which are like individual counselling), and communication questionnaires (which resemble tests I use). In collecting data using these methods, my goal was always to understand the way that key leaders interacted with one another normally, how they responded to one another, and how they managed issues together (or struggled to). This helped me to understand the culture, values, behaviours, and social dynamics of the participants, especially their communication patterns and power dynamics. My training as a therapist helped me listen to the participants’ stories carefully and observe their behaviours and interactions. Thus, I could understand JC’s

leaders' communication styles and provide them with advice that suited their circumstances. My positive relationship with them and my familiarity with their culture and language were also relevant to the research project.

The methods I took from PAR and ethnography helped me to better understand participants' relationships with themselves and others. I went over comments and feedback on the project's effectiveness to understand the participants' communication styles and help them build healthy relationships with each other. The outcome was evaluated using qualitative methods, including coding. One of the crucial components of healthy leadership is to understand communication styles. It is one of the cornerstones of relationship building.

Methods

As mentioned above, this project followed the four stages of PAR. In Phase One, the Observation Stage, I did a one-on-one interview with each participant in order to know what areas we need to work on in the leadership team. In Phase Two, the Planning Stage, I led a focus group meeting to debrief the participants' interviews and questionnaires with them and share what I had observed during the first phase. In Phase Three, the Action Stage, a workshop was conducted according to the plans made during the focus group discussion. In Phase Four, the Reflection Stage, I evaluated each participant's outcomes using interviews, a closing questionnaire, and participant observation in order to determine what kind of effect the workshop had.

I used a number of methods to collect and analyze data during this project. The first was one-on-one interviews. These allow “people to describe their situations and put words to their interior lives, personal feelings, opinions, and experiences” and they provide “a record of interviewees’ particular views and perspectives” and “recognize the legitimacy of their view” (Sensing 2011, 103). In Phase One, the Observation Stage, I conducted a one-on-one interview with each participant using ten questions created by me (see Appendix 2). These interviews lasted from forty minutes to an hour, and I audio-recorded them with the participants’ permission. In Phase Four, I conducted a group interview with each participant answering four questions created by me for themselves (see Appendix 4). These interviews were audio-recorded with the participant’s permission like in phase one. The interviews were conducted in Korean and translated into English by me.

The second method I used was questionnaires that I used to find out each participant’s communication style. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3. I first discovered this quiz online. It was taken from *DBT Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide to Dialectical Behavior Therapy* by Sheri Van Dijk (2012, 165-176). Sheri is a psychotherapist and author and I found that her 4-Communication Style quiz was simple and clear. I had previously used it in my counselling work and found it helpful, so I thought it would work well for this study. I contacted Sheri on July 31, 2023, and asked her for permission to use it. She contacted her editor and got back to me with permission. However, she expressed some concern that it was not empirically validated and could present some issues in a study like

mine. As I will share in my Findings and Interpretations, in the end, I did notice that it had an unexpected impact. The four styles in this quiz include Aggressive, Passive, Passive-Aggressive, and Assertive. There were twenty questions total, five pertaining to each of the four communication styles. For example, one of the questions was, “Do you fear that expressing yourself will cause others to be angry with you or not like you,” which lines up with a Passive communication style. Similarly, “Do you yell, swear, or use other aggressive means of communicating regularly” and “Are you disrespectful toward others when communicating with them, not really caring if they get what they need if your needs are met” were both tied to the Aggressive communication style. “Are you generally reluctant to express your emotions but find that how you feel gets expressed in other ways, like slamming doors or other aggressive behaviours” fits the Passive-Aggressive style. Lastly, questions such as “Do you listen closely to what others are saying, sending them the message that you’re trying to understand their perspective” and “When communicating with others, do you treat them with respect while also respecting yourself” scored the participants for Assertive communication. This quiz helped identify Passive and Passive-Aggressive tendencies in the participants, which line up with their Korean background. This created opportunities to discuss what effective communication looks like. I was planning to send the questionnaires to each participant via email at first but some of them feel more comfortable doing it in person. Thus, I met each participant and explained when they had some questions regarding the questionnaires. It was the same questionnaire they took again because the purpose of this was to compare

pre- and post-test results. I noticed that it took a shorter time than before because they already knew the questions. A couple of participants mentioned that they wish they could be more assertive, but it is not easy for them to change quickly.

My third method was a focus group discussion in which we debriefed participants' interviews and questionnaires and then came up with plans for the workshop together. The purpose of this meeting was to share what I observed during the first phase. It was conducted on January 16th, 2023. I met with participants in the church boardroom. Six participants attended. The questions we discussed during this meeting can be found in Appendix 4.

My fourth method was participant observation, which was conducted throughout the project, especially during the workshop. I recorded my observations using field notes and by reviewing meeting recordings. Participant observation is designed to understand how a group functions, including their communication styles. Participant observation is "the primary tool used in ethnography, the study of living human beings in their social and cultural contexts" (Sensing 2011, 93). It gathers information about participants' "physical, social, cultural, political, and economic contexts, among others" (Sensing 2011, 93). Participant observation allowed me to understand the participants and their team culture as they engaged in activities together. I took field notes which are "the most effective technique for letting the researcher pull back from being too fully engrossed in the participation project" (Sensing 2011, 95) and provide "a straightforward description of what selectively took place" (Sensing 2011, 182). My field notes constituted a crucial part of the data. I used the "Tips for Taking

Field Notes” in Sensing’s book *Qualitative Research* (2011, 185). As mentioned in the Resources section, I also followed Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein’s suggested list of what should be included in all field notes so I could be accurate as possible.

I collected data throughout the project, then analyzed it and wrote about what I learned regarding my research question and other related points. I then looked for links between the different aspects of what I observed during the workshop. I analyzed transcripts of the audio recordings by using Emotion Coding (Saldaña 2016, 170-179) because it is suitable for exploring “intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions” (Saldaña 2016, 125). Emotion Coding focuses on issues related to social relationships and judgement. Furthermore, it helps to observe participants’ “perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions” (Saldaña 2016, 125). Emotion Coding is “a combination of In Vivo Codes and emotional states and reactions” (Saldaña 2016, 125). With Emotion Coding I could understand what participants had experienced emotionally. I also used Descriptive Coding, which covers multiple types of data forms such as interview transcripts, field notes, and documents (Saldaña 2016, 102). Via this method, I could observe their communication styles by measuring their interactions with one another. I could also analyze subject data and the participant’s communication styles, and compare their thoughts and opinions, which was one of my goals in analyzing the data.

