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Tyndale University

The Ministry Benefits and Personal Growth that Came
from Using Participatory Action Research to
Develop a Workshop for Cree Mentors

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 Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Research Portfolio details the author's development as a leader throughout the program via his Leadership Narrative, Ministry Context Analysis, Project Report, and Philosophy of Leadership. His research project consisted of using Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods to develop a mentoring workshop for Cree adults. Using PAR methods caused him to revisit his assumptions and alter the way he designed and ran the workshop, which increased participants' confidence in ways that he did not originally anticipate. This experience, alongside other elements of the DMin program and developments in his leadership responsibilities, led him to identify his calling as leading intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation using communal discernment processes. Alongside demonstrating how spiritual experiences, faithful mentors, Christian community, and formal education can enable an individual to overcome a difficult upbringing and become a capable Christian leader, this portfolio offers insights into the value of using PAR and similar processes for improving ministry endeavours in an indigenous context.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

This Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Research Portfolio is the culmination of over three years' work, and illustrates my growth over that time. It contains four major sections. The first is my Leadership Narrative, which I first wrote in September 2017. It describes my life events, inasmuch as they are relevant to my development as a leader. The second section is my Ministry Context Analysis, which I also wrote in September 2017. It describes Mistissini, a Cree community and one of the places I am engaged in ministry. This assignment was done in anticipation of my research project, and provides a description of the community, the camp that I help with, the ministry challenges and opportunities we faced at that time, and the opportunity that I identified as most worth pursuing during my research project. The third section is my Project Report, which describes what I did and discovered through my research. The project took place between November 2018 and February 2020, and the report was written in May 2020. The fourth and final section is my Philosophy of Christian Leadership. This was written in April 2020, following my project's completion but before I wrote the report. As such, it reflects how my ministry experiences, DMin studies, and research have contributed to my thinking about ministry leadership.

My hope is that by ordering the sections this way, readers will come to

appreciate the role that the DMin program played in my development as a leader. It was certainly not the only contributing factor. As readers will see in my Leadership Narrative, many events took place over the past three years. As these transpired, however, I was able to navigate them by applying the lessons I was learning through my coursework and research. In this sense, the DMin program and my ministry experiences worked together to facilitate the kind of learning described by David Livermore in Figure 1:

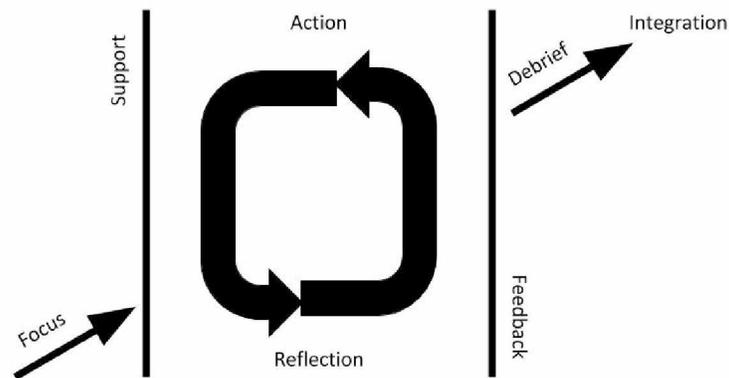


Figure 1: The Joplin Model of Learning (Livermore 2009, 302)

This model, which seeks to reconcile traditional teaching with praxis-based learning, involves three stages. First, students go through a period of focused learning. Then, they put their ideas into practice through action and reflection with support and feedback from their teachers. Then, they debrief their experiences so they can transfer their learning beyond their immediate situation. I learned this way constantly throughout the past three years, first learning about leadership in the classroom, then putting those ideas into practice in my various

ministry settings, and then using assignments and my research project to distill and integrate the things I had learned experientially. As cliché as it sounds, I would not be the leader I am today without this program.

I believe that this is apparent in the documents that follow. As I compiled them, I noticed a remarkable difference in the way that I wrote about myself in September 2017 and May 2020. Here are some of the changes I noticed: First, my sense of calling was refined, as exhibited in the shift in language from raising up leaders—a fairly generic sentiment—to leading intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation using communal discernment processes—a more precise idea that still manages to tie together my ministry experiences. Second, my leadership competency increased, as reflected by positive outcomes and feedback in the various ministries I lead. Third, my leadership capacity increased, as reflected by the number of new opportunities that I have been able to engage in over the three years, while still managing family life and school. Finally, my relationship with God has improved. Admittedly, this is difficult to see in the documents themselves, but when I consider how I felt when I wrote the Leadership Narrative, as I was still recovering from a difficult few years, and contrast it to the way that I felt when I wrote my Philosophy of Leadership, I recognize that I have learned to depend on God in new ways. This has strengthened my confidence that he is at work in this world, restoring it to its original goodness, and that he sees me as his son first, and his servant second. I trust that readers will see these markers of growth too.

In sharing about my growth this way, it is my hope that readers will learn about a handful of topics that are important to me. My journey shows how spiritual experiences, faithful role models, Christian community, and formal education can enable someone to overcome a difficult childhood and become a capable Christian leader. In this sense, it is a portrait of deep life change, which is a topic most Christian leaders are invested in. Alongside this, my story involves a great deal of theological change, as my exposure to Calvinism permitted me to let go of legalism and then missional theology challenged me to think in a big-picture way about God's kingdom and humanity's role in the world. Some of these ideas might challenge readers to reconsider some of their own theological convictions. I also touch on important cultural trends in Canada, including the increasing divide between generations and longstanding racial issues that have yet again been thrust into the spotlight over the past month or so because of concerns with police activity in the United States. Although I could not provide a thorough analysis of these issues, I hope that the information I do provide motivates readers to consider the issues more closely, as they impact the Church along with our broader society.

My portfolio does offer a more thorough analysis of how one can lead reconciliation across generations and cultures. Although I am still young and hope to continue growing in my capacity to do so, the past ten years have taught me a great deal about how to facilitate understanding between people and empower them to work together despite deep differences. The DMin program encouraged me to glean wisdom from my prior experiences and provided me with concepts

and tools so I could improve in this capacity. Among these, the most important were various communal discernment processes, which enable groups of people to make decisions and evaluate their impact together. I think that my work over the past three years shows that these processes are effective for pursuing reconciliation between people groups, and hope that readers consider adopting these methods in their own context, even if they would need to be adapted to suit the differences between our ministries.

A couple of notes before moving onto my Leadership Narrative. First, where I felt it was necessary, I have used fake names to protect people's privacy. Second, all scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version (*The Holy Bible* 2016). Third, some of the details found in the first two documents are repeated in the latter two. I tried to minimize this, but some repetition was necessary for the ideas in each section to be properly understood. Fourth, I use first-person language throughout the portfolio. This may seem odd in an academic paper, but it was important to capture the personal growth that the program facilitated. Now, here are some terms that I use throughout the portfolio that may be unfamiliar to some readers.

Definition of Key Terms

Communal Discernment Processes: A number of related processes that are designed to empower participants in a research or ministry context. Although these processes differ in practice, they share a common commitment to listening to and taking into account the experiences of participants in order to discern the

best course of action. There is some overlap between this term and the more established term “Community-Based Research,” but I intend it to include processes that might not be regarded as fitting this category, such as George Bullar’s 100 Days of Prayer. Other examples include Appreciative Inquiry, Asset Mapping, and Participatory Action Research. These processes will be defined and applied in the relevant sections of the portfolio.

Culture(s): Shared sets of values and practices that differ across people groups, as well as the people groups themselves. This can be used in a general way (eg. workplace culture) or in a more precise way to refer to tendencies rooted in history and geography (eg. Cree culture). In this portfolio this term is used exclusively in the latter sense, to avoid confusion.

Cree: A large First Nations group that spans the northern part of many Canadian provinces. There are a number of Cree subgroups. In this portfolio this term refers exclusively to the James Bay Cree in northern Quebec who are a part of the Grand Council of the Crees, particularly those living in Mistissini.

Deep Differences: Instances when people groups differ in their norms and values, which contribute to more overt but less significant differences such as food or clothing. Multiple models describe the varying traits. I favour the 6-D model of national culture, which includes collectivism vs. individualism, small vs. large power distance, masculinity vs. femininity (or tolerance of domineering behaviour), uncertainty tolerance vs. avoidance, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede 2016).

First Nations: A number of people groups that span North America and share some common historical and cultural qualities, including having arrived on the continent prior to European settlers.

Indigenous: People groups across the world who were the original inhabitants of their geographic region. In this portfolio, this term refers exclusively to the indigenous peoples of Canada, which includes those who are First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Mentoring: A process in which a younger, less experienced person (the “**mentee**”) learns from an older, more experienced person (the “**mentor**”) through a voluntary, ongoing, mutual—but not reciprocal—relationship. There is some overlap with the term coaching, although the latter often connotes a professional role and involves training on the part of the coach, whereas mentoring generally stems from a pre-existing relationship and is determined purely based on the parties’ mutual commitment. The primary skill involved in mentoring is intergenerational relationship building, which requires active listening, transparency, and teaching based on one’s life experience. It is also beneficial if mentors are connected to community resources—such as pastors, coaches, and counsellors—so they can direct mentees to these as needed. In this sense, mentors function similarly to medical general practitioners. They serve as the most consistent caregiver of their mentees outside of family and should be able to respond to their basic needs, while acknowledging their limitations.

Settler(s): People groups across the world that settled their geographic

region later than indigenous people. In this portfolio, this term refers exclusively to Canadian settlers and is thus used to describe all non-indigenous Canadians, including but not limited to those who are white.

White: An adjective used to describe lighter-skinned people of European descent and their cultural practices. In this portfolio, this term refers exclusively to Canadians who fit this description.

CHAPTER 2:

LEADERSHIP NARRATIVE

The following is a description of my development as a leader. It details my growth through multiple stages of life, including my upbringing, adolescence, undergraduate studies, early ministry, a formative ministry transition, and then the years leading up to my entry into Tyndale’s Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program. Following this, I describe some of the early contributions the program made to my self-perception, then the changes that have taken place over the course of the past three years. It has been edited for style and consistency, but aside from the last section, which was added for the sake of this portfolio, the content of this narrative reflects how I felt in September 2017, and thus sets the stage for the growth I went through during the DMin program.

One thing worth noting: throughout this narrative I regularly refer to my mentors. These are five men who sought to help me grow through an ongoing, mutual, voluntary relationship, as per the definition I provided previously. The first was assigned to me as a “buddy” when I was nine or ten as part of a Pioneer Clubs program at my home church. He spent time with me at the program and took me to baseball games periodically over the next few years. The second taught my pre-teen Sunday School class, and took me to hockey games throughout my adolescence. The third was one of my youth pastors and coached a

football team I played on during high school. The fourth was a man I worked alongside and attended church with while earning my undergraduate degree. The fifth was a transition pastor I met during a year that I spent in between ministry roles. He provided me with some tutelage when it came to my preaching, and has continued to phone me periodically since then to ask how I am doing.

Over the years, my contact with these men has varied in terms of frequency and intensity, but I hold them all in high regard, and for a period of time each of them was one of my primary confidantes and role models. The only one I mention by name is Paul, the youth pastor and football coach, because I have since begun to work closely with him in ministering to First Nations people, which will be described in more detail in this and the next two documents, since he was part of the leadership team for my research project.

My Upbringing

My parents both grew up in Peterborough, Ontario, and moved to Toronto for university. There they became Christians and married when my father felt called into ministry. I was born in the late spring of 1988. I am the first of five children, followed by three sisters and then a brother, who is seven years younger than me. For the first few years of my life my dad pastored a small evangelical church in a rural community west of Toronto. He had been warned before taking the role that the church was conflicted but he was naively confident in his ability to turn things around. And, despite the challenging circumstances, he was somewhat successful. People tell me that he was a gifted teacher and the church

grew from fifteen to thirty people during his tenure. He also took his faith seriously on a personal and family level. One story my mother likes to share illustrates this: One Sunday when I was two, my dad was preaching on missions at a conference and invited the attendees to consider dedicating their children to the Lord. As he issued this call, I escaped from my mom and ran down the aisle to join him. He noted that if he was going to ask people to offer God their children, it made sense to start with his own, and he publicly dedicated me to Christian service. This foreshadows my calling and also shows my father's desire to nurture us in the faith. I also have fond memories of him leading family worship on his guitar and singing a blessing over us before bed.

Unfortunately the stress of leading the congregation and a crisis within his family of origin wore on my dad and eventually he resigned. After spending some time at his parents' house in Peterborough, we moved to Ottawa. He searched for another pastorate to no avail, and ended up working in a group home. He proceeded to spend a number of years there trying to provide for a growing family on a minimal salary. He became depressed and eventually had an affair, which led to him moving out when my brother was eighteen months old. It was arranged that we would live with my mother and visit my father most weekends.

Although my parents were close to one another geographically, their homes seemed like two separate lives. My mother's was in a townhouse complex with a number of children our age, some of whom are still my close friends. It was in a rapidly-growing area on the outskirts of the city, which meant that we

went to school with children from a variety of backgrounds, and my mom was intentional about getting to know our teachers and friends' parents. Despite working multiple jobs simultaneously, she arranged her schedule so she was almost always home when we were.

Even though she came to faith through my father, my mom remained a committed Christian and immersed us in the faith. I vividly remember how she would start praying out loud as soon as she dropped me off at the bus stop. She depended on God's provision, and at various points he provided for us in incredible ways, with people unexpectedly supplying gas money, a van, and a down payment for a house, among other things. She also recognized that, as the oldest child of a single mom, I was forced to grow up faster than most children. She affirmed and encouraged that growth, even though she regretted that it was necessary. Even when I was a child she took my advice seriously and regularly told me that I had a gift of wisdom, which I still see as my primary spiritual gift. My mom had her flaws, of course, but she took ownership of these. For example, when her hurt and stress resulted in angry outbursts she was consistently the first to apologize and seek our forgiveness. She also recognized her limitations and sought mentors for us within the church, one of whom baptized me when I was ten.

My experience at my father's house was quite different. When we came to visit he found us overwhelming and disengaged emotionally. He often told us to entertain ourselves while he read or watched television. We had a tense

relationship with his partner, too, which at times made it uncomfortable to be around the house. Unfortunately, most of our personal belongings were at my mother's house, and there was a mutual distrust between him and our friends' parents, which meant that we were not allowed to visit each other. Thus, we had to be creative about filling our time. This was not entirely negative. For example, I spent large chunks of time alternating between reading books and playing simple games by myself, which fostered my literacy and imagination - traits my dad encouraged. At the time, however, I did not appreciate the limited options and came to associate his house with boredom and loneliness.

My father was also bitter towards evangelicals for the way they had treated him during the divorce. When we were at his house on Sundays he did not take us to our home church, opting at first to try out others and eventually giving up on church altogether. He also openly criticized our faith, pointing out biblical contradictions and pushing back against traditional morality. In retrospect, I recognize that he was recovering from burnout and a faith crisis, and he has since apologized to me. At the time, however, this behaviour seemed like a personal attack. This left me feeling unwanted when I was at his house, which added to the sense of abandonment I felt because of the divorce. I became increasingly angry towards him. My teachers noticed this affecting my performance and asked my mom about it, but there was no simple solution. I became isolated at school, trusting only a small number of people and fighting frequently even with them. This continued until grade six. Then, I had a transformative encounter with God.

During the summer following Grade 6 my siblings and I were visiting my father for a two-week stretch, which took place every July and August. These long visits were more taxing than the usual weekends because I could not look forward to going home the next day. One upside was that we would visit my grandpa's cottage. I have fond memories of swimming, fishing, catching frogs, feeding chipmunks, listening to loons, roasting marshmallows over the fire, and going for boat rides. Best of all, these activities often involved my dad teaching us skills, like building fires and roasting marshmallows.

Despite these good memories, my dad and I also fought during these stays, and one of these led to my encounter with God. I do not remember what we fought about, but I remember lying alone in the basement bedroom, wide awake and furious. For whatever reason, that night it occurred to me that I did not want to be such an angry person. I asked God to help me forgive my father, then uttered, "Satan, leave me alone!" At that moment I felt something leave the room and a chill ran down my spine. I imagined God wrapping me in a big hug. I felt surprisingly peaceful and cried with joy. After the sensation had passed it came to me that I needed to stop waiting for my dad to change, love him as he was, and focus on being the kind of person God wanted me to be.

Although the change was not instant, there was a noticeable difference in a short time. In grades seven and eight I grew more confident and made new friends. In high school, my marks increased, and I became more involved in my church youth group, summer camps, and sports teams. And, as I grew, my

relationship with my father also changed. Although we continued to have disagreements, especially around his relationship with my siblings, my anger dissipated and our fights became less frequent. I would come to enjoy having conversations about politics and watching hockey games at the local pub with him. Altogether, it seems clear that a major barrier to my growth was removed that night at the cottage.

My Adolescence

Although I no longer hated my father, our relationship still dictated how I lived on another level. Throughout high school my primary concern was defending the things my dad had rejected. I became contentious, regularly telling my family members, mentors, teachers, and friends that I was right and they were wrong about their beliefs and decisions. Often this was well-meaning—I genuinely wanted the best for them—but my attitude was harmful.

It took a romantic relationship for me to recognize the issue. I met Shoshanna in Grade 9. She had been raised in a culturally religious household, with a Jewish father and Catholic mother. She loved to dance, wore clothes that I considered immodest, swore on occasion, and drank lightly at social events with her parents' permission. Despite these differences I was smitten and we started dating in November 2003. Soon, however, our differences began to frustrate me and I tried to make her change. I also argued with her friends when they expressed views with which I did not agree. After almost a year together things were tense enough that we broke up. However, one of my mentors showed me that part of the

problem was that we had not taken the time to build a healthy friendship before dating. By the grace of God (and Shoshanna) we were able to work on this over the next six months and in February 2005 we started dating again, this time with an agreement that I needed to respect her more and she needed to tell me when I was being disrespectful. Much to my surprise, when I did not try to bully her into thinking and acting as I thought she should, she became more open to my suggestions, and we were able to work together constructively. Our second attempt at dating went much better than the first, and five years later we married.