Altogether, I think these were good methods to identify each participant’s communication styles, help them grow in their self-awareness, and answer my project questions.

Findings, Interpretation, and Outcomes

This section contains my findings, interpretation, and outcomes. My Portfolio Advisor introduced me to a free qualitative data analysis software, but unfortunately my MacBook did not allow me to download it, so I created my own method for coding the data and creating visualizations. I used Microsoft Insert and Draw. It took some time, but it turned out nicely.

In Phase One, the Observation Stage, I conducted a one-on-one interview with each participant using ten questions created by me (see Appendix 2). These interviews lasted from forty minutes to an hour, and I audio-recorded them with the participants' permission. The interviews were done in Korean, and I translated them into English afterwards. The purpose of these interviews was to identify each participant's communication style and to see how self-aware they were on this front. There were some challenges in setting interview dates, but all of the interviews were completed by November 16, 2022. Eight participants completed these interviews, although two people had to drop out afterwards because of scheduling issues. Table 1 and 2 show the participants' interview responses.

Table 7: Participants 1-4 Communication Style Quiz 1 Results

Question	P1	P2	P3	P4
1	Active listening	Understanding	Understanding /Patience	Active listening /Environments where anyone talks freely
2	Being quiet	Quiet/angry	Being quiet	Being quiet
3	Talk indirectly but talk assertively if necessary	Mostly agreeable and talk indirectly but talk if necessary	Pray first & listen to God's voice. Talk with them if necessary	Used to talk with others but is quiet these days
4	4	7	1	1
5	Hierarchical structure - used to address issues actively but because of unpleasant events, no hopes for changes - keeps silent	Hierarchical structure	Hierarchical structure, Competitive system among the team (get paid based on how much you work). Other opinions are not considered	Hierarchical structure, Competitive system among the team (get paid based on how much you work). Other opinions are not considered
6	Passive + assertive	Passive + aggressive	Passive+ assertive	Passive+ assertive
7	Faith	Obedience	Faith	Faith
8	Indifference	Disappointing	Good	Suffocating
9	4	6	8	5
10	4	6	8	1

Table 8: Participants 5-8 Communication Style Quiz 1 Results

Question	P5	P6	P7	P8
1	Active listening	Talk freely without judgement	Active listening/ Humility	Active listening
2	Being quiet	Being quiet	Quiet/angry	Quiet/ignore
3	Talk indirectly but talk assertively if necessary	Talk indirectly, but talk assertively if necessary	Mostly agreeable and talk indirectly but talk if necessary	Try to understand others' situation
4	5	6	4	5
5	Hierarchical structure	Hierarchical structure	Hierarchical structure	Hierarchical structure
6	Passive + assertive	Passive+ assertive	Passive+ aggressive	Passive + assertive
7	Faith	Sacrifice/ Obedience	Faith	Faith/obedience
8	Good	Careful	Discouraging	Frustrating
9	6	6	4	4
10	5	6	4	4

It is important to note that some of the recorded answers were not the participants' exact words in Korean—such as active listening and hierarchical structure—but I summarized and interpreted what they said using my own language. I took this into account in my coding process.

I analyzed the interview transcripts and created interpretive summaries by using Emotion Coding. I categorized the data into frequent words, symbols, and patterns of interaction. Doing this enabled me to explore more deeply the effect of traditional Korean values on individuals' communication and how this impacted JC's ministry. My main purpose in analyzing this data was to know each

participant's understanding of and values concerning communication. I noticed some interesting patterns. The first question for this interview was, "What is your definition of good communication?" I found it noteworthy that so many participants described what I would refer to as Active Listening. Shebib describes Active Listening as "a cluster of skills used to increase the accuracy of meaning. Attending, being silent, summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning, and empathizing are the essential skills of active listening" (2013, 116). Active Listening requires these skills, so we need willingness and intentionality to have active listening skills.

The fifth question was, "If you think a change is necessary, how would you adjust the way that your team communicates with one another?" Most participants highlighted the organization's hierarchical structure. By this, I understood them to mean that they would decrease how hierarchical the organization was. Stringer notes that the interview process provides "a record of participants' views and perspectives but also symbolically recognizes the legitimacy of their experience" (2021, 125).

Alongside this, I noticed that the participants were quite careful about sharing their thoughts about their fellow leaders even though they knew that they would be kept confidential. One sign of this was that, even though I had already reminded them that what they said would not be shared, they double-checked that this would be the case. Some of them said that they felt guilty or uncomfortable criticizing others' leadership because they thought that God would be unhappy about it. They preferred to pray for others rather than talk about their concerns.

Another thing I noticed was that some of them had opposite opinions about communication between leaders. Some thought they communicated very well, but the rest said that communication was lacking because others did not listen well. They remarked that many leaders tended not to listen to others, and it led to misunderstandings. Maxwell mentions that,

Effective leaders are always good communicators, but that means much more than just being a good talker. [...] What most people really want is to be listened to, respected, and understood. [...] Author and speaker Brian Tracy says, "Listening builds trust, the foundation of all lasting relationships" (2007, 61).

This aligns with the participants' answers; most of them did not feel listened to and this weighed on them. This also may partly explain why so many of them thought that Active Listening was the key to good communication. Two participants thought that understanding was the most important part of communication, and one did not feel that he could talk freely without being judged.

Another interesting data point was the participants' response when an issue arose. Most of them said that they would remain quiet at first and express their concerns indirectly if necessary. I found this very interesting because it is a typical way for Koreans to communicate. As explained in my Context Analysis, Koreans traditionally hold that it is important to respect others. Therefore, older Koreans try hard not to offend others. Another important aspect of Korean culture is showing deference to elders. One of the ways to show respect is to avoid talking in a straightforward manner and to avoid anything that could be perceived as aggressiveness. In light of this, it was unsurprising that the participants all said

that they have Passive communication styles. However, they also expressed assertiveness. This surprised me and showed me that I had an implicit bias towards my own people. This bias came from my personal experiences with many Koreans with whom I interacted before and how consistently they communicated in a Passive manner. I recognize now that being passive or assertive can be situational. For example, participants can feel comfortable at home so they might be more assertive with their family members. On the other hand, they can be less assertive at work because hierarchical structure, status, and age influence their communication style.

More expected to me was the fact that everyone addressed the issues caused by the church's hierarchical structure. Lee notes that "South Korea is a country with high power distance and hierarchy" (2012, 186). He also adds that "the Korean management style consists of top-down decision-making" and "main decisions go through a formal procedure of approval from top levels of management" (2012, 189). Most of the participants expressed discontent with the current leadership's tendency to make decisions unilaterally without considering their perspectives. For example, in Korean culture, obedience is a crucial aspect of maintaining the hierarchical structure within organizations. Lee notes that "Koreans show their respect to their employers and supervisors, and usually avoid conflicts as much as they can if they have different opinions" (2012, 185). Faith plays a role in how this plays out in Christian communities. For example, when a senior leader says, "I prayed about it," they expect others to accept their decision. In Yusupova's article, "Communication Culture in Korea," the author mentions

that Korea's Confucian ethics led to "the emergence of obedience in the country and its transformation into value over time" (2021, 355). Because of the importance placed on obedience and respect for leadership, within and outside of the church, JC's leaders felt guilty about challenging the senior pastor because they saw it as a betrayal of their Christian values to do so.

One of the insights I gained from the interviews was that, due to their Passive communication style, JC's leaders sometimes felt that their ministry work was disappointing, suffocating, overly cautious, and discouraging because they feared offending others and being disrespectful. However, two participants said that the team's communication affected their ministry and personal relationships for good. I suspect that this is because they are generally positive people and tend to minimize negative experiences. Another possibility is that they did not recognize how other participants felt about the team's communication. Saldaña notes that "your abilities to read non-verbal cues, to infer underlying effects, and to sympathize and empathize with your participants, are critical for Emotion Coding" (2016, 125). Observing the interviewees, I was able to note their verbal and non-verbal signals and discern various emotions. Tables 8 and 9 show this in detail below.

Table 9: Participant 1-4's Emotions During Phase One Interviews

Participant	P1	P2	P3	P4
Emotions	Suffocating, Sad, feel low, stressed, careful, sighing	Repress his emotions, careful, sigh, wait (hope) for next pastor	Inferiority, strong, shy, cheerful, Humility, no facial expressions	Easily get hurt, introverted, Frustrated, sigh

Table 10: Participant 5-8's Emotions During Phase One Interviews

Participant	P5	P6	P7	P8
Emotions	Concerns, careful, sigh	Calm, careful, try to be hopeful	Extroverted, sigh, discouraging	Introverted, careful

Some participants showed their frustration by sighing and, as mentioned, they were hesitant to share criticisms about the current leadership situation, which meant they spoke carefully. For example, P1 said he used to share his ideas and opinions openly, but he noticed that his contributions were not very effective. Over time, he became more careful when sharing his thoughts and he accepted what other leaders said. This led him to feel sad, low, stressed, and indifferent. He also shared with me that he was going through personal hardship related to family matters, so he felt exhausted. However, he could not take a break due to a heavy church workload and his one-year contract. He felt nervous about losing his job so sometimes he was hesitant to talk about sensitive topics.

P2 said he was careful about sharing his opinions after the conflict over LGBTQ+ issues, so he tended to repress his emotions. He sighed a lot while sharing about the current leadership team and believed that there was no room for change unless there were significant leadership and communication changes.

P3 mentioned that his leadership style was learned from his father, who was a pastor. P3 was discouraged from showing facial expressions while he was preaching. There were some rules he felt he had to follow as a pastor. He noticed that many people saw him differently because he did not show facial expressions. He used to feel inferior due to his appearance, but he was freed from this after a personal encounter with Jesus.

P4 said he was introverted and easily got hurt by others. This surprised me because he projected a strong and tough image. He said he did not want to offend others, so he tended to be very careful about what he said and expected others to show him respect as well. He experienced some challenges on the JC leadership team, saying that his opinions and thoughts were considered but the answer was almost always set beforehand. He did not try to change things because he knew that nothing would change.

P5 was previously more actively involved, but he was discouraged by other leaders' behaviour, so he decided to do what other leaders had done and was set to retire soon. I was surprised by this because I knew that he cared a lot about JC. He said he was exhausted and did not want to be involved as a key leader anymore.

P6 was introverted and tended to be quiet. He was careful when sharing about the other leaders, double-checking if the conversation was confidential. He had been devoted to JC for a long time, ever since he came to Canada. He had seen a lot of change over the years. He saw that there were some problems, such

as closed communication, but had not given up hope yet. He believed that God would change things in His time.

P7 was extroverted and his communication style could be aggressive at times, but he tried not to behave this way at church because he saw it as God's sanctuary. He, too, was cautious about sharing negative thoughts about other leaders.

P8 was introverted and was also careful about what he shared.

What I found through these first one-on-one interviews was that the participants wanted to talk about many things. At some points, I felt like I was counselling them. I saw that they all loved God and had good intentions in whatever they did as JC's leaders. But it also seemed clear that the team had communication issues. Despite all of these challenges, each participant still expressed a sense of hope, reserved judgement towards one another, and believed that their team would become more united and would improve in terms of communication.

I realized that this was how my project could benefit them. I remembered Stringer's statement that "understanding human behaviour requires action researchers to take into account the differing rationalities, intuitions, emotions, and other aspects of human experience that affect the ability of people to engage in actions necessary to resolve significant problem and issues in their lives" (2021, 123). Communicating openly can be challenging for all of us, but that does not mean that we need to pretend everything is okay and move on. I became more certain that this was a good opportunity for participants to learn or reconsider

their communication style. Self-awareness of one's communication is the first step in interacting better with oneself and with others. I thought that self-awareness would change the problematic dynamic that the first round of interviews uncovered. I expected that the oldest leader(s) and the people in lower positions would all change if they had more self-awareness.

The questionnaire results from Phase One lined up with what I observed in the Phase One interviews. I originally planned to send the questionnaire to each participant by email to save time. However, some elders were not familiar with email, so I invited them to the church office and had them take it in person. This helped me identify each participant's communication style. Table 5 shows the participants' responses to the communication questionnaire. Each communication style section has 5 questions. The left score is the number that the participants got. For example, when you see 0/5 in Aggressive communication style section, that means they did not score any points in that category, so they do not have that communication style. The quiz can be found in its entirety, including all the questions asked of the participants, in Appendix 3. As I mentioned previously, the woman who designed this quiz expressed concern that it had not been empirically validated. In retrospect, I see now that it has some issues. In particular, it does not do a good job of portraying all of the communication styles in a positive light. I believe that the participants in my study picked up on this, consciously or not. The result was that their answers skewed toward assertiveness, as shown in the following table. I acknowledge that the questionnaire results are not a hundred percent accurate for telling each participant's communication style, but it was not

totally useless either. To accommodate for the bias, I gave more weight to the participants' interview responses and less weight to the questionnaire.