As I learned to operate in a less contentious manner, I also began developing leadership abilities. Three environments were particularly formative. The first was my family, where I sought to set a good example for my siblings. Like my relationship with Shoshanna, this required doing away with my contentious attitude and extending them love and patience. The second was my football team. I was invited to play by Paul, a mentor from church who was the Offensive Coordinator of a team in a AAA bantam league. Football required a high level of discipline and respect for the coaches. It also forced me to work closely with peers who did not share my faith. Although I did not budge in my convictions, I learned how to hold back my opinions and lead by example, which led to me winning the Coach's Award for leadership in my grade twelve season. Alongside this, I began taking on minor leadership roles at my church's youth group and the Christian camps I attended. The tasks I was assigned, such as running activities and leading discussions, taught me skills I continue to use

today. Together, my family life, football team, and church activities taught me the joy of being relied upon by others and facilitating their growth.

My Undergraduate Years

By the end of high school I wanted to pursue journalism and Shoshanna planned to teach history and French. She decided to go to Trent University (Trent) in Peterborough, Ontario and I followed her there, in part because I could live with extended family. One of our first priorities was finding a Christian community together. We ended up finding two. First, we were invited by one of Shoshanna's friends to join a local church that blended evangelical beliefs with a traditional style and a focus on social justice. Then, we became involved in an interdenominational campus ministry. Each shaped my faith in different ways.

At church, I found a new mentor and opportunities to serve people on the margins of society. With the campus ministry, I formed deep friendships and learned how to work with others to make organizational decisions as part of the student leadership team. In both environments, the topic of grace was a central element of the teaching, and over the next few years I was introduced to hermeneutics as well as theological books like *The Prodigal God* (Keller 2011) and *Desiring God* (Piper 2001). These made me realize that God wants us to pursue him out of joy rather than duty (Piper 2001, 16). I realized how much my identity was based on my performance rather than God's freely-given love, which was the root cause of the legalism I had exhibited during high school. At the same time, my studies at Trent revealed that politics cannot solve evil and suffering. I

remember thinking that we needed someone to save us from ourselves, and realizing that Christianity teaches the same thing.

This conviction increased my passion for ministry and I began to dedicate more of my time and energy to my leadership responsibilities than I spent on school. One of my mentors pointed this out and told me that I should become a pastor. Initially, I paid him little heed. I had seen how poorly my father's ministry journey had ended and, alongside that, I believed that gifted Christians should serve in secular fields to witness to our culture. However, as my mentor persisted and others made the same suggestion, I began to consider it more closely.

Eventually, God convicted me that I needed to focus on following him rather than avoiding being like my dad. This would also permit me to realize that in many ways, I was like my father, including his analytical nature and communication skills. This, combined with the fact that my mother remarried during my final year at Trent, meant that a new season was beginning in which I had positive relationships with the men inside my family, which my mentors encouraged me to embrace. Shoshanna, too, was led to change her career path during this season. Rather than finishing her education degree, a desire to homeschool our future children and partner with me in ministry blossomed. We agreed that we would both finish our bachelor's degrees, but after that, I would attend seminary and look for ministry work while she raised our children and participated in my ministries whenever she could. Thus, our new life trajectory was established.

Alongside discerning a call to ministry, I had two experiences during these years that taught me a great deal because of how negative they were. During my third year at Trent, a handful of students suggested that we turn the campus ministry into a local church. The group's primary functions were a monthly interdenominational worship service and weekly small groups, which involved 150 and seventy students, respectively. The leaders making the proposal were concerned that the fact that the group was student-led made it easy for false teaching to occur in these settings. I reacted defensively, arguing that being student-led and interdenominational were essential aspects of the group's ministry and becoming a local church would harm it. During the following months my contentious habits reemerged, which resulted in a series of fights between me and one of the young men that made the suggestion. Eventually the other leaders reached a consensus and I begrudgingly accepted it.

The decision to plant divided the group's members when it was made public, but the plans were still carried out hastily over the summer. By the time the church launched in the fall only fifty students joined it. Over the following three years its leaders had a rocky relationship with the school administration, the church declined in numbers, and it eventually split from its mother congregation and left the campus to pursue a more multi-generational ministry. These events seemed to validate my initial concerns, but I recognize now that the way that I raised those concerns was ineffective. Of course, I still have disagreements with my fellow leaders, but never since have I been in a shouting match with a

teammate, and I am often the person who calms things down when anger does arise.

The year after this happened I learned what contentious leadership feels like from the receiving end. During my fourth year at Trent I dedicated more time to my local church, and one of my objectives was to start a youth group. The idea was received well by parents but actually starting it proved more difficult than I anticipated, because the church had a number of other programs for their students. When I suggested that the youth group should be a bigger priority, one of the board members took offense and accused me of trying to change their traditions. In one meeting he yelled at me and accused me of having malicious motives in front of the rest of the board. After this I abandoned my attempt to develop the youth group and my wife and I would eventually move on to a new church. This, alongside my failure during the church plant decision, showed me that contentiousness has no place in Christian leadership.

My Early Ministry

In 2010, I graduated from Trent and was accepted to a Master's program at Tyndale University. Shoshanna and I also married that spring. Soon thereafter, Paul—my high school football coach—asked if we would be willing to lead a sports camp in a First Nations community that summer. Because Trent specializes in indigenous issues, we had both learned about the topic during our undergraduate degrees, but neither of us had any firsthand experience with First Nations people and we thought it would be worthwhile. The job, which was

funded by the Cree Health Board, also paid reasonably well. Thus, we agreed, and in July 2010 we flew with a team of three other people to Nemaska, Quebec.

Nemaska is a Cree community located 300 kilometres east of the southern tip of James Bay. It has a population of just over 600 people and is 400 kilometres away from the nearest settler town. They had agreed to host a sports camp at the last minute and Paul's team, which was already conducting camps in a number of other Cree communities, was scrambling to pull things together. As a result, our team was ill-equipped for our first immersive intercultural experience. We faced challenges with our budget, health, and certain team members, which required a lot of improvising on my part as the team leader.

Despite this, things turned out well. The Cree adults were welcoming and the children—most of whom were between five and ten and normally spent a good portion of their summer playing unsupervised—were eager to have adults spend time with them. Even though they were fairly well off materially, with good clothes, food, and technology, many of the children had still been exposed to abuse, addiction, and tragic deaths at a young age. Despite these challenges, however, their community was full of joy, as we witnessed in their sporting activities, feasts, and annual trip to their traditional village, which we were invited to attend. The result is that Shoshanna and I fell in love with the Cree people and this would end up being the first of many trips to their communities. This would spark a growing interest in First Nations issues and increasingly define my ministry. It also provided a common interest with my father, who around this time

began working for the federal government as a negotiator with Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

When we returned from up north, Shoshanna and I chose to use the opportunity provided by our long absence to find a new local church. We informed the people we were closest to and on our first Sunday back went to church with some of our friends from the campus ministry. This church was pleasantly similar to the one in which I grew up. Alongside this, it was announced that Sunday that they were looking to hire a part-time interim Youth Pastor to work alongside Aaron, a young man who had been raised in the church and just started a part-time role. I spoke with the lead pastor and let him know that I had leadership experience and was studying at a seminary, which ultimately led to me being hired.

Working with Aaron was a good learning experience for me because of our differing leadership styles. He was meticulous, and because of that he tended to run things in a hands-on way. I, on the other hand, preferred to focus on teaching and leadership development, and often delegated tasks instead of handling them personally. At first, our different approaches caused tension. To me, he seemed controlling; to him, I seemed neglectful. Over time and with the lead pastor's guidance, however, we came to appreciate each other and learned to divide our responsibilities in a way that played to our strengths. Alongside this, those two years involved me recruiting and training volunteers, reporting to a board, and teaching on an ongoing basis for the first time, all of which developed

my leadership skills.

At the same time, my mind was being stretched in my Masters of Theological Studies (MTS) courses. The school's emphasis on missional theology provided me with a new, big-picture understanding of God's purposes for the world. Some of the particular ideas that I had picked up from the campus ministry, such as predestination and complementarianism, were challenged by professors who had studied the issues thoroughly. A course on Genesis showed me that it was reasonable to interpret the creation story figuratively (Blocher 1984, 49-59), which was one of many instances that forced me to revisit my tradition's narrow reading of scripture.

Because I was in a cohort-based distanced program, I spent three years with the same classmates, many of whom were older than me and shared their experiences as missionaries, pastors, health care practitioners, and trades workers. This meant that discussions were laced with practical wisdom. At the same time, the fact that Tyndale was interdenominational taught me the value of the many traditions I had been exposed to growing up, including my Plymouth Brethren home church, my grandpa's United church, my mom's Pentecostal bible study, Shoshanna's Judaism and Catholicism, and our justice-oriented church during university. My undergraduate years allowed me to overcome my reactive legalism; my early ministry years encouraged me to form a more holistic understanding of what it means to be a Christian leader.

A Season of Transition

The 2011-2012 ministry year brought about many changes. It began with the birth of our daughter that September. Then I was offered the opportunity to raise financial support as a “Commended Worker” at my church. I was convicted that if I was going to embrace the opportunity fully, I needed to leave my other part-time job at a Christian group home. I was scared to tell my boss but when she heard my reasoning she encouragingly said that I had to follow God’s calling, or else I would not have a ministry very long. Then, in the winter, Paul asked me to assist him with a new project. He was no longer responsible for the sports camps and had been asked by a local church in Mistissini, one of the larger Cree communities, to design a teen program for their local Bible camp. He was wondering if I could find counsellors, which worked well because my board had previously suggested a youth missions trip.

Aaron and I compiled a team and in July 2012 we ran our first Teen Week at Sunrise Camp alongside Christian leaders from Mistissini. It was quite different from the sports camp we ran in Nemaska. The team I was leading was larger and younger. The campers were older and stayed overnight. They were used to a lot of independence and pushed back against camp rules. At first they were uninterested in the activities we ran, even though they complained that they were bored during free time. Over the course of the week, however, they saw how committed we were to getting to know them and heard our message of grace and hope, and began to share their experiences. A number of them had been affected by a recent

suicide. We had many tearful conversations late at night and during breaks in the day. The relationships that were developed that week more than made up for the fact that we were still learning to do things effectively. A number of leaders and campers would return the next few summers and deepen their connection, and I came to look forward to the camps as a key part of my ministry.

Alongside this, I resigned from my role at the church. As the 2011-2012 ministry year was winding down and we were preparing for that first Teen Week, I realized that we had reached a plateau. Only a small number of teenagers seemed to benefit from my primary gifts, which led me to believe that God was calling me to another form of ministry. Aaron, on the other hand, enjoyed running youth activities and was beginning to do more of the teaching. I thought that his growth would be inhibited by continuing to share the role. With this in mind, I submitted my resignation that May. The board members could scarcely believe my reasoning. They wondered if there was some underlying problem motivating my choice, and when I assured them that I was leaving simply because I felt called to do so, one commented that it was the most positive resignation the team had ever received. They blessed my departure and allowed me to keep my Commended status so I could raise funds for whatever came next.

Thus, by the time fall arrived, we were surviving on student loans and the small income I had fundraised. As we prayed about where we were supposed to go next the surprising answer we received was Cambridge, Ontario. It was not much closer to Tyndale than Peterborough, and we only knew one family there, so

moving there seemed impractical. At first I thought that I could possibly get hired as the pastor of our friends' local church because they were looking for a teaching pastor, but well before we moved we found out that I was one of two hundred applicants and had been disqualified based on education and experience alone. The weekend we found this out, however, a classmate told me that God wanted me to know that he was going to use me to raise up leaders. I had not shared my predicament with her when she said this. This was one of many confirmations we received along the way that we were hearing from God, and a simple but profound summary of my calling.

We took the step of faith and moved to Cambridge in December 2012. There, we found a welcoming home church alongside our friends. I soon began helping with their small youth ministry. The transition pastor also began mentoring me, providing opportunities for me to preach and receive feedback. However, no paid work emerged and I had abundant time to dwell on that fact. During my prayer times I would ask God about all sorts of things, and I often received clear responses in my mind. However, every time I asked when he would provide a job, I received a blunt response: "Wait." I learned that there was no point in pressing for more. God had some purpose in delaying but was not going to reveal what it was.

That year I was approaching the end of my MTS. I spent most of the winter working on a research project on the differences between the Emergent and Missional movements. I also had to meet with a Spiritual Director. The lady I met

with suggested that I read *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (Nouwen 1994). Over the course of that winter, God used the book to drive much of what I knew theologically into my heart. I particularly related to the older, resentful brother, and was moved by the Father's plea for him to come inside and join the celebration, leaving behind his need to prove his worth (Nouwen 1994, 80). By the time I finished the book, my sense was that God was telling me, "Before you can truly be my servant, you must know that you are my son." I do not think I would have grasped this message if I had been working in ministry at the time.

In the spring of 2013, I wrapped up my MTS and, at the encouragement of my professors, applied to the Master of Theology (ThM) program for the fall. Then, suddenly, a ministry opportunity opened up. Because of staffing changes, the position I had applied for in the fall had changed from part-time to full-time and they had to restart the hiring process. My wife and I saw this as a divinely-appointed opportunity, since I now had six months of rapport with the congregation. I applied and was granted an interview, despite my limited qualifications. When I shared the news with my Spiritual Director, she paraphrased 1 Samuel 2:30, noting that God honours those who honour him, and said that she thought God would honour me for waiting by providing me with ministry work.

The day came; the interview went well. Then, a few days later, I received a phone call. Shoshanna was running errands while I watched our daughter at home. The man on the other end of the phone said that I had impressed the interviewers,

but they were concerned that the position involved too much responsibility and could hurt my growth. He relayed their suggestion that I search for an Associate Pastor role so I could build up experience without so much pressure. Choking back tears I thanked him and hung up. Our daughter, who was two at the time, asked me what was wrong and, unable to explain, I asked her if she would like to go to the playground. There, while she played, I wept. I felt exhausted, discouraged, confused, and hurt. Here I was, in a city I barely knew, with a young family to provide for and no good career options. I trusted God, but suddenly the whole adventure felt too big for me to handle.

When Shoshanna arrived home I shared the news with her and we cried together. Then, after taking some time for the pain to pass, we agreed on a plan. It was early May. I was finished my MTS and we had enough money to pay rent in June. Thus, we agreed to ask God to provide a ministry job by the end of the month, or else I would look for work in another field.

The month went by quickly and soon the final weekend was upon us. One of my sisters was having her Canadian wedding reception in Ottawa and we agreed that once we returned from there, I would start handing out resumes. Paul was at the reception, and told me how difficult the year had been for him. Then he asked if there was any way I could work for him that summer. I recall looking at Shoshanna across the room, knowing that we were both thinking that this was an answer to our prayer, since it was still May. Paul could pay me just over \$2000, which meant that I needed to raise \$1400 to cover our expenses. There was no

time to see whether that was feasible, however, because if I accepted he needed me to go on a building trip in less than a week. Shoshanna and I agreed that we had to yet again take the step of faith and trust that God would provide for us, since this was a direct answer to prayer. We let our supporters know our plans, packed up our essential belongings, and moved to my mom's house in Ottawa for the summer. At the end of the summer, I wrote in my ministry newsletter:

Thank you to everyone who supported us this summer. I asked for \$1400 and was blown away to receive over \$6000! As always, God provided for needs I never knew would arise, with \$2000 in unexpected car repairs and 10,000 kilometres worth of gas eating up most of the surplus. Thanks for your generosity and thank God for his fatherly care (Peltz 2013, 4).

It was a validating experience and much-needed sign that I was supposed to stay in ministry.

New Ministry Opportunities and Challenges

That summer, I found out that the church at Trent University (Trent) had decided to move off campus. There was still a Catholic group, but no generic Christian ministry. Shoshanna and I agreed that we should try to meet that need as I worked on my ThM. When I reached out to some students, they were excited to start something new together. I asked the leaders from the church that had left the university if they were okay with my doing this. They agreed to support the endeavour, so long as it was not another church plant, because they still saw themselves as the Trent church. That was an easy condition to meet, since I had objected to the church plant in the first place.

So, with a team of eight students, I launched a new university ministry.

The result was Oikos, a student-led interdenominational ministry that aimed to bless Trent students through prayer, service, and dialogue about faith. My role with the group was to mentor students as they ran events. Generally, I would initiate a relationship with them through team meetings and events, then invite them to build a one-on-one relationship, which led to me supporting them in a number of areas, including developing life skills, growing as leaders, exploring theological questions, implementing spiritual disciplines, and building healthy relationships with friends, family members, and romantic partners. I also connected them to community resources as needed. The group was later rebranded to Christians For Trent (CFT).

Working with students complemented my summer camp ministry, since the campus ministry slowed down over the summer and many CFT students served as camp counsellors over the years. Alongside this, I took on a new role with the church in which I had been a youth pastor. During our time in Cambridge, their lead pastor had departed in the midst of a church split. They hired one of their board members as a part-time teaching pastor, and in the winter of 2014 decided to search for another part-time pastor to accompany him. I applied and in April 2014, they hired me as their care and discipleship pastor. This involved developing a pastoral care plan for the church and overseeing small groups, as well as providing one-on-one counselling, discipleship, and leadership development, which lined up well with my gifts and passions. This combination of the campus ministry, the church, and the summer camps became my new

normal, and after the previous tumultuous period I appreciated the chance to settle into a more stable season of ministry.