One of the reasons why I do not think that the quiz data is worthless is that not every participant scored high in Assertiveness. P2 only scored one out of five. I suspect this is because of a previous incident he had in leadership. He strongly opposed the other leaders on an issue that arose and suffered significant consequences. Since then, I think that he has been less assertive and wants to maintain harmony in leadership. P3 also scored low in Assertive communication. After taking it, P3 mentioned the limitations of the questionnaire. The fact that he was conscious of this might have affected his results. As I mentioned above, there were twenty questions total, five pertaining to each of the four communication styles. I think more detailed questions for each style might have been helpful for P3 to identify his communication style better. It is worth noting that P1 could no longer participate in the project due to a pressing family matter, and P8 also decided to drop out because of a tight schedule. Thus, only six participants were able to take the questionnaire. Here are their results:

Table 11: Participants' Phase One Questionnaire Scores

Comm. Style	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Passive	3/5	1/5	5/5	3/5	1/5	2/5
Aggressive	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5
Passive-Aggressive	1/5	1/5	3/5	2/5	2/5	3/5
Assertive	1/5	2/5	4/5	4/5	5/5	4/5

One thing I found interesting was that comparing the interview and quiz results shows gaps in some participants' self-awareness about their communication style. For example, P2 identified he has Passive and Aggressive communication styles during the interview. On the quiz, he scored 3 points out of 5 in regard to Passive communication but got 0 points in the Aggressive section. P3 said that he has a Passive and Assertive communication style, but he only got 1 point out of 5 in Passiveness and 2 points in Assertiveness. P4 said he has both Passiveness and Assertiveness communication styles, but he got 3 points out of 5 in Passive-Aggressiveness as well. P6 also identified himself as Passive and Assertive, but he scored 1 point in Passive, which was even lower than the 2 points in Passive-Aggressiveness. Lastly, P7 described himself as Passive and Aggressive, but he got 4 points in Assertiveness and 3 points in the Passive-Aggressive section. I wondered if this gap was coming from a lack of self-awareness or a misunderstanding about the communication styles despite my attempt to help them understand the terms before they took the questionnaire. I think it is more likely a lack of self-awareness and I assume the questionnaire's flaws also have a role to play in this.

In Phase Two, the Planning Stage, I led a meeting to debrief the participants' interviews and questionnaires with them. The purpose of this meeting was to share what I had observed during the first phase. It was conducted on January 16th, 2023. Participants were excited to listen to the results of the communication style quiz. With their permission, I shared each participant's results openly. Some of them were surprised by others' results. For example, one

participant assumed another participant had a different communication style than the quiz suggested. He mentioned that the other participant's test results helped him not to assume he knew how they would respond to him. I reminded participants that everyone has different communication styles. They agreed with me that respecting differences is important. The questions we discussed in this focus group can be found in Appendix 4. Tables 6 and 7 show what people responded to the questions.

Table 12: Participants 2-4's Focus Group Feedback

Question	P2	P3	P4
1 (Takeaways)	It was a good opportunity for him to think about the importance of communication	It was a good time to observe his own communication style	Self-awareness of his own communication style- he realized that he tends to close himself off when others hurt him.
2 (Needs & Opportunities)	Better communication via openness	Taking ownership rather blame others	Communication matters and wanted to share his thoughts and feelings openly
3 (What to Do)	Workshop or seminar	Workshop or seminar	Workshop
4 (Who to Lead)	Anyone who knows church leadership communication	Youth pastor Han or anyone	Youth pastor Han or anyone

Table 13: Participants 5-7's Focus Group Feedback

Question	P5	P6	P7
1 (Takeaways)	It was a good chance to observe his own communication style	It was a good time to observe his own communication style	It was a good time to observe his own communication style
2 (Needs & Opportunities)	Make a healthier leadership with open communication	Better communication via understanding	Better communication via understanding
3 (What to Do)	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop
4 (Who to Lead)	Anyone who knows church leadership communication	Anyone who knows church leadership communication	Anyone who knows church leadership communication

All of the participants mentioned that they appreciated the chance to check their communication styles and that they had almost never thought about it before. Three participants thought that increased openness would be a good way to improve team communication and two participants mentioned that greater understanding was needed. The last participant highlighted the importance of taking ownership rather than blaming others. Participants also expressed the need for a workshop in the next phase. I had already informed them that running a workshop was my intention, but I explained to them that this research project would work best if their desires were taken into account, not just mine. Thus, I told them we would make the final decision of what to do together. Interestingly, many participants gave similar answers to one another. I wondered if some of them felt obligated to answer similarly due to the collectivist values of Korean

culture or if their Passive communication style patterns kicked in. I also think it is possible that they actually agreed on the best course of action. Based on what I observed, I think they saw the necessity of improving their communication. At the same time, they are cooperative people and were likely influenced by the desires I expressed during the workshop and hearing other participants' opinions.

In Phase Three, the Action Stage, a workshop was conducted according to the plans made during the focus group discussion. After the Senior Pastor retired, the Youth Pastor became the main pastor and the person responsible for the leadership team's internal communications. He is also finishing his doctorate and has been on staff for a long time. With all this in mind, the participants and I thought he was the best fit to teach a communications workshop. Thus, I reached out to Pastor Kim and asked if he could lead a workshop for the project. He was thankful for the offer but was hesitant to talk about the leaders' communication. That is because he is the one who was chosen to be the next Lead Pastor and he felt hesitant to interact with key leaders before taking over the position. He wanted to pray for a couple of days and then decide what to do. Thankfully, after thinking he said yes because he thought it would be a good opportunity to interact with the other key leaders. Then we talked about what content would be ideal in a workshop. I shared about my project with him, and he wanted to prepare the content by himself. I agreed because I wanted to see if he could provide a different perspective concerning communication styles. Thus, he led the workshop in the JC meeting room on March 3rd, 2021.

The workshop lasted two hours and was titled “Church Leaders and Communication.” Only four of the six participants were able to join the workshop due to personal matters. Those present looked relaxed as they drank beverages and ate oranges that smelled and tasted good. They listened attentively to the pastor’s lesson, but I noticed that they did not make eye contact with him at first. This may have partly been because they were uncomfortable saying things that could be perceived as criticizing the former senior pastor, even though he was not present. Then the pastor started asking questions to encourage the participants to become more involved. They slowly started looking at him and answering his questions. He provided some good examples of the power of verbal and non-verbal expressions by comparing former U.S. and Korean presidents. He stressed that many people thought certain people were guaranteed to be elected, but due to their different communication strategies, sometimes unexpected people won. Hearing this, the participants started engaging more actively because they were pretty much on the same page about this.

In regard to the content of the workshop, the pastor invited participants to reflect on communication using the following questions and ideas:

A) Are dialogue and communication different?

- Dialogue and communication are different
- Language is not communication and communication is not limited to language
- What you want to convey and what you want to receive (example: 1960 US Presidential Election/2017 Korean Presidential Election)

B) Relationships are determined by communication

- Listening, Empathy, Praise + Questions, Personality

C) Non-verbal expression

- Voice, facial expressions, hand gestures

D) Love and Comfort

As the participants became more comfortable Pastor Kim began asking questions such as “what is most important in your leadership?” “What values the most?” How would you apply them to the JC leadership team in the future? “Do you have action plans for that?” Pastor Kim did not talk about the four different communication styles specifically because he knew that each participant had completed the questionnaire. Thus, he emphasized the important components of communication such as active listening skills, empathy, and non-verbal expressions.

While the workshop took place, I started engaging in participant observation and wrote field notes. My primary source of data was field notes, so I wrote them as soon as possible after any meeting. This was particularly important during the workshop because one of the participants was not comfortable with me creating an audio recording, despite the fact that I had earlier sought permission to do that. I respected his wishes and stuck to handwritten notes. As mentioned above, I followed Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein’s list of what should be included in all field notes so I could be as accurate as possible (1997, 73).

As Springer argues, observation in Action Research is “more ethnographic, enabling an observer to build a picture of the lifeworld of those

being observed and to develop an understanding of the way they ordinarily go about their everyday activities” (2021,140). This aligns with my experience during this workshop. With close observation, I was able to see aspects of the team’s responses that I had not noticed before. Particularly important to me was recognizing the participants’ passive communication at the beginning until they saw other participants actively engaging. Then, they slowly opened themselves up and communicated more assertively. This was helpful for me to learn about the participants and Korean culture. As I mentioned before, Koreans value respect for others so they tend to give themselves some time to observe others and situations before fully engaging. This cultural part aligns with using a Passive communication style.

In Phase Four, the Reflection Stage, I evaluated each participant’s outcomes using interviews, a closing questionnaire, and ethnographic methods in order to determine what kind of effect the workshop had. Then I analyzed and coded my data to understand some of the patterns in what had taken place throughout the four phases. Unfortunately, I was not able to include the two participants who couldn’t attend the workshop because their schedule was too tight.

In Phase Four, I had the participants re-take the quiz and conduct their closing interviews at the same time. The questions I asked the participants in the closing interviews are in Appendix 5. I hoped this would help me determine if the workshop had changed their communication style. I was hoping to see each participant’s questionnaire scores change at least a little, but most participants’

scores remained the same. I was a bit disappointed but there were some differences, and these made me feel satisfied. The results of their questionnaires are included in Table 13 below, with the former results in parentheses beside their final score.

Table 14: Participants' Phase Four Questionnaire Scores

Comm. Style	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Passive	3/5 (3)	1/5 (1)	5/5 (2)	3/5 (3)	1/5 (1)	2/5 (2)
Aggressive	0/5 (0)	0/5 (1)	0/5 (0)	0/5 (0)	0/5 (0)	0/5 (0)
Passive-Aggressive	1/5 (1)	1/5 (2)	3/5 (2)	2/5 (2)	2/5 (2)	3/5 (2)
Assertive	1/5 (1)	2/5 (2)	4/5 (4)	4/5 (4)	5/5 (5)	4/5 (4)

As you can see in Table 13, P2, P5, and P6 did not have any change in their pre- and post-workshop questionnaires. On the other hand, P3 added one point for Aggressive communication and Passive-Aggressive accordingly. During his closing interview, P3 said that he did not realize he sometimes used an Aggressive communication style or a Passive-Aggressive one until participating in this project. He observed that he did not like having team meetings, so he tended to make decisions by himself. P3 regretted his previous interactions with the other leaders. I concluded that even though the others thought he valued traditional Korean hierarchical leadership, this was not actually his intention. In his closing interview, P4 noted that he had a Passive communication style but since participating in the project, he was intentionally trying not to be Passive or Passive-Aggressive. He concluded that it was not helpful to communicate this

way, since others cannot read his mind if he does not express his thoughts and feelings. P7 decreased one point in the Passive-Aggressive section because he wanted to start saying what he thought was right rather than following others' opinions. He came to this conclusion by reflecting on his previous Passive–Aggressive approach and deciding that it would be a barrier to effective communication. This result suggests that the questionnaire helped the participants grow in their self-awareness concerning communication styles.

Table 15: Participant 2-4's Phase Four Interview Remarks

Question	P2	P3	P4
1 (Benefits)	Self-awareness/ understand others better	Self-awareness. Reflection time of his previous leadership and relationship where he needs to work on.	Self-awareness of his communication styles and self-reflection/ understand others better
2 (Changes)	More team meetings	Provide a more customized communication style questionnaire in a church setting	Have more time to interact with participants via meetings
3 (Next Steps)	Have more workshops to focus on teamwork	Show empathy and patience	Have regular key leaders' meetings for openness

Table 16: Participant 5-7's Phase Four Interview Remarks

Question	P5	P6	P7
1 (Benefits)	Self-awareness and self- reflection/ understand others better	Self-awareness of his communication styles /understand others better	Self-awareness and self-reflection/ understand others better
2 (Changes)	More team meetings	More team meetings	More team meetings
3 (Next Steps)	Have more workshops or meetings for openness	Have more workshops or meetings	Have regular meetings for openness

As you can see, the language used in these answers is remarkably similar. This is partly because I summarized their answers, which were more detailed. But there were also many common themes. For example, I had the opportunity to see participants develop new awareness about communication styles, which led to behavioural change such as listening actively to others. At the same time, they all said it is still difficult for them to fully open up because they were not used to it and were not sure how others would respond to them. We talked about change needing time, and that being mindful of what they experienced via this project was the first step in that change process. Since then, I have reflected on why these changes took place and I think they were hoping that change would happen among themselves even though it would be challenging.