Many positive developments took place following the convergence of these roles in 2014. The campus ministry grew from eight active members to over twenty, with the largest events drawing around thirty-five. We experimented with a number of outreach ideas, including worship and testimony nights, movies, debates, cooking classes, social events, praying for students in cafeterias, and a week-long campaign called Christian Awareness Week. One Power to Change leader who visited during the latter remarked that we were doing more with twenty people than some groups manage with a hundred.

At the church, I helped design a meal program for a homeless shelter, worked with the Sunday school teachers to develop a new ministry model, and led the board through the creation of a new mission, vision, and strategic plan alongside the teaching pastor. Although it was not a formal part of my job description, my preaching also continued to improve, which many congregants commented on over the years.

The summer camps also grew. A few years after we began the Teen Week in Mistissini, I was invited to return to Nemaska to serve with their Bible Camp. We also began helping with programming for younger age ranges. As a result, one week of camp expanded to four or five, which meant that most years, my family and I spent the whole month of July in northern Quebec. I also helped with more building projects and led additional programming for Cree youth throughout the

school year. Thus, all three ministries developed simultaneously, and I grew as a leader as a result, in part because of how distinct each role was. Most important to me, though, were my many fruitful ministry relationships.

Alongside these positive developments, I grew through a series of challenges. The first was an intellectual and spiritual crisis that caused me to stall out academically. The personal encounters I had with God over the previous few years and the new ideas I gleaned from my studies forced me to seriously consider what I could and could not accept from my evangelical upbringing. This, combined with my increasing ministry responsibilities, meant that my motivation to do schoolwork vanished. I went from being a straight-A student to failing because I did not complete a number of assignments. This was disheartening, and difficult to share with my friends and family, but in retrospect I see how it strengthened me. I also recognize the value of having gone through it, as it refined my faith and leadership and allowed me to relate to students as they wrestled with similar questions.

The second challenge came from the former Trent church. Although the leaders supported our new work at first, tension arose when I invited an Anglican speaker to one of our events. The same concern about false teachers that had led to the church plant now characterized their view of me and my ministry. Despite the fact that I spent much of the 2015-2016 ministry year trying to address their concerns, they publicly denounced me and invited CFT's leaders to do the same. When they did not, the church leaders decided to start their own campus ministry,

which caused a dilemma for those who attended the church and CFT's events.

Leading throughout this time required me to manage my emotions carefully. I had to respond to their attacks graciously, care for hurting students, and continue operating at a normal capacity in my other leadership roles, all while processing my own pain. In retrospect, this stands out as my most overt experience of sabotage—people who had previously been invested in a leader consciously undermining him or her (Barton 2012, 140). I am pleased that, in the face of this adversity, I behaved differently than I did back when the church plant was first suggested. As a result, I grew personally, the damage from the conflict was minimized, and my ministry relationships were deepened.

The third challenge was learning to lead a church board. Leading them directly was a different experience than leading a youth ministry under them. Those who agreed to serve on the board following the church split were stable, logical men. They were good at managing the crisis, but not as good at caring for and communicating with the people under their leadership. Congregants shared with me how hurt and confused they were by the split, and how distant they felt from the board. This was compounded by the fact that the split had brought about financial difficulties, which meant that Aaron and the church secretary both had to be let go fairly abruptly, causing more hurt and confusion in the congregation.

Since the board had hired me to help them care for the congregation, I began making suggestions about how they could respond to these concerns. The board members pushed back, defending their decisions and suggesting that my

concern for pastoral care was because of my generation's preoccupation with people's feelings, despite the fact that it was my older mentors who originally modeled pastoral care to me. I was so discouraged that I considered searching for work elsewhere. Fortunately, my mentors encouraged me to stay, and Shoshanna shared that she felt like I was supposed to work there for five years. Over time, I realized that the board would follow if I continued raising my concerns in a gentle but persistent manner and modeled the kind of leadership that I wanted them to exhibit. They came to recognize the merit in my suggestions, and we designed a new membership process and pastoral care plan to address the church's needs.

Given the choice, I would not have faced any one of these challenges, let alone all three in close proximity. However, like the positive developments in my ministries, these challenges taught me to use my abilities more effectively. I also became more confident and patient. I had come a long way from the fearful contentiousness that characterized my adolescence.

My Doctor of Ministry

Between the church, campus ministry, and summer camps, I have had plenty of opportunities to learn through hands-on experience. Because of that, I did not intend to return to school after failing my ThM. Then Paul suggested that I do a Doctor of Ministry (DMin). As I describe in the Ministry Context Analysis, we were exploring ways to enhance our ministry to the campers, and Paul suggested that some of the ideas could be the basis for a DMin research project. I was hesitant but agreed to explore it further. I spoke with a pastor in Peterborough

that helped with the program in the past, and he thought that there was merit in Paul's suggestion. Then I reached out to the program director. He, too, suggested that I apply, so I did, and started the program in May 2017.

One of the first courses was "Formation of the Leader," which included writing the original version of my Leadership Narrative. In doing so, I saw how I had progressed through various developmental stages described in our readings (Clinton 1988, 30). I recognized the foundation that was laid in my dad committing me to God's service, the example set by my mother and mentors after my dad's affair, and the divine encounter that allowed me to let go of my hatred and begin turning to God for my identity. I could see how God used my high school and early university years to grow my inner life and summon me to ministry. I noted how my early ministry experiences taught me about my particular gifts and the calling God had for me to raise up leaders, as my classmate suggested. And I saw how my new pastoral role and work at Trent and up north lined up well with my gifts and calling and taught me perseverance. This allowed me to mature and my leadership responsibilities to begin converging. Although I did not yet know where God was leading me long-term, I had a good sense of my values and abilities and was confident that I would continue to grow in my effectiveness over time. Most importantly, I remained rooted in the knowledge I gained in Cambridge that I was God's son first and his servant second, which was life giving, especially when I encountered challenges.

The course material was also beneficial. Although I had read them before,

I enjoyed the opportunity to revisit *In the Name of Jesus* (Nouwen 1989) and *Let Your Life Speak* (Palmer 1999). *Restoring the Soul of Your Leadership* (Barton 2012) and *Deep Mentoring* (Reese and Loane 2012) complemented other books I had read previously, such as *Courage and Calling* (Smith 2011), *The Call* (Guinness 2003), and *Spiritual Leadership* (Sanders 2008). *Restoring the Soul of Your Leadership* was especially useful, since it provides suggestions for leading groups of people through spiritual discernment processes, which is a skill I was still developing (Barton 2012, 191-207).

We also had to complete MBTI and Strengthsfinder assessments. Neither of these were new to me—I had used both for personal development and teaching others—however reading *Gifts Differing* (Myers and Myers 2010) and my MBTI Type II Inventory (Quenk and Kummerow 2017) provided some new information about my personality, and the four leadership domains described in *Strengths-Based Leadership* (Rath 2008, 23) allowed me apply my Strengthsfinder report (“Strengths Insight Guide” 2017) to my leadership roles. Interestingly, these sources of information seemed to contradict one another, since INTJs like me “have a tendency to ignore the views and feelings of other people” (Myers and Myers 2010, loc 1696), and yet three of my top five strengths fell under Relationship Building. My professor noted this and suggested that there is such a thing as a “thinking approach to feeling,” which was an accurate description of me: Having learned the hard way that contentiousness hinders leadership, I try to listen patiently to others and ask guiding questions until I have

a good understanding of their perspective, and only then do I offer my insights. We also had to conduct a guided personal retreat which, like the readings and inventories, was a familiar but beneficial exercise, providing me with some much-needed rest and reflection.

The most significant opportunity for me was undergoing a 360 Assessment (“20/20 Insight” 2017). I appreciated the opportunity to hear directly from those affected by my work. The report confirmed my sense that my church board had difficulty recognizing some of my leadership gifts, as they ranked me much lower than people under my leadership did in areas such as developing leaders, visioning and facilitating change, and looking after the organization’s health. My professor encouraged me to use this feedback as an opportunity to ask if there was some way I could demonstrate my abilities. When I did, the board members told me that I should feel free to be more vocal during team meetings, and that fall they gave me the opportunity to do some vision casting. I had spent three years building trust and putting forward ideas; now I would have the opportunity to lead more directly. This, alongside the ministry advances I expected to make through my research project, suggested that the following year would be significant in terms of personal growth. I hoped that this would enable me to fulfill my calling to raise up leaders even more effectively.

Addendum: What Has Transpired Since

Revisiting what I wrote in 2017 showed me how much has changed in the handful of years since, and how much has stayed the same. I am happy to say that

most of the trends I identified have played out successfully. The DMin program played an important role in that. I still feel called to raise up leaders, but have greater clarity about how I can best do that, which is reflected in my Philosophy of Leadership, where I identify my calling as leading intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation using communal discernment processes.

Multiple generations of student leaders have now graduated from CFT. I kept in touch with many of them, and even officiated weddings for a handful. I continue to mentor the new student leaders, and used a class assignment to develop a recurring workshop on Christian leadership. I also recently guided the team through Patrick Lencioni's "six critical questions," which I was introduced to through my DMin, to help them refine their vision (Lencioni 2012, 77).

Alongside this, I am now part of a team of clergy that are endorsed by Trent Spiritual Affairs for students who need support. I also worked with student leaders to start the Global Table, a weekly meal for international students. These are funded by local churches and prepared by international students. Originally, they were conceived of as a CFT ministry, but this was difficult for student leaders to sustain, so now I lead this in partnership with Trent International, the branch of the administration responsible for recruiting and supporting international students.

My involvement with the Cree camps has remained relatively steady. I continue to lead multiple weeks of programming in Nemaska and Mistissini, alongside occasional retreats and building trips. Alongside this, my DMin

research project served as a catalyst for ministry outside of the camp season. Paul and I now visit Mistissini multiple times a year and, as I describe in my Project Report, I have a deeper ministry relationship with many individuals there. We hope to leverage the insights provided by the research to further develop Cree mentors and their programs.

As both the campus and Cree ministries expanded, I recognized that my pastoral role would become more difficult to sustain. The board foresaw this as well, and asked what I saw as my long-term ministry direction. I was honest with them that at some point, I would likely step away from the church so I could focus on these other ministries, and they understood and blessed that. Then, in December 2017, I received a large grant from a denominational missions board and sensed that this was God telling me that it was time to make the shift. I committed to remaining on staff until June 2019, which was the end of my contract and would allow for a gradual transition. That spring, I led an adapted version of George Bullard's "100 Days of Prayer" (Bullard 2005, 2). During this process, the church's members shared that they would appreciate having a full-time lead pastor again, which I took as a sign that the teaching pastor and I had helped them to heal from the previous lead pastor's hurtful departure.

During that same stretch, I came into close contact with a pastor of a church at Curve Lake First Nation, which is about half an hour north of Peterborough. He asked if I would join him so he could move towards retirement, which was necessary due to his age and health. Because the congregation was

smaller, the pastoral role would be less intense than it was at the previous church. It also fit with my passion for First Nations ministry, as well as my campus ministry, since Trent has a close relationship with Curve Lake. With this in mind, I accepted, and became the co-pastor of Curve Lake Christian Assembly (CLCA) in October 2019. I also approached the leaders of my church network, Vision Ministries of Canada, to see if I could channel my financial support through them instead of the local church. They agreed, and also asked if I could promote First Nations ministry throughout the network, another welcome opportunity.

Thus, the past year has involved another transition. I have gradually built a ministry relationship with the members of CLCA, while remaining on the board of my previous church so I could maintain ministry relationships and aid in the search for a new pastor. At first, my hope was that someone would be found by June 2020 so I could play a role in welcoming him or her. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and I had to end my time on the board to focus more on CLCA. Nonetheless, I parted on good terms, and let the board know that I was willing to consult with them if needed. During this time, I used communal discernment processes to guide leadership discussions in both settings. In each instance, the collaborative approach was well-received, which strengthened my conviction that communal discernment processes are an important means for me to carry out my calling.

Overall, my sense is that the transition between congregations has revealed how much I have grown. My second 360 assessment (“20/20 Insight Report”

2020) shows this as well. I scored higher overall in every category, including an increase from 7.70 to 8.54 in Visioning and Facilitating Change. This improvement includes my Managers—the board from my previous church—who rated me higher in every category. Turnover among board members likely contributes to this, but it also seems to reflect how much I have grown and earned the trust of those affected by my leadership over the past three years.

I continue to depend on my mentors for wisdom and encouragement. I seek their advice before making difficult decisions, which is both affirming, since they often say that I am on the right track, and refining, since they challenge me to stick to my values as closely as possible. My relationship with my father has also continued to improve, and we regularly converse about faith and First Nations issues. Thus, between my mentors, father, stepfather, friends, mother, and wife, I have a rich network of support, which allows me to remain healthy despite the challenges of ministry leadership, and motivates me to extend that same kind of support to others.

Ten years into my ministry career, I am still engaged in multiple leadership roles. I still minister to students at Trent, run programming for Cree youth, and pastor a church. However, over the past three years these roles have developed a great deal, and I am more aware of what it takes to be effective in them. The DMin program enabled me to make many positive changes, in the ministries and my leadership. The research project was particularly important in this regard, and as such, I think it is fitting to consider that over the next two sections before

closing with my Philosophy of Christian Leadership.

CHAPTER 3:

MINISTRY CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The following is an analysis of Sunrise Camp and Mistissini, Quebec, the Cree community where it is located. It was written in September 2017 as a precursor to my research project. It includes background information about the camp and community; an analysis of the context's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and problems; potential projects that I could have done at the time of writing; and an analysis of those options to determine which would be most beneficial. Finally, it includes a force-field analysis of my preferred option, which was the development of a workshop to train Cree mentors. Although I have edited it for style and consistency and added details for clarity's sake, I have intentionally left the primary content in this document intact. As such, it reflects what I was thinking in 2017 as I planned my research project, rather than what I might write today if I were to consider the current needs and opportunities.

Background

Mistissini is a Cree community of 3500 people in northern Quebec, in the traditional territory of Eeyou Istchee. This includes 715 youth between ten and nineteen years old ("Mistissini, Terres Réservées" 2017). These figures include English and French speaking settlers as well as indigenous people, although the

latter are by far the majority. When you first enter, Mistissini feels like a thriving small town thanks to a beautiful lakefront, good infrastructure, and a growing commercial district. Throughout the day the main streets are full of people walking and driving, including unaccompanied children, sometimes as young as four or five years old. Once away from the main stretch, however, the houses get smaller and more tightly spaced, many windows are boarded up, and graffiti, broken bottles, and cigarettes are scattered about the landscape. Side streets are often busier at night than they are during the day and alcohol-fueled fights break out periodically.

Thus, for those who know it well, Mistissini feels like it is full of both hope and despair. Three local landmarks illustrate this well. The first is a big, modern building that sits atop the hill leading down to the commercial district. It looks like the athletic centre kitty corner to it, but it is actually a lockdown facility that hosts Cree teens that are a serious risk to others and themselves. The second is a picturesque graveyard not far from the main stretch that contains a number of youth and young adults. The third is a new bridge that was built on the west side of the community a few years ago. It won awards for its sustainable design, but it also sports looming barriers on either side because the community was worried it would be a convenient way for people to commit suicide. Why does this tension between hope and despair exist? Because Mistissini, like many First Nations communities, still suffers from the effects of the cultural genocide that settlers conducted throughout the 20th century.

In defining cultural genocide and the way it was carried out in Canada,

What We Have Learned reads:

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can be best described as "cultural genocide."

Physical genocide is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and biological genocide is the destruction of the group's reproductive capacity. Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

In its dealings with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things (Sinclair et al. 2015, 4).

Christians often supported these efforts (King 2012, loc 1409). This cultural genocide has resulted in a substantially decreased quality of life for First Nations people and contributed to high rates of addiction and abusive parenting, lower educational success and employment rates, higher self-harm and suicide rates, and an elevated level of incarceration for First Nations people (Sinclair et al. 2015, 103-112). The James Bay Cree have been more successful than many tribes in overcoming these difficulties as a result of achieving the first modern self-governance agreement (Gee-Silverman 2005). Writing about the historic

importance of this treaty, one author notes:

By the final territorial treaty, the Williams Treaties of 1923, traditional protocol was nowhere to be seen or heard. Canada would follow that mockery of treaty-making by shutting down treaty negotiations for half a century. It was not until the James Bay Cree and Nisga'a got the state's attention by means of court decisions in 1972 and 1973 that the federal government rediscovered its ability to make treaties with the First Nations whose lands and resources southern entrepreneurs coveted. The Calder decision of 1973 led to the creation of a claims process that included a comprehensive claims settlement mechanism by 1974. The interim injunction the James Bay Cree obtained in 1972 resulted from difficult negotiations in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) of 1975. The JBNQA is generally regarded as the first modern Canadian treaty, and comprehensive claims settlements have the same legal and constitutional status as territorial treaties. These events ushered in the modern treaty-making era (Miller 2013, 6).

Since then, the James Bay Cree have continued to benefit from effective political leadership (Hamilton 2016). This has led to a series of new, ground-breaking agreements with the Canadian government (Strahl et al. 2008; The Government of Canada et al 2008). Despite this, the effects of the cultural genocide are still evident with abuse, addiction, tragic deaths, and educational and employment challenges featuring more prominently in the cultural landscape than in most white communities. Adults and adolescents alike are aware of these challenges, as depicted in the documentary *Mistissini Healing*, which featured an intergenerational discussion of the difficulties faced by the community (Vizi 2017). The fact that these challenges persist is a testament to how much damage was done to indigenous people. The solution will need to be long-term and multifaceted, with people inside and outside of the community contributing.

Fortunately, many Cree individuals have managed to overcome the

difficulties facing them and are seeking to be part of the solution. Some of them have found it helpful to blend their First Nations cultural practices with the teachings and lifestyle of Christianity. As with most First Nations communities, Mistissini's relationship with Christianity is complicated. On one hand, churches helped undermine indigenous culture, particularly by helping run residential schools (Miller 2000, loc 2061). On the other hand, not all missionaries or denominations were equally focused on forced assimilation, preferring to focus on sharing their faith relationally (Miller 2000, loc 2381).

Cree people experienced both firsthand, with some suffering abuse at the hands of religious leaders in residential schools, and others benefitting from friendly relationships with missionaries who came to live in their community. As such, leaders like former Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come acknowledge the harm done by the Church (Dueck 2000), while attempting to draw Christians and indigenous people together by appealing to their common interest in reconciliation (McLaughlin et al. 2006, 2). This has contributed to a sizable population of Cree Christians in Mistissini—enough to support Anglican, Pentecostal, and Baptist congregations as well as a number of independent churches and camp meetings. They are motivated by their faith to try and improve their people's wellbeing. The Grand Council of the Cree generally views local churches as allies in this regard, and their government functions often include overt references to the Christian faith.

Many Cree people are particularly concerned about their children and

youth, since they represent the future of the community. It is sometimes difficult for Cree adults to invest in their young people, however, because residential schools separated children from their parents, which in turn made it difficult for them to relate to their own children. Sometimes this results in active abuse, but more often it results in neglect, which means that young people are often more influenced by their peers than adult role models. Those that are able to parent well frequently choose to leave the community for the sake of their children, pursuing educational options for themselves and their families in Montreal or Ottawa. There has also been a rapid lifestyle shift across generations as Cree communities become more connected to the broader Canadian society and they introduce new technologies such as video game systems and cell phones. As such, even parents who remain in the community and avoid the worst kinds of neglect find it difficult to relate to their children. The result is that there is a perceived shortcoming of positive role models within the community, which leads local churches to rely on people from elsewhere. This is what takes place at Sonrise Camp (Sonrise), a Christian camp located a short distance from Mistissini.

Sonrise is owned by Faith Bible Chapel (Faith), the local Baptist congregation. Sonrise and Faith were both started by a settler missionary who arrived in the 1970s and still lives in Mistissini. Faith recently became part of the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. Most Sundays around twenty people attend Faith's worship services, the majority of whom are Cree. Since they do not have their own church building (unlike the Pentecostal and Anglican churches),

throughout the school year they meet in Mistissini's only hotel. They often meet at Sunrise during the summer. They are led by a Cree pastor and board, although the missionary who planted the church still attends and is respected by the formal leaders.

Since Faith and Sunrise were both started around the same time by the same person, the church continues to see the camp as one of its primary ministries, although Christians from other local churches also help out there. They also run an Awana program for younger children. They do not currently have a ministry for older youth aside from the camp. This may be because the Pentecostal church has a youth ministry—albeit one that seems to reach different youth than Sunrise—or because they do not have the capacity for more at this time, given their relatively small size. Faith's former pastor, James, and his wife, Carol—both of whom are Cree—serve as the camp directors.

Cree schools only have a six-week-long summer break to accommodate hunting breaks during the school year. Cree youth already experience significantly more independence than settler kids tend to, and this increases over the summer. During this stretch, it is not unusual for preteens and teens to be outside with their friends until dawn, after which they return home to sleep until early afternoon. Because Mistissini is well-off financially, youth also have access to most of the conveniences that urban settlers take for granted, including internet-connected smartphones. With this level of freedom, Cree youth face tremendous peer pressure, which makes it difficult for them to make healthy decisions. This

inevitably carries over into the school year, where youth are prone to skip classes and party on the weekends. The schools and other youth services run a number of initiatives to try to alter this. For their part, Faith sees the camp as one part of the solution, since it gives youth something positive to do when they have the most time on their hands. Many Cree parents appreciate this and are excited to send their kids when the time comes, which is why the camp tends to draw more than its capacity of attendees.

The staff at Sonrise hold five weeks of programming every summer: a day camp for five- and six-year-olds, followed by overnight camps for seven- and eight-year-olds, nine- and ten-year-olds, eleven- and twelve-year-olds, and thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds. Despite the fact that the camp was started in the 1970s, it was not until 2012, under James and Carol's leadership, that the ministry was expanded to include teenagers. As mentioned in my Leadership Narrative, James and Carol invited Paul to design the new programming, since he was already engaged in sports camps and counselling youth there. He, in turn, invited me, because he knew I could recruit and train a team of volunteer counsellors. This was important because James and Carol's experience was that Cree Christians were happy to support the camps financially, but not interested in volunteering because of their age (they tend to be older on average) and the perception that they should be paid for their work. Since that year, we have been involved with Teen Week at Sonrise every July. Our aim is to create a safe space for campers to explore God's love and build relationships with Christian leaders,

with the hope that this will improve their sense of self-worth and enable them to pursue healthier lives. The programming includes indoor and outdoor activities, worship, biblical teaching, and small group discussion and prayer, most of which is currently led by Paul, myself, or the volunteers we bring.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Problems

We seem to have accomplished our basic objective of creating a safe space for campers to experience love from God and Christian leaders. Many campers return every year and the feedback we receive is consistently positive. We always have enough registrants that we have to exceed our capacity, and campers have been increasingly willing to participate in games, worship, and discussions. In 2016, we baptized six campers, and in other years many teenagers have committed their lives to Christ, come forward to receive prayer from leaders, taken communion, and participated in voluntary workshops on how to read the Bible. Two comments from 2017's camp season reinforce my sense that we are succeeding. During *Mistissini Healing* one young woman stated that "camp is the only place I don't feel like drinking" (Vizi 2017), and another told me that one of her favourite parts of camp is that the leaders don't see themselves as better than the campers, but as their friends. These comments reflect our vision that the camp would be a safe, loving environment.

However, despite our success on this front, the limitations of camp ministry have become increasingly apparent over the past few years. Although the

campers have had positive experiences with God and Christian leaders, they seem to have experienced minimal life change. Most of them continue to struggle with addictions. A number became pregnant as teenagers and are now single mothers. Even less drastic behaviours like bullying persist, despite the positive shared experiences they have at camp. We were aware that what we are doing would not single-handedly solve these issues, but as time progresses we have begun to recognize just how limited the impact of a single week is.

There are a couple of particularly noteworthy limiting factors. The first is the cultural and geographic gap between our counsellors and campers. Most of our cabin leaders are from Ottawa and Peterborough, where Paul and I live, respectively. This means that they have difficulty relating to the issues Cree teens face. It also means that they only see the campers in-person once a year. The most natural solution would be to develop leaders locally, which we have attempted to do. Because people are hesitant to volunteer, we have applied for and received grants from the Mississini council and the federal government to hire summer interns a number of years in a row. Unfortunately, the results have been mixed. Some have successfully fulfilled their responsibilities, but more often they struggle, in part because the camp directors are not able to give them much individual attention since they are so busy overseeing the camp and church. The interns often lack confidence and commitment and have even on occasion crossed serious boundaries, such as sneaking alcohol into camp. Thus, despite our efforts we are still dependent on outside leaders and have to navigate the cultural and

geographic distance.

Alongside this, the nature of camp ministry is that it only lasts for a short time and is separate from the campers' ordinary activities. This is both a strength and weakness. On one hand, it would be hard to cultivate such a safe space in the community. Inevitably, the issues they face there would affect their level of engagement. Because they are living in close proximity to one another, outside for good portions of the day, constantly physically active, away from parties and access to addictive substances, and following a more standard sleep cycle rather than staying up and waking up late, the campers are mostly free from their usual harmful habits. This makes it easier to provide a positive experience. On the other hand, this also means that campers' learning and experiences do not easily translate into their everyday life. Even simple changes like reading the Bible every morning can be hard to maintain once a teen has gone home. In this sense there is a bubble effect to camp ministry. It becomes a world unto itself with no clear relation to the campers' regular lives.

We were not surprised by either of these limitations, since Paul and I both had prior camp experience. However as the ministry has stabilized, the limitations have become more pressing. We have become increasingly convinced that we need to figure out how to accompany the camps with some other form of ministry that won't be constrained by the same barriers. My research project is a good opportunity to begin addressing this need.

Potential Projects

There are a handful of issues we could seek to address to alleviate the effects of the camp bubble. The first is the limited contact we have with the campers. The second is the lack of local young leaders who can positively influence their peers. The third is the lack of positive role models in many campers' lives. Addressing any of these issues could increase the amount of overlap that exists between the teens' experience at camp and throughout the school year.

The first and most obvious shortcoming with our ministry is the fact that we only see the campers for a single week in the year. We may tell campers that they are valuable to God and us, but for the other fifty-one weeks of the year competing claims are more prominent in their lives. Similarly, our volunteers may be effective at building relationships with their cabin members throughout the week, but the depth of these relationships is inhibited by the fact that they only see each other once a year. We have sought to address this limitation by utilizing social media, since most of the campers have their own cell phones and are active on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, among others. Cabin leaders are encouraged to befriend and keep in touch with campers online. There have been times when teens have reached out because they were hurting or at risk, but these occasions have been few and far between. The primary result is that the counselors see the campers' intoxicated, emotional, and conflict-ridden posts, which facilitates a deeper level of understanding on their part but does not really

enhance their relationships. We have also attempted to leverage Facebook groups that contain photos, stories, and biblical teaching, but engagement with these groups has been too low to maintain. These attempts at follow-up have revealed that expanding the impact of the leaders we bring with us requires more in-person meetings throughout the year.

As good as it would be to increase the frequency of personal contact with the campers, there will always be a limit to how much this can take place, since we live over a thousand kilometres apart. The teens themselves, on the other hand, can see one another as often as they like. This is problematic insofar as the campers encourage one another to perpetuate harmful thinking and actions, but if a handful of youth were to emerge as healthy leaders they would have ample opportunity to influence their peers. Unfortunately, there are not many youth or young adults who have managed to achieve this to date. A more comprehensive leadership development program at the camps could improve this. If we could identify upper-year and graduated campers who have leadership potential and provide them with training and opportunities to serve at the camp, over the course of a few years they may be able to stand out from their peers and contribute positively to their lives. However, as we have seen with the summer internships, any such program would need to be quite hands-on, because they often lack confidence and capacity.

Peers are one thing; adults are another. One of the biggest challenges faced by Mississauga teens is that their peers are a greater influence in their lives than

adults. As described above, because of intergenerational trauma, Cree adults are often unsure of how to engage in relationships with youth, even if the adults themselves have managed to heal from their wounds and build healthy lives. Involving local adults in the camp and encouraging campers to connect with them throughout the school year could provide teens with role models and consistent emotional and spiritual support. It is unlikely that Cree adults would be willing to serve as cabin leaders and spend the night at camp, so rather than focusing on integrating them into the camp ministry directly, it would likely be more effective to focus on mentorship.

Although the term is European, the concept of mentorship is ancient (Carr 1999, 6) and part of traditional Cree culture. Historically, Cree youth were expected to seek out their elders to learn from them while living off the land, and many traditional skills such as hunting and navigation are accompanied by teachings about spiritual beliefs and values. This transmission of skills and values was disrupted by lifestyle changes and intergenerational trauma. Cree elders often lament the fact that older people are no longer involved in the lives of young people. Adults who are old enough to remember a time before Residential Schools talk about how older people were active in passing on their wisdom and skills, and there are still certain community celebrations that seek to recapture this experience. Because of the familiarity adults have with this concept, inviting them to serve in such a capacity would likely be received positively. We could then recruit and train people to mentor the youth throughout the year and use the

camps as a means for connecting campers with mentors. To do this would require recruiting a handful of adults, training them, introducing them to campers during the following Teen Week, and following up with the mentors and campers to ensure that mentoring is taking place and working well for the involved parties. This kind of formal mentoring could be an excellent complement to the camp ministry.

Evaluating Options

James, Carol, Paul, and I have been aware of all three of the aforementioned needs for some time now, and we have discussed possible options for addressing them, although further evaluation is necessary to determine which could be addressed through my research project.

Arranging additional in-person meetings throughout the school year would be fairly simple because we have a close relationship with Faith Bible Chapel and we have already helped them host retreats. To do youth-specific programming throughout the year, we would have to finance the trips, but this too should be relatively easy to manage since Paul and I both have solid financial support for our ministries and the Cree would likely cover a good portion of our costs. The greater challenge may be the time commitment for our volunteer leaders, since most of our camp counselors are in high school or university and would need to take time off. We would need to provide notice well in advance and be prepared for some of the leaders to back out if their responsibilities prove more difficult to escape than expected.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of this option is that it would not require a significant change on the part of campers or adults in the community, unlike the other options. On the other hand, there may be an inverse relationship between the ease with which we can launch a project and the impact it will have long-term. There are already many white people running programming for the youth and, like the camps themselves, additional events would be somewhat separate from their normal lives. Although the relational and spiritual content of such retreats would be different from programming they are getting elsewhere, the impact may still be similar to our camps, resulting in something the youth look forward to but not much life change beyond that.

The leadership development option may be the least feasible of the three because of the challenges we have already faced with internships. The camp receives funding from the local church and government which means that finding interns is not difficult, but developing them is another story. Many of the youth are not accustomed to leadership responsibilities and require a great deal of direct support as they go about their tasks. Thus far, the camp directors have not been able to provide this. As a result, Paul or I are generally responsible for leadership development, which involves the same geographic and cultural limitations that the camps themselves face. Even if we could successfully implement a training program and provide the support needed for the interns to fulfill their duties at camp, it is uncertain if they would be able to provide the same kind of leadership within their communities; like the campers, leaders' experiences at camp may be

difficult to translate into real-life change and it is likely that the interns would simply return to their unhealthy lifestyles once back in the community. However, such a program could have a great impact if it were successful. If youth or young adults could become camp leaders and demonstrate changed lives year-round, it would give other campers an example to follow and introduce positive change to their primary circle of influence. As such, a program like this is worth pursuing, but may be best alongside or after another option.

The third option of training Cree adult mentors and connecting them to campers may be the best balance of feasibility and potential impact. It would be relatively simple to recruit adults from within Faith Bible Chapel and their network of contacts. This would also make it easy to screen people and ensure that they were positive role models before assigning them mentees, since the church leaders would be careful about vouching for someone. Connecting campers to mentors should also be fairly straightforward. Ensuring that the mentoring conversations actually take place would likely be the most difficult part. It is possible that prospective mentors would happily go through training and affirm the need for mentoring, but then fail to follow through. It is equally possible that mentees would agree to participate at camp, when it is easy to do so, but then avoid meeting with their mentor because of the peer pressure or shame brought about by their usual lifestyle. As such, the program would need to be developed carefully with clear markers of success and participants would need to be aware of and committed to the whole process ahead of time. We would also

need to check in with them to ensure follow through.

In developing the training component of the program we would want to ensure that it was culturally appropriate and addressed the particular needs of Cree adults, but we could also learn from the experiences of others who have designed mentoring programs. The travel costs and human resources required to train mentors and follow up with them would likely be smaller than the first option, since it would rely less on students and more on church and business leaders. Still, we would still have to account for money and time. If this option could be successfully implemented the impact would be substantial. If we could train ten leaders, each of whom committed to mentoring two or three young people, most of the teens who attend camp the following summer could begin learning from an older person within their community that school year. This could partly bridge the generational divide that exists in the community and provide teens with an example to aspire to as they navigate their own life decisions. Although they have generally been conducted off-reserve, studies have shown that mentoring programs can have an impact on the wellbeing of First Nations youth elsewhere, which suggests that it could be effective in our context as well (Crooks et al. 2017; Kinley 2015; Eskicioglu et al. 2013).

Unfortunately, this kind of program would take longer than three to six months, which is the timeframe for my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) research. With this in mind, I could break the program up into three stages: recruiting and training mentors, connecting campers to mentors, and the mentoring process

itself. The first of these would be the focus of my project.

The most urgent issue we face is the need for some sort of follow-up to the camps, since each year that goes by with no plan is another year that some campers will graduate with nothing but their week of memories to lean on. Additional programming and facilitating mentoring could both provide this relatively quickly; developing young leaders is a longer-term objective. Additional programming is easier to implement, but would likely have a more limited long-term upside. Facilitating mentoring, on the other hand, has the potential to ameliorate the longstanding generation gap within the community alongside addressing the immediate need for follow-through. Given the fact that Cree adults regularly note their concern about this generation gap, even making small inroads could be valuable to the community.

All three of these options would ideally be undertaken in partnership with Faith Bible Chapel's leaders, with them taking primary ownership of the project and Paul and me supporting them. This year, that may be more feasible than ever because Carol recently retired from her translation job and has indicated that she would be willing to coordinate a program. This also increases the urgency of doing something this year because Carol will likely be asked to fill other leadership roles in the community and her capacity will decrease. It is also worth noting that we have approached the Cree Justice Department and a private network of Christian business leaders to see if we can secure some funding for one or multiple of these follow-through options, which would make the task more

feasible. No funding has yet been secured.

With all of these factors in mind, I believe that if we were to pick one of these options to pursue, the best would be to facilitate mentoring. The other options may be worth pursuing alongside or after it, but it is feasible, addresses our immediate needs, and has the potential for significant long-term impact, which makes it the best priority at present.