I also found it interesting that five participants pointed out the necessity for more meetings. It appears that their mindset about meetings changed during this project. Previously, they said that they were all too busy, so they could not meet often. Through this project, they noticed that they enjoyed interacting with each other. Alongside this, one of the participants who bought a big house last year invited the other leaders to his place while this project was in process, and there they had a good experience sharing things with one another. It turns out they felt more comfortable meeting at his place than at the church offices. I suspect that this was because food and beverages were included, and it was a casual atmosphere. Because of everyone's positive response, he decided to invite the other leaders to his place at least once a month for a meeting. Some participants showed interest and others wanted to check their schedules before committing. As a researcher, it was great to see at least some participants talking about this freely. I saw that their Passive communication styles were slowly changing.

As I have reflected on this research project, I have come to realize that I regard Assertive communication as ideal. I am sure that some readers will disagree with me. They might respond that there are no right or wrong styles. I wish I could think that all communication styles are equally good and focus solely on helping people become more aware of their approach and respectful of others'. In preparing this project, I tried hard to be neutral about this, whether I agreed with it or not, because it could be perceived as unethical to suggest that a person or culture might need to change how they communicate. However, I really do believe that assertiveness is a good thing, partly because of my own experiences

as a person and a therapist. I tried to make the project as neutral as possible, but I also hoped that my participants would learn to be more assertive. Despite my efforts, this inclination came out in the way that I designed the project, including the questionnaire I used.

Upon reflection, my bias towards assertiveness changed the nature of my project. For example, I think it maybe is not really in line with Participatory Action Research and Ethnography the way that I hoped. It could have accidentally harmed my participants to think that they need to be more assertive. However, I do not think they were harmed. I also realize that I was hesitant to share my true views while designing the project because I still tend to use Passive or Passive-Aggressive communication styles, especially when dealing with authority figures. However, I think that writing this was a good opportunity for me to be assertive by being honest and reflecting on it deeply rather than avoiding it.

The participants' feedback also provided some smaller ideas about how the project could have been changed. P3 thought the questionnaire had limitations because it was not explicitly Christian, so he suggested it could be customized for churches. His comment made me reconsider choosing a questionnaire in this setting in the future. However, I am not sure what difference it would have made if it was church-based, and only one participant addressed it while others found it helpful. Communication skills are not the exclusive property of Christians, so we don't necessarily need to talk about them using overtly Christian language. Thus, I still believe that my finding is valuable and worthwhile despite the questionnaire's limitations. I was not expecting this project to be too extensive;

rather, I wanted to focus on one specific area, as some of the DMin professors suggested. I believe that change starts with something small such as developing self-awareness and I am happy to see that the participants grew in this regard, and that their relationships are becoming more harmonious as a result.

How do I know that the participants became more self-aware? Partly because of the final answers they gave in the closing group interview. Four participants mentioned the need for more meetings or workshops on openness. They realized that talking about things openly is important in leadership, even if sometimes it is not easy, because then things are clear, and misunderstanding is less likely. They mentioned that speaking up in church settings can be difficult sometimes, especially in a Korean context. They shared some incidents in which they used Passive and Passive-Aggressive communication styles during team meetings and their personal lives. Also, even though I may have implied it, I did not tell them that Assertive communication is best, but they concluded that it was helpful for teams even if it was not their natural inclination. I think this was at least partly based on their own reflection. I think that all of these are good signs that the participants' self-awareness and self-understanding grew. I noticed that in the Reflection Stage, participants looked more relaxed and comfortable during my interactions with them and their interactions with each other. I think they were more relaxed because I provided an open and non-judgmental stance, not telling them what is right or wrong but just observing them. This is something that participants mentioned favourably. Because I was intentional about not judging others but respecting them, they embraced one another's differences and came to

recognize that they all had good intentions. I also think that the time they spent together contributed to their improved relationships.

Again, I do not expect an immediate, drastic change in the JC leaders. I am satisfied as long as the participants feel safer and more comfortable with each other. If so, this project is successful in my mind. My hope is that the key leaders can apply what they learned from this project to the small groups that they are in charge of. It would be wonderful to see even a small change in JC. I also hope that participants can practice their takeaways at home with their spouses and children, and generally be more aware of their communication outside the church. Some participants shared that their communication with their wives and the way they responded to them started to change and became more positive. Finally, some participants noted that having open communication with their children was challenging, but learning about assertive communication helped them to open up with and listen to their children better. This is partly because they better understood their unspoken cultural rules and assumptions. As I mentioned above, children of immigrants who were born in Canada or moved here when they are young tend to be confused by their parents' unspoken rules. All of this supports the idea that being assertive is good rather than thinking that it does not matter what our communication style is.

Conclusions

This project gave me an opportunity to interact with JC's key leaders and observe their communication styles. What I noticed was participants were trying

their best to change for the better, or at least maintain what had worked previously. However, despite their good intentions, the consequences were often different than they expected. We tend to think that we know ourselves well, but even if we have good intentions the consequences of our actions are not always positive. One implication of this project is the importance of understanding ourselves, which grants us the capacity to understand others. Although it was not my intent, I also embrace the idea that I taught them the value of assertiveness. This project will not only benefit their ministry but will also impact other areas of each participant's life.

Sensing notes that,

The DMin project provides congregations with ways to meta-think their structures, activities, policies, and goals. The project facilitates the acquisition of skills for churches to apply in the future. One of the primary serendipities of PAR is communal empowerment. The congregation develops skills that enable it to influence its own future. The congregation is able to address future problems and opportunities with hope. Your leadership has equipped the church to function effectively (2022, 462).

If this project is as effective as I hope, the JCs leaders will be better able to solve problems in a healthy way and teach others to do the same. This includes when they face conflict, and will hopefully extend to their small groups, not just their leadership team. The desired outcome of my project was that it would facilitate an understanding of communication styles and help the team function better. I likely communicated this to my participants, even if I were trying not to. There was a small difference between the first and second tests, which shows that they grew in their self-understanding, even though no one improved in their assertiveness scores. That said, I do not think that the testing added much to my conclusion.

Rather, it was the comments and behavioral changes I observed that really convinced me they are growing. Because of this, I believe that this project was helpful for knowing each participant's communication style, how aware they were of themselves, and how they could grow.