Force-Field Analysis

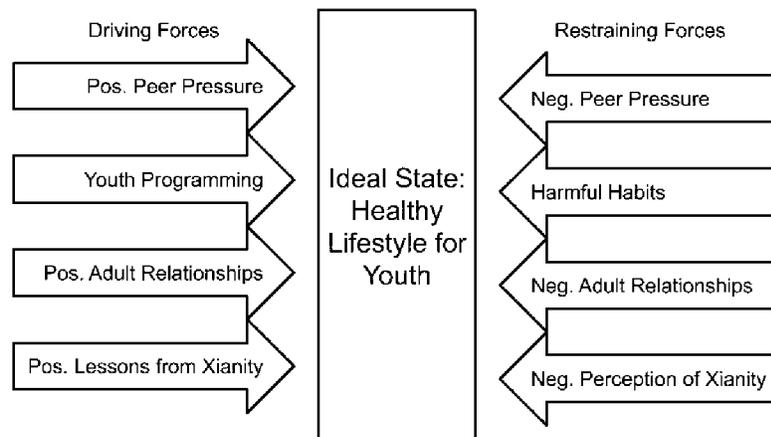


Figure 2: Ministry Force Field Analysis

A Force-Field Analysis is a helpful tool for evaluating what is required to generate positive change in a given situation (Connelly 2020). It considers what elements of the situation serve to promote positive change (driving forces) and what elements discourage change (restraining forces). Figure 2 conveys what I believe to be the primary forces at work in the lives of Cree youth as we seek to

encourage them to live healthy lives. As described in the following analysis, the effect of facilitating mentoring through the camps would be to enhance the strength of the bottom two driving forces, those being positive adult relationships and positive lessons from Christianity.

From the outset, our hope for the teen program at Sonrise was that youth would come away with a deeper sense of their worth and be more capable of living healthy lives. We are not the only people pursuing this objective in Mistissini. There are a number of workers and programs that are seeking to encourage healthy choices among the Cree youth, each of which constitutes a driving factor towards that same ideal state. Some of these are run by the school and government, while others, like the Pentecostal youth group, are put on by churches.

We hoped that our ministry could complement other programs by facilitating loving relationships with God and Christian leaders. This would contribute to the campers' health and move the status quo towards the ideal state. Our success has been limited. The campers feel valued and capable of resisting destructive behaviours at camp, but this has little impact on their self-image and behaviour back in the community. The driving forces that we have introduced—the relationships between campers and counselors, the teaching during chapel times, and the healthier rhythms and activities of camp life—are insufficient to overcome the many factors that keep campers from experiencing similar things back home.

The most prominent restraining force is the tremendous peer pressure teens face. To care for oneself enough to avoid parties, choose romantic partners carefully, apply oneself academically, and other such healthy decisions almost requires exiting the adolescent social scene in Mississauga entirely. There are some teenagers who have the support and wherewithal to do this but they are few and far between. Alongside this, the harm that has been done to many teens through abusive or dysfunctional relationships and the tragedies they have been exposed to growing up have left them with unresolved hurt and the desire to escape through pleasure-seeking even if it is destructive long-term. Many youth also have chemical and/or psychological addictions to alcohol, marijuana, and other less-common substances.

Another restraining force is the image that most of the youth in Mississauga have of Christianity. Local churches are perceived by youth as being legalistic and judgmental, which discourages their participation in Christian community. Christian leaders sometimes reinforce this impression by insisting that God is angry with those who engage in destructive behaviours in an attempt to motivate life change. Thus, Cree youth tend to think that God condemns them, which reinforces problematic habits by leading them to believe that they are a lost cause, rather than declaring with David that “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14) and seeking to live a life that reflects that. All of these factors serve to perpetuate the harmful status quo, and the driving forces that have been introduced through our teen program have been insufficient to overcome these

restraining forces.

Complementing the camp ministry with a year-round mentoring program could have a larger effect on the status quo. It would introduce a number of new driving forces. The first would be an extension of the lessons the teens learn at camp. Mentors could continue to tell youth that they are loved by God and worth taking care of, which would hopefully bridge the gap between what campers hear at camp and what they hear in the community. This could have the added benefit of changing teens' understanding of Christianity and God, thus reducing or eliminating one of the restraining forces. If they receive grace from Christian adults, they might begin to accept that God, too, is gracious, not condemning.

Another driving force would be the example set by the mentors. Because most of them have had to overcome similar challenges to the teens, their stories and lifestyle choices provide a portrait of what the teens can aspire to. Alongside this, if mentors are informed of the various resources that are available for youth in Mississauga, they may be able to influence teens to access these resources, which would make existing driving forces more effective.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe that the most effective way to enhance our ministry at Sunrise would be to introduce a year-round mentoring program that could build on the things that youth hear and experience during Teen Week. We have successfully created a safe space for campers to experience the love of God and Christian leaders. Their sense of self-worth is higher at camp and they do not

engage in as many destructive behaviours.

However, the camps are limited in their impact because they are confined to a single week of the year in an unfamiliar environment. Mentors could provide continuity and model a different kind of life than campers are used to. Mentors could also connect teens to other supports that exist within the community, thus increasing the effectiveness of these programs. Although there are many factors that sustain the status quo, and any solution to the intergenerational trauma that indigenous people have suffered will need to be long-term and multifaceted, I think our campers would benefit from such a program. And, if we were to combine it with additional programming and/or a thorough leadership development process, the effect on the lives of those involved could be even greater.

CHAPTER 4:

PROJECT REPORT

The following is a description of my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) research project. It was written in May 2020 and, as such, is the most recent of the four documents in this portfolio, however because my Philosophy of Leadership was written following the project itself, the thinking contained within it reflects what I learned through the experience. Thus, it seemed fitting to include this report first. It details some initial resources that motivated and shaped the project, the methods that I used to conduct it, an overview of the data I collected, and my thoughts on what the data reveals about the impact of the project.

Introduction

In this project, I had the opportunity to design a contextually-suitable mentoring workshop for Cree adults in Mistissini, Quebec. This workshop was intended to be the first step in developing a mentoring program for youth who attend Teen Week at Sunrise Camp. The need for this program arose when I and the other camp leaders recognized that the volunteers, who were largely settlers from southern Ontario, were unable to provide the consistent follow-up needed to help campers integrate their learning and experiences into everyday life. It was determined that recruiting and training Cree mentors to meet with youth

throughout the year was the best option for meeting that need, and that it could also play a role in overcoming an entrenched generation gap in the community. The reasoning behind this is provided in more detail in my Ministry Context Analysis.

One of my priorities in designing the workshop was to take into account the distinct culture, geography, and history of the James Bay Cree. My hope was that by taking these distinctives into account, the workshop could equip Cree mentors to build relationships with and respond to the needs of their youth. It could then be repeated and refined, to train new mentors as needed.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods were used to design the workshop. Five to ten adult Cree participants were recruited and asked to contribute to the planning and evaluation of the workshop, in order to take their unique culture, history, and geography into account. To evaluate the workshop's effectiveness, data from interviews, focus groups, activity logs, and a questionnaire were collected and analyzed. The PAR process led me to revisit my assumptions and change how I designed and ran the workshop, which in turn increased participants' confidence in ways I did not expect. It also deepened my ministry relationship with the participants, even though I was careful to delineate between my pastoral and researcher functions.

In order to ensure that this research took place in an ethical and effective manner, I was accountable to Tyndale's Research Ethics Board (REB), Mistissini's chief and council, and the leaders of Faith Bible Chapel (Faith), the

Baptist church in Mistissini that owns Sonrise Camp. The chief and council and church leaders are all Cree. Prior to commencing research, I submitted an Ethics Review Application to the REB, which was approved on March 8th, 2018. I then sought permission from Mistissini's chief and he granted it on October 3rd, 2018, as well as assigning us a representative to report to as the research progressed. I led the project alongside my mentor Paul and a Cree couple named James and Carol. James retired from pastoring Faith shortly before the project began, and Carol joined the Mistissini council around the same time. Both of them were also participants in the research project. Because of my longstanding ministry relationship with Faith, I knew many of the individuals who were invited to participate in the study, although a few were recommended by other participants.

To reduce risk, I included James and Carol in major decisions and sought feedback from them and the other participants regularly throughout the process. I also limited the study to adults, provided clear and comprehensive information to participants, sought verbal and written consent before collecting data, stored data securely with plans for its ultimate destruction, and took measures to protect participants' privacy when sharing information about the project, including in this report. I used sharing circles to conduct meetings, which ensured that participants were given ample opportunity to express their opinions, and James and Carol also offered to provide extra pastoral care for participants if needed, since the conversations sometimes touched on painful past experiences. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time, without reprisal. I hoped that these

measures would minimize the effect of my personal biases and ensure participants' wellbeing.

Context

As described in my Leadership Narrative, I am a white pastor, husband, and father who lives in Peterborough, Ontario. I earned a Bachelor in Politics from Trent University (Trent) in 2010. Having learned about indigenous issues and discerned a call to ministry during our studies there, my wife and I accepted when Paul invited us to help with summer camps for Cree youth in northern Quebec. We have continued to be involved in the camps since then, and I have come to recognize that I am called to lead intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation, which I describe more fully in my Philosophy of Leadership. Currently, I do this by leading a campus ministry at Trent, pastoring a church at Curve Lake First Nation, and working with the Cree.

As described in the Ministry Context Analysis, Mistissini is a Cree community of approximately 3500 people, with youth composing a sizeable portion of this number ("Mistissini, Terres Réservées" 2017). It is relatively homogenous culturally, with most of the permanent population being Cree and most of the white population being made up of transitory government and natural resource workers. Like most First Nations communities, Mistissini was affected by what the government of Canada refers to as the "cultural genocide" committed against indigenous people by white Canadians (Sinclair et al. 2015 , 4). Intergenerational trauma and its effects, such as addiction and mental health

issues, are more prominent in Mistissini than most white towns. Despite this, they have been a model of development among First Nations thanks to the first modern self-governance agreement (Gee-Silverman 2005). The James Bay Cree have sought to use their ensuing economic success to overcome the challenges of the harm that was done to their culture.

Sonrise Camp was established in the 1970s by the Christian community that would eventually become Faith Bible Chapel, which at the time was pastored by a white missionary but has more recently been led by Cree pastors and elders. James was pastoring the church in 2012. At the time, his perception was that the community was doing a good job of caring for children and adults, but struggling with teenagers. He hoped that a camp week for teenagers would meet that need. Paul and I worked with James and Carol to launch the teen programming that year and today it draws forty to fifty campers each summer.

Every year campers seem to have meaningful emotional and spiritual experiences during the week, however a single week of ministry produces limited long-term life change. Recognizing this, we began to explore opportunities to follow up with campers throughout the year. We ultimately concluded that a mentoring program within the community was the best option for doing so, for reasons detailed in the Ministry Context Analysis. Our long-term objective was to train a number of Cree mentors, who could then assist the settler counsellors and develop deep relationships with the youth that could carry on year-round. The first step in meeting this objective was to train mentors, in a manner that reflected

the distinctives of Mistissini and the Cree culture.

As previously stated, Paul, James, Carol, and I worked together to lead the project. James and Carol were also participants in the study, alongside twelve other Christian Cree adults, most of whom were members of Faith Bible Chapel. These participants varied in terms of age, gender, and education.

Models and Other Resources

As mentioned, intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation is a core part of my mandate as a Christian leader. This project helped me recognize the integral role that communal discernment processes play in carrying out that calling, a topic I deal with in more detail in my *Philosophy of Leadership*. My desire to pursue intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation stems from my conviction that Christians are called to participate in God's mission to restore the world to its original goodness (Wright 2006, 22). Christian leaders play a particular role in this mission, using their various God-given gifts to equip the church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16). In this sense, ministry is not the exclusive property of Christian leaders, but something that all Christians participate in as part of the body of Christ, which enables the church to be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's kingdom within the world (Newbigin 1989, 232). One of the essential aspects of this ministry is modelling and calling people to reconcile with God, each other, and the cosmos (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

In twenty-first century Canada, this "ministry of reconciliation" must include bridging the gap between generations and cultures. The gap between

generations exists because of rapid changes that have taken place within our society, which is felt within the church as much as anywhere (Penner et al 2011, 11-19). Of course, cultural shifts have always taken place across generations, and younger ones certainly have their differences (White 2017, 35-52), but the two most recent generations seem to have more in common with one another than they do with previous generations in regards to their lifestyle and values (Parker et al 2019, 2). This contributes to a sense of alienation between older and younger Canadians. This gap is even more obvious in Cree communities, where technological and social change has taken place more quickly than in most white communities.

The gap between the many cultures in Canada is a more complicated phenomenon, but to some degree it stems from colonialism (King 2012, loc 896) and has been exacerbated by the global diaspora, which brought white Canadians face-to-face with people from all over the world and ushered in many other changes with it (Krause et al 2018, loc 171). Again, gaps between cultures have always existed, but these factors made intercultural interactions more common. Drawing on terms found in the Intercultural Development Index (“IDI General Information” 2020), this increase in interactions has arguably resulted in cultural polarization (thinking that cultures are either all good or all bad) or minimization (thinking that cultures are all basically the same beyond surface differences) more often than true acceptance and adaptation on the part of white Canadians (Cousins 2019).

Fortunately, scripture speaks to the relationship between these people groups. The Bible encourages older people to pursue younger people so they can model and teach them to live godly lives (Titus 2:2-6). Younger people, meanwhile, are called to honour the older people God has put in their lives and to learn from them (Leviticus 19:32), while still exercising their leadership gifts in an appropriate way (1 Timothy 4:12). The process being described here is what I call mentoring. Intergenerational reconciliation involves recovering this practice. When it comes to intercultural relationships, the Bible implies that diversity is part of God's original intention for humanity (Wright 2006, 197), and that people from different cultures are able to receive God's grace while practicing their faith in a way that reflects their distinctions (Acts 15:19-21).

Particularly moving to me is the scene in Revelation where it describes people of "every nation, tribe, people and language" worshiping around God's throne (Revelation 7:9), which suggests that even in the new Earth, cultural diversity will exist. In light of this vision, it seems to me that the church's task is not to reject, replace, or respect culture as supreme, but rather to redeem culture by empowering people to identify and reject that which is evil in their culture and honour Christ through that which is good. Intercultural reconciliation occurs when Christians from different cultures support one another in that task, rather than wielding power over one another. As a white Christian leading a group of Cree Christians, pursuing intercultural reconciliation required ensuring that my views were not taken as overruling theirs by default.

In light of these objectives, I wanted to avoid perpetuating the power imbalance that has historically existed between white Canadians and First Nations people. Recognizing that white Christians have often wrongly identified their culture with true Christianity and imposed their theology and practices on others (Jacobs et al 2008, 29), I wanted to ensure that we trained mentors in a way that validated and built on Cree culture. The Principles of Reconciliation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission provided a general framework for doing this (Sinclair et al 2015, 2-4).

The DMin program introduced me to communal discernment processes like Appreciative Inquiry and Participatory Action Research, which I will describe in more detail in my Philosophy of Leadership and Project Report, respectively. These processes are reputed to reduce the power imbalance between researchers and participants (Harder 2013, 87 & 127). Early in the DMin program I was introduced to a past Tyndale project that seemed to confirm this (Rempel 2014, 93). I also sought to understand the Cree culture more deeply, so I read books on the history of Settler-Indigenous relations such as *The Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens* (Miller 2000), as well as looking up articles on the James Bay Cree (Gee-Silverman 2005; Hamilton 2016). These built on the knowledge I had through my studies at Trent University and my first-hand ministry observations. These resources reinforced my sense that I needed to lead the project in a way that encouraged participants to share and reflect on their experiences and to contribute to decision-making. I hoped that by doing so, participants would feel affirmed in

their values and practices and, through the training, be equipped to build relationships and respond to the particular needs of their youth.

Project, Methodology, and Methods

The project took place in Mistissini, Quebec between November 26th, 2018 and February 5th, 2020. I led the project alongside three other people: James, Carol, and Paul. James is a Cree retired pastor. Carol is his Cree wife and a member of the Mistissini council. Paul is a white pastor from Ottawa with adult children. I am a white pastor from Peterborough in my early thirties. I was the primary researcher and led the interviews, focus group discussions, and planning meetings. I also collected activity logs from participants. James and Carol contributed to decisions concerning research processes, and were also participants in the study, meaning they shared their thoughts during interviews, logs, and group discussions. I consulted with Paul about the project as necessary, and he also recruited participants alongside James and Carol.

Paul, James, and Carol sought five to ten Cree adult participants by word of mouth. All of the people invited were either members of Faith Bible Chapel or worked with youth in some capacity. All of them were also Christians, although this was not a formal requirement. Because of the tight-knit nature of Mistissini, all of them knew James and Carol personally, and Paul and I knew them from past ministry endeavours, although some only by face and name. See Appendix A for a full list of participants and what project elements they participated in.

My primary objective in designing the workshop was to equip participants

to build relationships with and respond to the needs of Cree youth. Recognizing that the kind of training required to do so might be different with Cree mentors in Mistissini than it would be with white mentors in southern Ontario, I used the research process to determine what needs were present in the community that could be addressed in the workshop. With this in mind, the project was limited to Cree participants from Mistissini. Although this approach may work well in other contexts, there is no way to know until the attempt has been made, and the findings should be interpreted as limited in this way.

Recruiting people via word of mouth also affected the project's scope, because all of the participants ended up being Christians. It is hard to know if the chosen methods would have worked with a more religiously diverse group. Word-of-mouth recruiting also meant that people who were interested in the topic were more likely to get involved. As it turned out, all of the participants were already mentoring youth. The process may not have had the same effects on someone who was unaware of or disinterested in mentoring. Because this was a short-term study and the workshop could only be conducted once, I was not able to determine its effectiveness over a long period of time. Finally, the study was limited to adults for ethical and logistical reasons, which means that a different approach may be needed for a project involving youth.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was used to design the mentoring workshop because it lined up with the project objectives with respect to its iterative approach and focus on empowering participants to make decisions and

enact positive changes within their community (Stringer 2014, 14). PAR is an iterative process involving four stages: Observation, Planning, Action, and Reflection (Bramer 2017, 30). During the Observation Stage, the researcher and participants work to identify what is currently taking place in the community to identify possible opportunities. During the Planning Stage, an opportunity is developed into a plan for some sort of project. During the Action Stage, that plan is put into effect. During the Reflection Stage, the researcher and participants evaluate the effects of the project together. In a longer-term project, this cycle is then repeated multiple times to build on the initial project and adjust as necessary to ensure the best possible outcomes. In this study, there was only time to conduct one cycle, but the iterative nature of PAR was still valuable because it provided a model for planning and evaluating future endeavours based on the project.

Because PAR is intended to take participants' experiences into account, I collected data that described these experiences in each stage of the process. During the Observation Stage, which involved sixteen participants, I attempted to understand what was already taking place in Mistissini in regards to mentoring. During the Planning Stage, which involved twelve participants, I worked with participants to design the workshop in a manner that could address the opportunities and needs that were identified in the Observation Stage. During the Action Stage, seven participants took part in the workshop. And finally, during the Reflection Stage, which involved six participants, I sought to understand the effects of the workshop and research process on participants. Afterwards, I

analyzed the collected data from across the stages to determine what their emotional experiences were, whether they felt positively or negatively about the workshop and research process, and how often they reported good or bad interactions with youth.

Since this was an illustrative, non-experimental, applied research project with a focus on understanding our participants' experience, I selected a variety of appropriate Case Study methods to use throughout the PAR cycle (Hancock and Algozzine 2017, 16-17).

During the Observation Stage participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to gauge their confidence concerning different aspects of mentoring youth, which can be found in Appendix B. Carol, James, Paul, and I designed this questionnaire based on the most common issues we had encountered while working with youth in Mistissini. I later conducted a simple quantitative analysis of the responses, determining the average and median score for each question to see how confident participants felt about navigating those issues. Participants were then interviewed concerning their experiences of mentoring and being mentored by others. The questions participants were asked during these interviews are found in Appendix C. Participants who held a leadership role within the community were also asked a second set of questions, also found in Appendix C, which invited their thoughts on intergenerational relationships within the community at large. For privacy reasons I chose not to record the interviews but, with consent, took detailed notes and later analyzed these notes

using Emotion Coding (Saldana 2013, 170-179) and Evaluative Coding (Saldana 2013, 192-199). I also invited participants to log their interactions with youth on a daily basis. Originally I suggested hand-written logs but Carol suggested that it would be better for me to text participants, because Cree people do not generally practice journaling and it would require a lot of initiative from the participants. The message I texted them was, “Good evening, time for our check-in! Have you had any memorable interactions with youth today? If you have, please share what took place in a sentence or two!” I later analyzed their responses using Descriptive Coding (Saldana 2013, 137-142), Emotion Coding, and Evaluative Coding. Because this kind of process was a new experience for the leadership team, I also took detailed notes during our team meetings and later analyzed these notes using Emotion Coding and Evaluative Coding.

My hope was that by taking this multifaceted approach, I would be able to develop an understanding of the participants’ perspective on mentoring. The questionnaire would provide a baseline sense of how participants felt about mentoring youth. The interviews would allow me to understand their subjective experiences in regards to mentoring, as well as leaders’ perception of intergenerational relationships within the broader community. The logs would provide concrete data to determine how often participants were actually engaging with youth and what kinds of experiences they perceived as positive or negative. I anticipated that these various sources and kinds of data would allow me to identify specific needs that could be addressed during the workshop, and then I

could evaluate what had changed as a result of the workshop in the Reflection Stage.

During the Planning Stage I facilitated a focus group, in which I presented an overview of what was shared during the Observation Stage and invited participants to share their thoughts using the questions found in Appendix D. As I will describe in more detail in Findings, Interpretations, and Outcomes, one of the conclusions reached during this focus group was that the participants would teach one another during the workshop, rather than inviting teachers from outside the community. In order to facilitate this, I coached participants through the process of creating lessons. After considering a few other options, I decided to design a lesson planning tool of my own because I felt that existing tools were too complex for the participants, most of whom had little or no teaching experience. Carol and Paul both expressed appreciation for it when I showed them a draft version. I have included this tool in Appendix E. I did not include the individual lesson plans or analyze them as an independent source of data but I will detail the lessons in Findings, Interpretations, and Outcomes.

During the Action Stage, I facilitated the workshop. Five participants taught in it, one participated in the whole thing, and one arrived midway through. After the workshop was over, I led a brief discussion using the questions in Appendix G to hear how participants felt it went. I took detailed notes about the workshop and discussion immediately after it was finished and later analyzed these notes using Emotion Coding and Evaluative Coding. Other than asking

whether participants thought the workshop was worth repeating in the future, I intentionally did not try to draw conclusions about its success or failure or identify potential changes because I first wanted to see how it shaped participants' experiences over the next couple of months.

During the Reflection Stage following the workshop, I messaged the participants who were involved in the workshop daily with the question "Good evening! Did you have any meaningful interactions with youth today?" I later analyzed their responses using Descriptive Coding and Emotion Coding. In February, I returned to Mistissini and led a final focus group to seek feedback on how participants felt the workshop had gone and what our next steps should be. The questions for this can be found in Appendix G. I took detailed notes during this focus group and later analyzed them using Emotion Coding and Evaluation Coding. Finally, I conducted interviews with all of the participants who participated in the full workshop using the questions in Appendix H. I took detailed notes during the interviews and later analyzed them using Emotion Coding and Evaluation Coding. I originally intended to repeat the questionnaire from the Observation Stage during the Reflection Stage but chose not to do so because the workshop did not address most of the topics covered in the questionnaire and any change in participants' confidence would likely have been incidental rather than brought about by the workshop.

During data analysis, Emotion Codes were arrived at deductively to track emotions expressed by participants throughout the interviews, daily logs, focus

groups, and workshop. Evaluation Codes were used inductively to track instances where participants made comments that affirmed or critiqued the project.

Descriptive Codes were used inductively to analyze the activity logs and track instances where participants reported positive or negative experiences with youth, as well as instances where participants reported not having interacted with youth and the general reason given (if any). If participants did not respond to my message during daily logging, it was not coded or counted. I also used coding to analyze my own experiences based on the interactions and reflective notes I recorded. I took the same approach to Emotion and Evaluation Coding as I did for participants. I used Descriptive Coding inductively to track instances that seemed like important relational investments, as well as comments that suggested that participants appreciated their relationship with me. For a more detailed breakdown of the codes I used during analysis and how they were defined and grouped, see Appendix I.

I think that these methods were appropriate for the context and ministry primarily because I was told by the Cree leaders and participants that they were. I was assured at the beginning and repeatedly throughout the study that the plan was good and the outcomes seem to bear this out. This validated my hope that PAR and its accompanying methods were appropriate for Mistissini. The fact that all of the methods were highly personal and centred on participants' experience also lines up with the fact that mentoring is a highly relational process and depends on positive experiences to succeed. I would change the way that I

collected certain forms of data, and will discuss this further in Findings, Interpretations, and Outcomes, but the methods themselves were suitable. For a full timeline of the project, see Appendix J.

To ensure that this project was conducted ethically, I adhered to requirements from the Tyndale Research Ethics Board and sought to follow the principles in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Sinclair et al. 2015, 3) and the guidelines for research involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada found in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement 2* (2014).

In order to reduce the power imbalance between myself and the participants, I provided participants with detailed information about the research and sought written consent at the beginning of the project and ongoing written or verbal consent whenever data was collected. Participants were able to withdraw from the project for any reason at any time, without reprisal. Sharing circles were used to lead group discussions to ensure that everyone was given equal opportunity to contribute. I also asked two Cree people—Carol and James—to be part of the leadership team and consulted them concerning major decisions, as well as regularly seeking feedback from them as leaders and project participants. Group decisions were made by consensus. When I met with participants one-on-one, I allowed them to choose the location and ensured that it was a shared living space or public location. Group meetings were held in locations that the participants were familiar with, and often included free food and beverages to encourage a friendly atmosphere. I believe it was also advantageous that I was

younger than most of the participants, which means that I did not command as much natural respect as an older person would have due to the Cree deference towards elders. Participants were made aware that if they had any concerns about the project, they could speak with James and Carol, who had a preexisting trust relationship with the participants.

Because I am relatively young and do not live in Mistissini, most of the participants do not regard me as their leader or pastor the way that they do with James, Carol, and Paul. That being said, I believe my camp leadership and relationship with Paul have garnered me some respect, so I wanted to be careful about potential dual roles. At the beginning of the project, I laid out the roles that each of our leaders were going to play, and specified that my role was the researcher and encouraged participants to speak with James or Carol if they needed pastoral care. Whenever participants did seek pastoral care from me—which happened more frequently as the project progressed—I tried to distinguish clearly between discussions that were related to the project and more personal discussions. This was facilitated by the fact that during research discussions, I took notes on my laptop and asked predetermined questions, which made it clear that it was a formal discussion. I kept the other members of the leadership team informed when I did have intimate personal conversations with people and, when necessary, asked them to follow up with the individual to ensure that they had the best possible care. I had no formal authority over any of the participants beyond my role as a researcher so that was not an issue.

Although I have become quite familiar with Cree culture through ten years of ministry and my formal studies, I recognized that my different culture brought with it the possibility of unconscious bias towards participants. I sought to reduce the potential effects of this by consulting with James and Carol regularly and paying close attention to my emotional responses when interacting with participants. When I had an unusually strong emotional reaction, I tried to record it in my notes, and later spoke with James, Carol, and Paul about it. At the end of the project I also analyzed my recorded responses to understand how the project affected me personally.

Because my work in the Cree communities was started independently and supported by free will donations, I did not require special permission from my employer to conduct this research. However, I did need approval from Tyndale's Research Ethics Board, and received it on March 8th, 2018. I also needed approval from Mistissini's chief and council, and received it via email on October 3rd, 2018. The latter came with the requirement that I report periodically to a representative chosen by Chief Neeposh, which I have done.

Findings, Interpretations, and Outcomes

The following section contains the results of my data analysis, beginning with the data itself then proceeding to my interpretation of the data and what I think the outcomes of the project are, based on those interpretations. See Appendix K for a detailed breakdown of the various types of data that I collected, how they were collected, when they were collected, who they were collected

from, and how they were analyzed. For a more detailed breakdown of the codes I used during analysis and how they were defined and grouped, see Appendix I.

Findings

Table 1 shows the responses participants gave on the questionnaire from Stage One of the project. Fourteen participants completed the questionnaire. The first few questions were used to identify participants and have not been reported for privacy’s sake. Question six was “How important do you think mentoring is?” Question seven was “How well do you think you understand the topic of mentoring?” Questions eight through twenty-five all began with “How confident do you feel” and then asked about a specific aspect of mentoring youth based on the most common issues the leadership team had faced while working with youth in Mississauga. In each case, a response of one indicated very low interest/confidence, while a score of five indicated very high interest/confidence. All averages are rounded to the first decimal point. For the full questionnaire, see Appendix B. Organizing the data this way is helpful for gaining a sense of how participants felt about various aspects of mentoring at the start of the project.

Table 1: Questionnaire Responses

Question	1s	2s	3s	4s	5s	Avg Score	Med Score
6				1	13	4.6	5
7			2	5	6	3.7	4.5
8				3	11	4.5	5
9			1	3	10	4.3	5

Questi- on	1s	2s	3s	4s	5s	Avg Score	Med Score
10			1	4	9	4.3	5
11		1	2	1	10	4.1	5
12			1	5	8	4.2	5
13			1	1	12	4.5	5
14				1	13	4.6	5
15			2	3	9	4.2	5
16		1	1	4	8	4.1	5
17			2	5	7	4.1	4.5
18		1		7	6	4	4
19		1	1	4	8	4.1	5
20	1	1	2	2	8	3.8	5
21		4	2	1	7	3.5	4.5
22		1		3	10	4.3	5
23			3	2	9	4.1	5
24		1	2	4	7	3.9	4.5
25				6	8	4.3	5

Figures 3-12 show how often codes appeared in different data sets. The “items” along the horizontal axis are the codes I used. The numbers along the vertical axis labelled “frequency” show how often each of these codes appeared. I chose to list every code from the relevant coding method (eg. Emotion Coding), even if some of the codes occurred zero times during that stage. This was done

because at times, the lack of an emotion occurring contributed to my interpretations, and it also made comparing the graphs easier. I chose these particular graphs because of the role they play in my interpretations and suggested outcomes. For more information on when each data set was collected and who it included, see Appendix K. For a description of how I developed these codes, see the Project, Methodology, and Methods section. For a complete list of the codes, including definitions and total occurrences, see Appendix I.

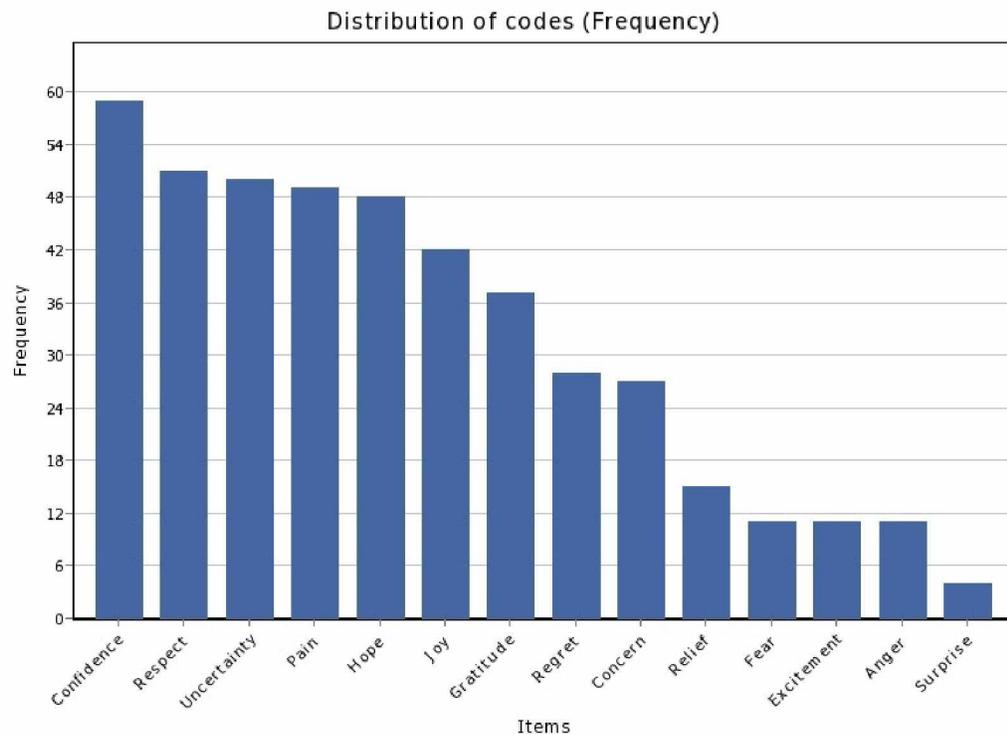


Figure 3: Frequency of Emotion Codes from Stage One interviews

Figure 3 shows how often I identified various emotions being expressed by participants during the interviews that took place during the Observation Stage. This was helpful for gauging how participants felt about mentoring in their lives

and community, which was the topic of the interviews. Twelve participants took part in these interviews.

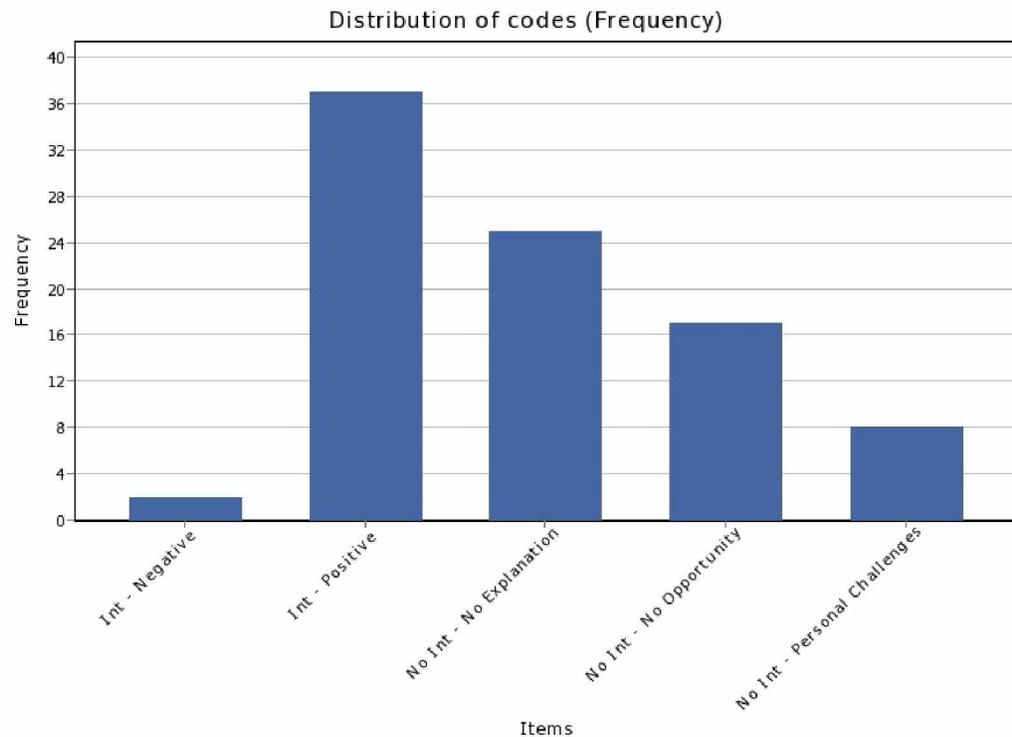


Figure 4: Frequency of Descriptive Codes from Stage One logs

Figure 4 shows how often participants reported negative, positive, or no interactions with youth during logs in the Observation Stage. I also noted what reason was given for a lack of interactions, be that no explanation, that they had no opportunity, or that personal challenges were a greater priority. If participants failed to respond on a given day, I did not count it under any of these categories. These logs took place immediately before and after Christmas, which likely negatively affected the number of reported interactions. Despite this, the coded logs were helpful in determining how likely participants' interactions with youth

were to be positive or negative prior to the workshop. Twelve participants contributed to these logs over nineteen days.