I think anyone who wants to communicate more effectively and build better teams might be able to learn from my project. What I learned applies to individuals, couples, parents, children, family members, workplaces, schools, churches, and communities. However, my project might not work so well in some contexts or circumstances. For example, people who want to know their communication styles in professional settings with a high level of accuracy. Also, one thing people should not conclude based on my work is that their communication styles or relationships will change automatically. However, we are constantly growing in our communication. As I mentioned before, the communication style questionnaire I used has limitations, so I don't encourage people to fully rely on it. As we know, people are complex so their communication might be predefined by issues such as culture, gender, and reactions to authority. These predefined tendencies might limit the scope of my research and findings because they might play out differently in different contexts. For example, even if Assertive communication is ideal, if one's culture requires obedience to elders or authority, it is hard to be assertive.

Finally, I wrote my Project Report following the required format. There were frustrating moments and times I regretted choosing to focus my project on JC's leaders. Because the participants were in their fifties and sixties, I often

hesitated to reach out to them. If they had been from my age group, it would have been more comfortable for me to contact them. Zientek notes that “Corporate culture in South Korea center around hierarchy, in which your age and status are crucial” (2022). On their website, Asialink Business notes,

respect for age and status are very important in Korean culture, with hierarchy affecting all aspects of social interactions. [...] Status is largely determined by someone’s role in an organization, which organization they work for, which university they went to and their marital status (2012).

Suk asserts that “when it comes to age, Korean people tend to be very sensitive on the issue” (2018). He adds that “the correlation between a nation’s culture and its language is inseparable, different words for younger and older sisters well explain how Koreans can be strict on age” (Suk 2018). In my experience, not all Koreans are like this. For example, I have a friendly relationship with some older people, including my older sister. But Suk has a good point about how age plays a big role in our culture, and I experienced this during my project.

I experienced some personal growth by challenging myself to speak with those older than myself and would do this project again. Perhaps I would do it at my counselling practice instead of the church, though. The process of going through the stages of interviewing people one-on-one and conducting pre/post questionnaires, planning a workshop, and reflecting on themes together could be beneficial for my clients. While interacting with my clients, one thing I have noticed is that in relationships, communication is almost always tricky. This topic is really important and being aware of our communication helps us better understand our relationships. This is why I want to continue utilizing these skills

in my personal life and wherever I am. Seeking to understand one's communication styles can be applied not only to my clients, but also become a useful training program or a seminar that will help my family, relatives, friends, and acquaintances around me.

The participants were very nice to me, and I appreciated their participation in my project, but as a Korean Canadian, I could not stop thinking about demonstrating respect for my elders. As a goal-oriented person, I wanted to finish the project as planned, but I learned that I need to be patient. This is my greatest weakness. God knows how I need to improve in this area. During the project, I put my anxiety down in front of Him and waited for His timing. In addition, a teenage boy made a comment that helped me see another way that I have grown. He said that I have become clearer in my expectations, rather than relying on unspoken assumptions. In other words, I became even more assertive. This is a really important takeaway for my own relationships. Unintentionally, even as a researcher, I learned so much through this process. Communication is a lifelong journey, and it is difficult to consistently apply what I have learned to my own life. This is part of human nature and I need God's grace to continue this journey of self-improvement.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

It feels amazing to arrive at the final section of my DMin portfolio. I feel like my life journey is like a plant that a farmer (God) planted, watered, and helped to grow so I could bear good fruit. The four major sections of this Portfolio show how my leadership developed as I grew in my self-awareness and became a more assertive communicator. My Leadership Narrative showed how my family of origin, my relationship with others, and critical life events impacted me. My life experiences did not just happen, they were God's perfect plan. I mentioned the pastor who shared God's vision for me in Kona, Hawaii: that I would awaken world leaders. At that time, I had never studied leadership and was about to study Clinical Counselling through Tyndale's Master of Divinity program. Now, I am about to finish my DMin in Ministry Leadership and, since the summer of 2022, I am an active member of the International Leadership Institute in Colorado Springs. This is a Christian organization, and my main roles are interpretation, counselling, and networking among world leaders. I visited there this summer for a couple of weeks in July. It was a wonderful time interacting with world leaders and observing how God was working in their ministries and organizations. Listening to what they were going through as leaders also confirmed why God led me to study counselling and leadership. I had a great opportunity to talk about my

project with them and share what I had learned about communication styles. They were glad to learn more about the importance of self-awareness and assertiveness. Some leaders from Africa and Asia pointed out the role that culture plays in communication, and they understood why many Koreans communicate passively since it is part of respecting our elders. This is only the beginning, but I am excited to see what direction God will lead me as I continue to share what I learned through my DMin. One thing I know: I am ready to follow His path because I know His plan is perfect.

My Philosophy of Leadership summarized what I value and how it shapes my leadership, as well as showing how I apply it to my counselling ministry and everyday life. That being said, I continue to grow in my self-understanding and thinking about leadership. For example, I did not mention Situational Leadership in my Philosophy of Leadership section but over time I realized that it is what I used in my project. This approach stresses that,

In brief, the essence of the situational approach demands that leaders match their style to the competence and commitment of the followers [...]
For leaders to be effective, it is essential that they determine where followers are on the developmental continuum and adapt their leadership styles so they directly match their style to the development level.
(Northouse 2016, 94-97)

I find Situational Leadership effective because it is a flexible approach. I had to take this flexible approach in my research project, which involved assessing a situation using my skills and experience in a field very different than my own. I think I provided an appropriate level of support and guidance to the participants and managed to enhance their teamwork by helping them grow in their self-

awareness, especially surrounding their communication styles. I was able to do this despite being a layperson because I am an expert in my field and could adapt that expertise to the church context. This is one of the benefits of taking an adaptive approach like Situational Leadership dictates.