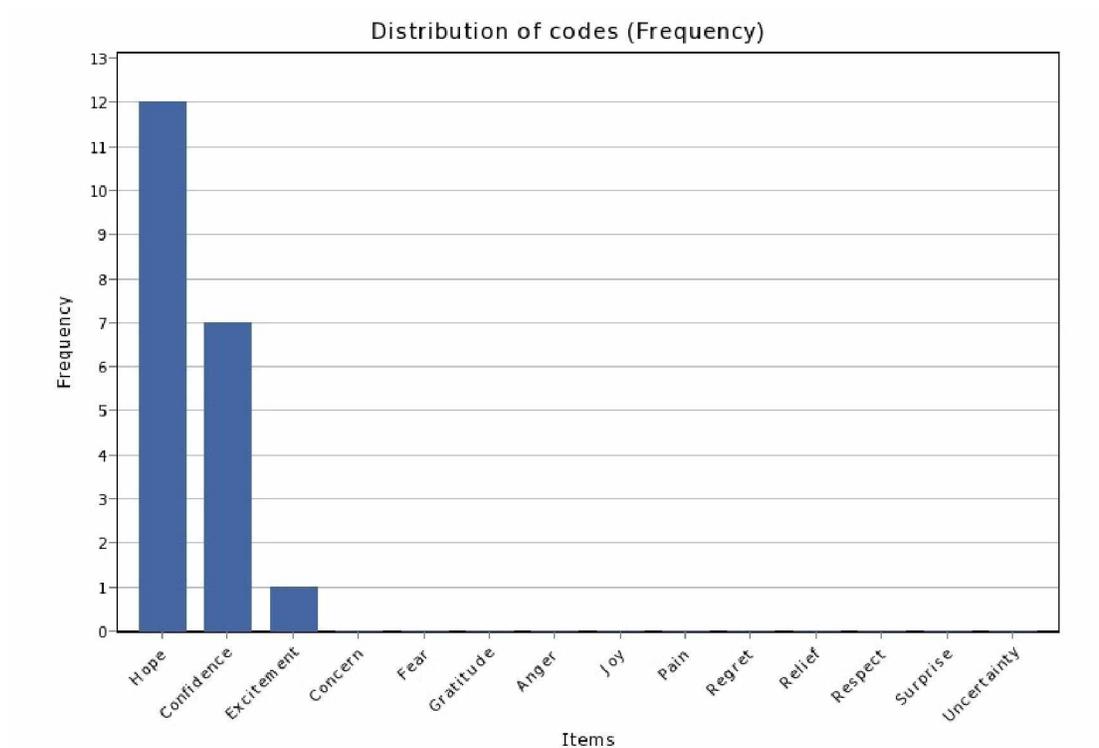


Figure 5: Frequency of Emotion Codes from Stage Two focus group

Figure 5 shows how often I identified various emotions being expressed by participants during the focus group discussion at the beginning of the Planning Stage. This was helpful in determining how participants felt about the findings from the Observation Stage and my suggestion that participants teach one other in the workshop, rather than bringing in outside speakers. Eight participants were part of this focus group discussion.

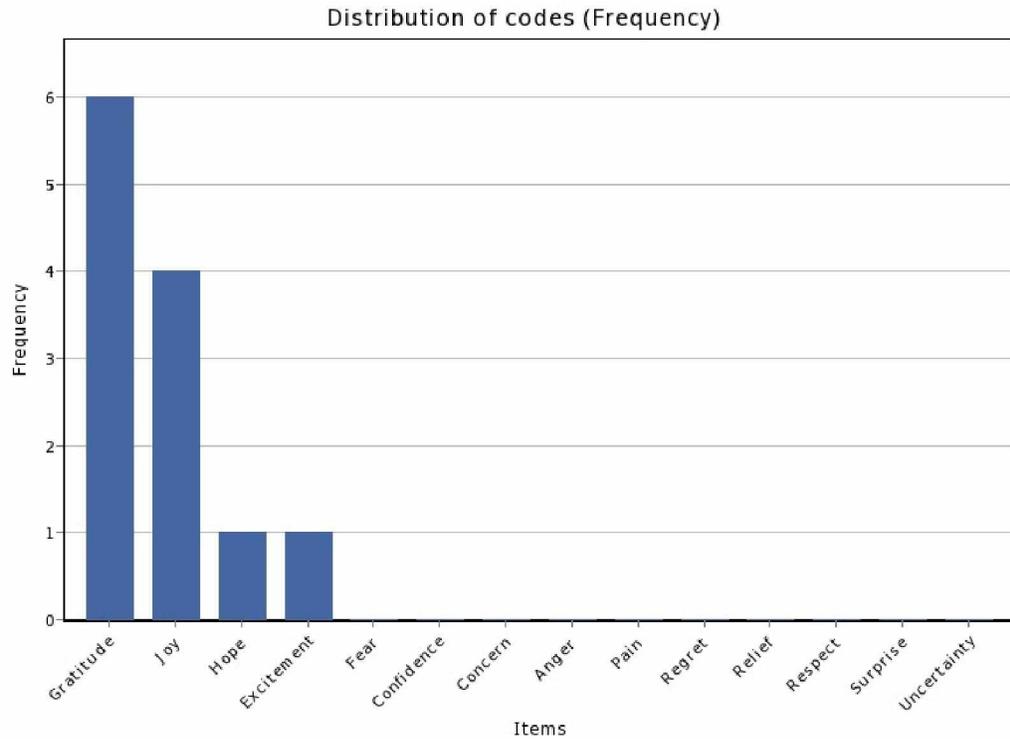


Figure 6: Frequency of Emotion Codes from workshop debrief

Figure 6 shows how often I identified various emotions being expressed by participants in the conversation we had following the workshop that was conducted during the Action Stage. This was helpful in determining the immediate emotional effect of the workshop. Six participants were present for the whole workshop and one arrived late.

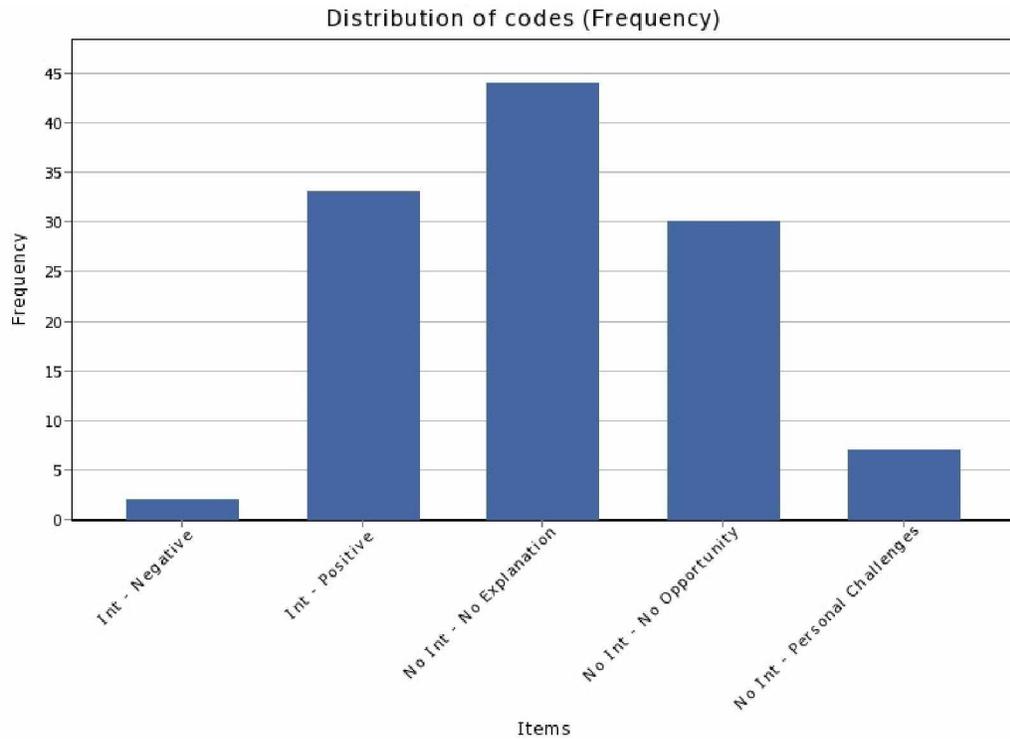


Figure 7: Frequency of Descriptive Codes from Stage Four logs

Figure 7 shows how often participants reported negative interactions, positive interactions, or no interactions with youth during logs in the Observation Stage. I also noted what reason was given for a lack of interactions, be that no explanation, that they had no opportunity to do so, or that personal challenges made mentoring a lower priority to them at that point. If participants failed to respond on a given day, I did not count it under any of these categories. This was helpful in determining how likely participants' interactions with youth were to be positive or negative following the workshop. Six participants contributed to these logs over sixty days. The increased logging period was partly due to my travel schedule and partly by design, to better account for Christmas.

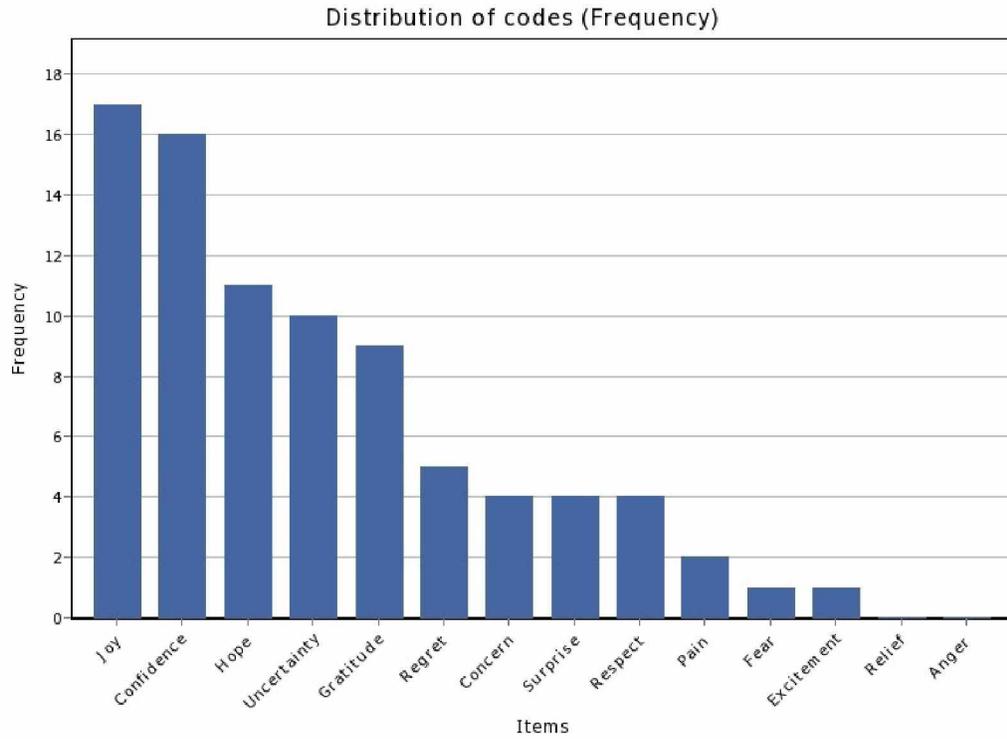


Figure 8: Frequency of Emotion Codes from Stage Four interviews and focus group

Figure 8 shows how often I identified various emotions being expressed by participants during the interviews and focus group discussion that took place during the Reflection Stage. This was helpful for determining how participants felt about the workshop after applying their learning for a period of time. Eight participants participated in the focus group discussion and Six participants participated in the interviews.

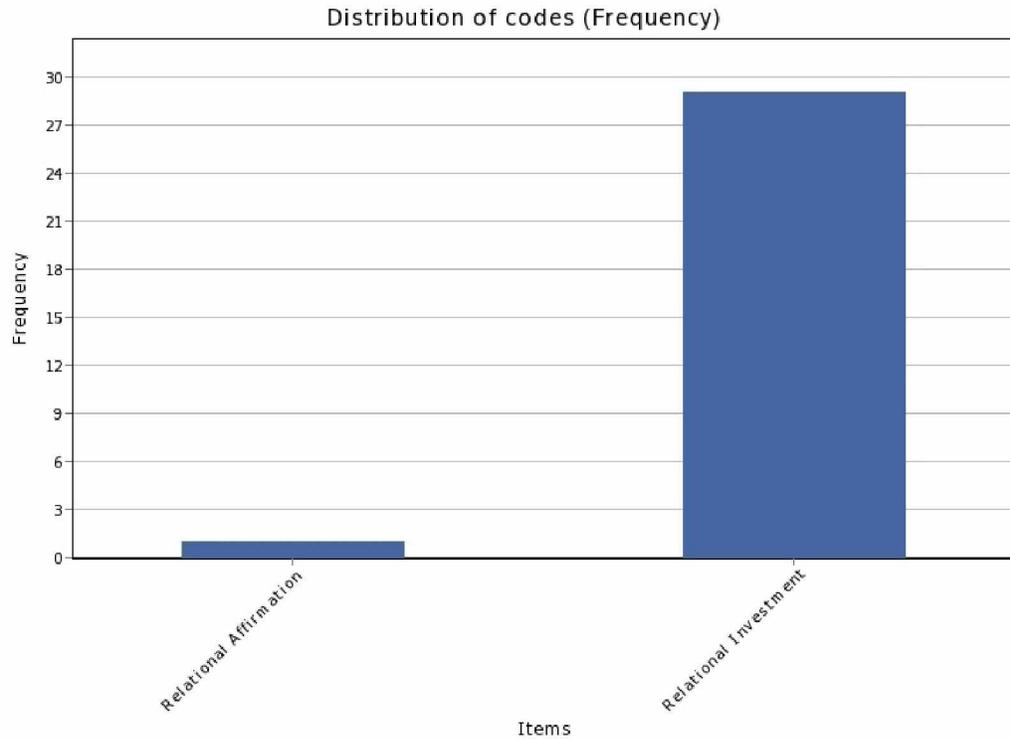


Figure 9: Frequency of Descriptive Codes from my interactions and reflections in Stages One and Two

Figure 9 shows how often I identified interactions between myself and participants that I regarded as affirmations of our relationship or relational investments on my part, during the Observation and Planning Stages. This was helpful in evaluating my sense that the project deepened my pastoral relationship with participants.

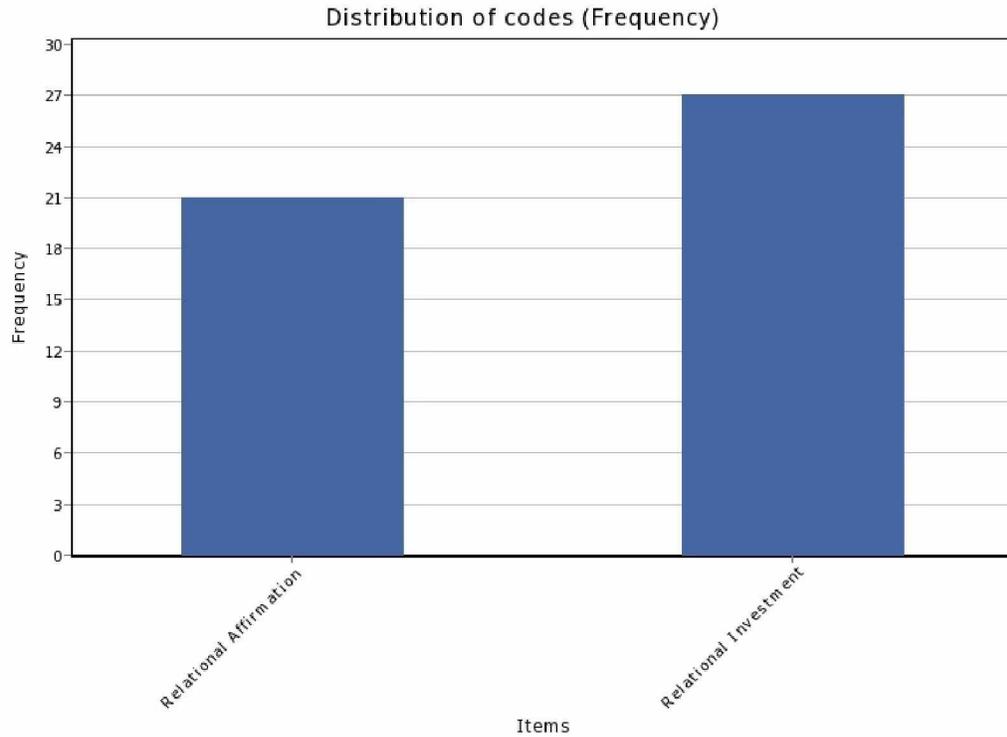


Figure 10: Frequency of Descriptive Codes from my interactions and reflections in Stage Three and Four

Figure 10 shows how often I identified interactions between myself and participants that I regarded as affirmations of our relationship or relational investments on my part, during the Action and Reflection Stages. This was helpful in evaluating my sense that the project deepened my pastoral relationship with participants.