My Ministry Context Analysis shared my perspective on Joy Church as a layperson. My Research Report showed that using methods taken from ethnography and participatory action research, I was able to engage with JC's leaders and identify what we needed to focus on in order to strengthen their teamwork. It helped that I knew the context so well because of the exegesis I had to do, including the role that culture played in shaping people's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. The experience of leading a research project was new to me. It involved the participants in the planning more than I was used to. There were moments I felt frustrated due to time limitations and scheduling conflicts. However, looking back on it, it was a great opportunity to understand the team and their communication styles. Moreover, the project helped JC's leaders understand their own communication styles and how to communicate better with each other and generally. I was grateful to receive positive comments and feedback from my participants. They even indicated a desire for me to lead future workshops or seminars to continue helping them grow. I think it is a privilege to be asked to contribute in this way. Now I do not see myself as a mere layperson. Rather, I am quite confident that I can use my strengths to contribute to leadership teams if God allows. I am also confident that I could do even better in the future because of what I learned in this process. I could potentially lead workshops on

emotional intelligence in leadership, stress management and well-being, or cultural competence and diversity. Furthermore, if I were to teach on communication styles again, I would use a evaluation tool because of the limitations I identified in the Report.

I never planned on being a therapist or studying leadership. As Isaiah 55:8-9 says, “My plans aren’t your plans, nor are your ways [...] Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my plans than your plans.” This is a humbling message for me and encourages me to surrender to him. I can trust Him more by seeing and experiencing His guidance. At first, I did not see any connection between counselling and leadership but now I know there are deep connections. Both involve working with people deeply. God reminded me many times of Jesus’ summons to his followers: “Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of people” (Matthew 4:19). The DMin program was a great journey for me and helped me become a more mature, deeper, and humble leader. The beauty of writing this portfolio was that it helped me see the bigger picture of my leadership development. Each chapter is connected in such a way as to make sense of who I am as a leader now.

For that, I cannot thank my professors enough for expanding my knowledge academically and spiritually. I also appreciate my peers, who encouraged me to be a better leader even though I was the only layperson and unexperienced leader in my cohort. With their love and support, I was able to finish this program. I will forever be grateful for this critical life event.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Form

Note: This form was adapted from Sensing's sample consent form (2011, 235).

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to strengthen leadership teams through developing self-awareness of their communication styles.

Procedure: If you consent, you will be asked some questions in an oral interview which will take place at JC.

Time required: The interview will take approximately 1-2 hours of your time.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with this interview. However, it is possible that you might feel distressed during the conversation. If this happens, please inform me promptly.

Benefits: While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible that you will enjoy sharing your answers to these questions or that you will find the conversation meaningful. This study is intended to benefit the key leaders in JC and JC's congregation in the long-term.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: Your name will be kept confidential in all of the reporting and/or writing related to this research. I will be the only person present for the interview and I will use pseudonyms for all participants unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name.

Sharing the results: Results from this research will be used for the graduation of my D.Min program online and in person.

Publication: This study will be published as my graduate portfolio. It can be used when I lead workshops, meetings, or give lectures. I will continue to use pseudonyms and I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

Before you sign: By signing below, you are agreeing to an oral interview and questionnaire for this research study.

Print name: _____ Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print name: _____ Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: One-On-One Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of good communication?
2. How do you usually react when conflict or disagreement arises in your relationships?
3. How do you solve communication problems with your co-workers?
4. How would you rate your current leadership communication and your ability to address issues on a 10-point scale? This question is for checking participants' self-awareness of their communication styles. (10 smoothly, 5 average, 1 poorly)
5. What is the main issue in current leadership communication? If you think a change is necessary, how would you adjust the way that your team communicates with one another?
6. There are four common communication styles: Passive, passive-aggressive, aggressive, and assertive. What is your communication style and what are your expectations for communication between yourself and other leaders in JC?
7. What strengths do you see in other leaders' communication?
8. How does your team's communication affect your ministry?
9. How satisfied are you with your communication style? on a 10-point scale? (10 smoothly, 5 average, 1 poorly)?
10. How satisfied are you with your JC leaders' communication style, on a 10-point scale? (10 smoothly, 5 average, 1 poorly)?

Appendix 3: Communication Styles Quiz

The following questions will help you get an idea of what your communication style is. Check off any for which your answer is yes. However, you'll probably be able to see that you do many of these things sometimes, so only check off those that seem to describe you best. The style for which you have the most checks is your dominant communication style.

1. Passive

Do you try to push your feelings away rather than express them to others?

Do you fear that expressing yourself will cause others to be angry with you or not like you?

Do you often say things like "I don't care" or "It doesn't matter to me" when you do care, or it does matter?

Do you keep quiet or try not to rock the boat because you don't want to upset others?

Do you often go along with others' opinions because you don't want to be different?

Total:

2. Aggressive

Are you most concerned with getting your own way, regardless of how it impacts others?

Do you yell, swear, or use other aggressive means of communicating regularly?

Do your friends fear you?

Are you disrespectful toward others when communicating with them, not really caring if they get what they need if your needs are met?

___ Do you have an attitude of “my way or the highway”? Have you ever heard anyone describe you this way?

Total: ___

3. Passive-Aggressive

___ Do you tend to be sarcastic when you feel angry?

___ Do you tend to give people silent treatment when you're angry with them?

___ Do you often find yourself saying one thing but thinking another, such as going along with another person's wishes even though you want to do something else?

___ Are you generally reluctant to express your emotions but find that how you feel gets expressed in other ways, like slamming doors or other aggressive behaviours?

___ Do you fear that expressing yourself will cause others to be angry with you or stop liking you, so you try to get your message across in more subtle ways?

Total: ___

4. Assertive

___ Do you believe that you have a right to express your opinions and emotions?

___ When you're having a disagreement with someone, are you able to express your opinions and emotions clearly and honestly?

___ When communicating with others, do you treat them with respect while also respecting yourself?

___ Do you listen closely to what others are saying, sending them the message that you're trying to understand their perspective?

___ Do you try to negotiate with others if you have different goals rather than being focused on meeting your own needs?

Total: ___

*It is not uncommon for people to use different styles depending on the situation and person they're communicating with. The point is not to diagnose how you communicate, but to increase awareness of your patterns of communicating so you can choose to communicate in different ways if you choose.

Source: DBT Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide to Dialectical Behavior Therapy Book by Sheri Van Dijk

<https://cmhasaskatoon.ca/app/uploads/2021/04/Communication-Styles-Quiz.pdf>

Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions

1. What did you learn from everything that I shared?
2. Based on what I shared, what needs, and opportunities do you see as a team?
3. Is there something we can do together to address those needs and opportunities? Be as detailed as possible. (e.g., team exercises, workshops, seminars)
4. Who should lead this ministry activity? It can be more than one person.

Appendix 5: Closing Interview

1. Did you benefit from participating in this research? If so, how did you benefit?
2. Is there anything you would have changed about this project?
3. What next steps should we take to continue addressing the needs and opportunities we identified together?

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