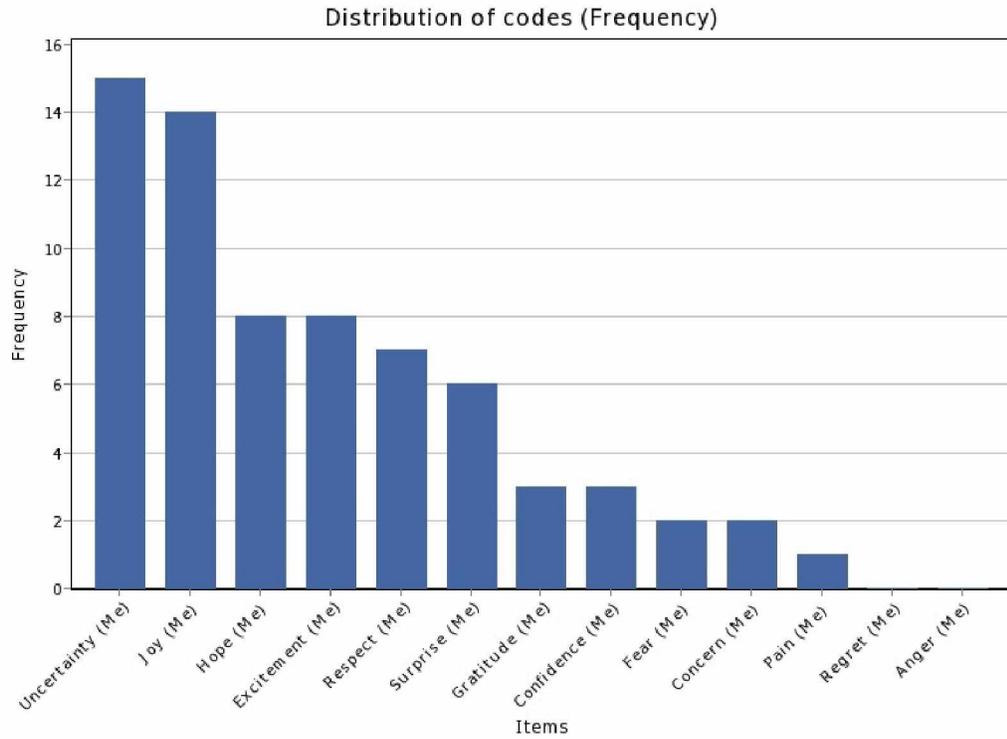


Figure 11: Frequency of Emotion Codes from my interactions and reflections in all data types

Figure 11 shows how often I identified various emotions being expressed by myself in reflective comments I made in my field notes. This was helpful in chronicling my own emotional journey as the one conducting the research.

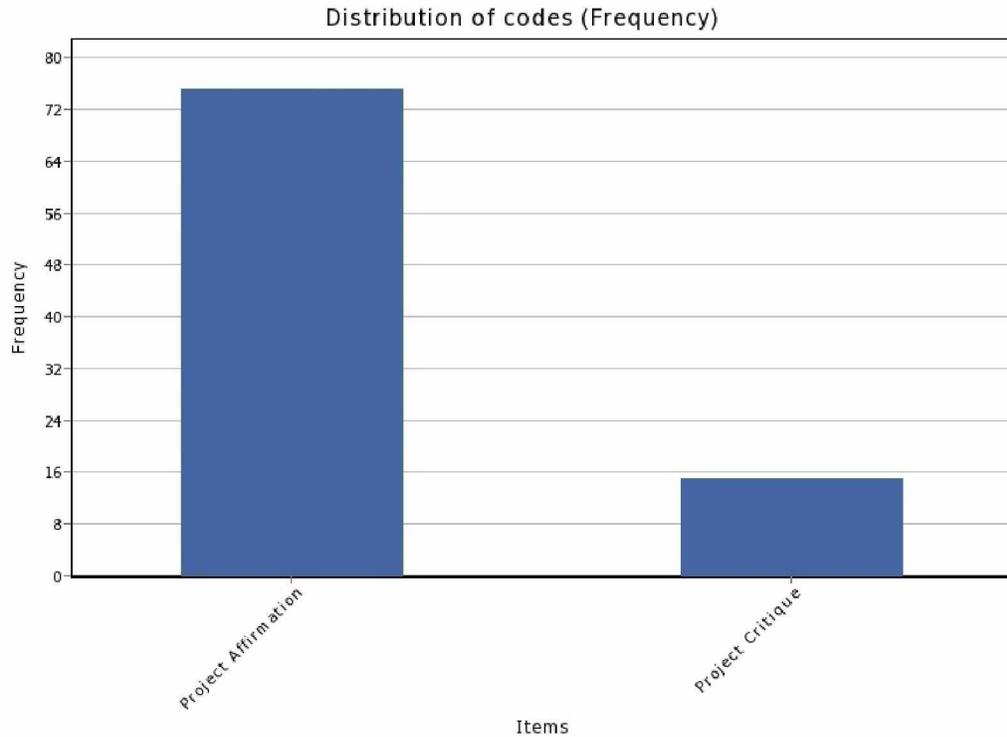


Figure 12: Frequency of Evaluation Codes from all participants and data types

Figure 12 shows how often I identified comments that affirmed or critiqued the project as it was designed, across all data sets. This was helpful in determining the perceived success or failure of the project in participants' eyes.

Interpretations

Participatory Action Research (PAR) emerged out of work with indigenous people (Stringer 2014, 277). Researchers have noted its effectiveness for work involving indigenous people in a number of fields, including ministry (Rempel 2014, 93), education (Hall et al. 2014, 4), health (Tsey et al. 2002, 279), and even archaeology (Atalay 2012, 4). By empowering research participants to

have their voices heard and contribute to decision making about what is done to improve their community, the power differential between them and researchers is reduced (Stringer 2014, 15). This is desirable in First Nations communities because of the ongoing effects of the harm done to them historically. Alongside this, researchers have noted the importance of accommodating indigenous perspectives on change (Tuck 2009, 49) and identity (Brown and Strega 2005, 106) while conducting research. PAR makes it more likely that researchers will take these into account. One study has also shown the effectiveness of taking a participatory approach to designing workshops (Mittelmeier et al. 2018, 262-263). With this in mind, I hoped that PAR would aid us in developing a contextually-suitable mentoring workshop in Mistissini, which continues to suffer from intergenerational trauma and its side effects despite its relative success as a community. The findings suggest that it was.

At the start of the project, my objective was to create a workshop that could equip Cree adults to mentor youth as part of the ministry at Sunrise Camp. My assumption at that point was that the reason why people were not already mentoring youth was that they were unaware of the need or felt intimidated by the task of mentoring. Because of this, my preliminary research question was “What kind of training is required to increase Cree adults’ confidence in regards to mentoring their youth?” During the first stage of the project, I recognized that my initial assumption was wrong. This realization caused me to change what I viewed as the most important distinctive to take into account in designing the training.

Not only was a lack of confidence not the thing holding participants back, they were not being held back at all: they were already actively engaged in mentoring youth.

The findings that led me to shift my focus are reflected in Table 1 and Figures 3-5. Table 1 shows how fourteen participants responded to our initial questionnaire, which was the first data I collected after recruiting people via word of mouth and hosting an information session to orient them. The leadership team and I designed the questionnaire based on the issues we had encountered while working with youth in Mistissini. This was motivated in part by my assumption that participants found certain aspects of mentoring intimidating. I hoped that identifying these would allow us to select appropriate topics for the workshop. Instead, participants reported a high level of confidence across the board. No question had a median score lower than 4.5. The lowest average score was question twenty-one, which read, “How confident do you feel about doing activities with youth? (eg. hunting, fishing, sports, or making something together).” Even this received an average score of 3.5, which indicates the group was more confident than not in this regard. It is also noteworthy that this average includes four participants who answered two out of five on this question. This may have stemmed from a sentiment that some people expressed during interviews: they wished they knew more about Cree traditional skills, which includes hunting and fishing. Thus, overall, the questionnaire results show a remarkably high level of confidence when it comes to mentoring youth.

This was also a theme throughout the Stage One interviews. Participants shared painful experiences from their childhood and linked those experiences to residential schools and other sources of intergenerational trauma. However, they also talked about older people who were positive role models and met their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs so they could overcome their hurt. For some, these people were present when they were young, for others they were teenagers or young adults before they had mentors, but in every case they had someone they could clearly point to as this kind of positive figure. Figure 3 seems to reflect this. It shows that pain was expressed frequently during these interviews, and yet, positive emotions like hope, joy, and gratitude were expressed more often than regret, fear, or anger. This suggests that participants' mentors assisted them in developing resilience and overcoming their trauma to a large degree.

Another contributing factor could be the participants' faith, which was manifest in participants' comments that they forgave those who had hurt them and their culture. Mentors played a critical role in this too, since most participants attributed their faith to a mentor who modeled it for them. The fact that participants had been successful at processing their past hurt may be part of the reason why they demonstrated personal confidence so often, even as they continued to acknowledge the complexity of the needs in their community and express concern and uncertainty about how to resolve them. Participants also clearly saw mentoring youth as a key part of addressing those needs. One

participant, who volunteers with a church youth group, shared an image with me that summed this conviction up beautifully. He told me that he had a dream in which he was walking through the woods. As he went, he was carefully making a path for others who came later to follow. He saw someone else race by without taking the time to make a trail, but he continued his slow work. When he woke up, he heard God tell him that this is the purpose of ministry: “You don’t have the option of going off on your own, you must prepare a trail for others to follow.” This was his motivation for serving with the youth group, and was reflected in comments and stories shared by each and every participant.

Alongside the overall confidence of participants, I began to realize that they were exercising a range of different skills in their work with youth. This made me wonder if they, instead of we, should be leading the workshop. I recorded this thought when it first occurred to me following an interview:

Four interviews into this I’m impressed at the range and depth of experience in this group. I also find it intriguing that the skills in the group complement each other well (James is a preacher, George is a playful discipler, Ruth is a caregiver and mother figure, Michael and Katherine teach traditional skills). Paul, James, and Carol have pointed us towards a lot of gifted and involved people. The thought has occurred to me that if the majority of the group continues to be this experienced and confident, perhaps we could take a slightly different approach to the training. Instead of Paul, Carol, and me doing the teaching, perhaps we could get the group to teach each other.

The remaining interviews confirmed this and I suggested the idea to Paul and Carol before leaving Mistissini at the end of that first trip. They thought the idea was interesting, so I returned home and reflected on it as I collected logs over the next month. Unfortunately, the Stage One logs were poorly timed, as they started

two weeks before Christmas and much of the community was already winding down. Between shopping trips, family visits, and personal issues for certain participants, not many meaningful interactions happened before the break. Some participants even implied that this was the wrong time to be asking them to contribute to a project, but while I might have caught the hints quickly in person, it took me a while to pick up on them via text. Similarly, community activity took a little while to resume in the new year, so for most of the time I had dedicated to logging, people were not as active as they normally would be.

Despite this, enough was reported to determine that the participants' interactions with youth were much more likely to be positive than negative, as can be seen in Figure 4. A question remained about how often those interactions were happening, but given the confidence participants had expressed in the questionnaire and interviews, I was convinced that the shift to equipping them to teach one another was worth trying. I presented what I had observed thus far in a focus group that January. I then asked the group further questions about how they felt about mentoring. In it, participants again expressed a high level of confidence, as seen in Figure 5, which shows that everything expressed during that conversation was positive. At the end of the meeting, I presented the idea of coaching participants to train each other. The group seemed excited by the novel approach and unanimously agreed to try it.

Nine participants expressed an interest in teaching. Over the summer, I helped them develop lessons based on skills they were already practicing in their

mentoring relationships. To do this, I created a simple lesson planning tool with input from Carol, found in Appendix E. The topics that emerged included praying with youth, showing love through acts of service, responding to crises, discussing romantic relationships, connecting youth to community resources, working with student leaders, and teaching traditional skills. One young man also agreed to share his testimony as an illustration of the power of mentoring.

After my fall trip was delayed, I was able to return to Mistissini in November in order to lead the workshop. We invited participants to come to the transit house Paul and I were staying in, set up a circle of chairs in the living room, and placed refreshments on the dining room table. Then we found out that five participants could not come because of unexpected events that day, so only seven participated in the workshop. Because of the confusion this caused, the workshop started late. Since most of the participants were not trained teachers, they were visibly nervous as they presented, stuck closely to their lesson plan, and talked for a shorter time than anticipated. One participant brought her daughter and puppy with her, and another arrived late and brought her two grandsons, all of which caused quite a bit of distraction. Despite all this, when we debriefed the experience immediately afterwards, participants' feelings were exclusively positive, as shown in Figure 6. Participants also repeatedly expressed that taking the peer learning approach was different but good, and that repeating it on a larger scale would be worthwhile. One of the comments that was made then and repeated in the Reflection Stage was that the most encouraging aspect of the

workshop was hearing how much they were already doing as a group—something they did not realize because they were all working independently and had never come together to share what they were doing until this study.

Following this, I initiated another round of activity logs with those who participated in the full workshop. This time the logs started sooner and ended later, which meant that the pause for Christmas did not have the same limiting effect. The result is that even though there were only half the number of participants reporting, the number of positive interactions was almost as high as in the Stage One logs, as can be seen in Figure 7. The logs were also more reflective of the participants' normal lives, with many meaningful interactions stemming from activities at the church, youth centre, or participants' workplaces. Then I returned to Mistissini and conducted a final focus group and second round of interviews to discuss participants' impression of the workshop and what our next steps should be. Figure 8 shows the emotions that were expressed during these, and again, positive emotions were significantly more prominent than negative ones.

A handful of comments illustrate the value of the peer-learning approach. One participant said, "You encouraged us to see that we have the capacity and the ability [to mentor youth.]" Another said, "This way somebody at my level is teaching me something they know on a personal level, which made it that much more meaningful and stuck with me more than a teacher teaching us beside the powerpoint or something." Speaking about how this workshop compared with

others that she had been part of, another participant noted that most workshops involve teachers saying, “Here’s what to do, now you’re on your own to do it,” whereas she appreciated the consistent, ongoing follow-up that this project involved. One participant also remarked that she had never considered that her personal experiences could be used to teach others. Carol, who was on the leadership team as well as a participant, also shared with me that she found the research process beneficial because it required planning more carefully than she or her fellow Crees typically do. The comments were not all simple encouragement, however. A challenge was issued by another participant when he said that the workshop made him ask, “How do we work together? Because we are all working alone not as a team.” In his closing interview he would vocalize this to me in a positive sense, saying that, “We need to come up with something and come together and do something,” which has been motivating for me as we plan next steps.

It is also worth noting that the negative emotions that do appear in Figure 8 were not generally connected to participants’ perception of the research project. Rather, during these final discussions, participants were more likely to tangent from the interview questions to share about things taking place in their personal lives, which sometimes included uncertainty, regret, and pain. This reflects another phenomenon that I observed during the process and saw spelled out in the data: my developing pastoral relationship with some of the participants. Although I was careful to maintain the boundary between my researcher role and pastoral

ministry—as described in the Ethics section—the fact that I was in such regular contact with participants resulted in many opportunities to build trust. They began to share about their personal lives and ask for dedicated pastoral meetings when I was in the community. Even as I was writing this report, one of the participants sent me an unprompted message to ask for prayer and advice, something that would not have happened prior to this project.

Although most of these interactions came outside of the formal interviews and logs, there were enough meaningful interactions during formal conversations that I decided to code them descriptively. Figure 9 shows that in the first two stages of the project, I identified a number of moments that I suspect built trust between me and a participant. Figure 10 shows that those moments continued in Stage Three and Four but that alongside that, participants began to express that they appreciated the role I played in their lives. During the final interviews, in particular, there was often a link between participants' positive comments on the study and their appreciation of the support I offered them through personal challenges. This was not something I anticipated at the outset, especially since I was careful to frame my role as a researcher and keep communications about the project professional. But it was encouraging to witness, as reflected in Figure 11, which shows the emotions I attributed to myself when coding the interactions I had with participants and reflective notes that I took. There were many moments when I felt uncertain, and others when I felt fear, concern, or even pain, but far more common were joyful experiences that increased my respect and gratitude for

my Cree friends.

With all this in mind, it appears that the project was a positive experience for leaders and participants alike. This is reflected in Figure 12, which shows the frequency of comments that participants made affirming or critiquing the study. At first, I broke down the codes by earlier and later stages as I did with the Emotion and Descriptive codes, but there was not much difference in the ratio of positive to negative evaluations throughout the process. At every point, participants tended to be positive about the study; what changed were the things that they felt positive about. In the earlier stages they appreciated the opportunity to share about their experiences and to work together on an important project. In the later stages, they appreciated the novel approach I took in designing the workshop and the things it helped them realize about themselves, as well as the relationship that developed between them and me.

The result is that participants expressed their appreciation for the project seventy-five times, while offering critical feedback fifteen times, with many of the critical comments being taken into account throughout the study or forming the basis for our next steps. It is not surprising that the number of negative comments was relatively small; Cree people tend to avoid direct criticism. However, when they are disappointed, my experience is that they will withhold feedback altogether instead of giving false praise. I asked Carol whether she thought this observation and interpretation were reasonable and she thought they were. As such, the fact that participants were so affirming throughout the process seems to

confirm that the approach I took was good, and worth considering as a model for future endeavours.

Outcomes

Revisiting my original research question, I realize that although the path to doing so was different than I anticipated, the workshop did increase participants' confidence as mentors. Unlike what I assumed at the outset, however, this did not happen by bringing in specialists to speak on the topics that Cree mentors found intimidating. Instead, I recognized that this group of participants was already actively mentoring youth and confident in their abilities. What they were lacking was awareness of how much they were already doing throughout the community as a group, and how that reflected on their ability to care for their youth. By bringing them together, the project allowed them to learn from one another and envision ways that they could collaborate instead of always working independently. In this sense, it increased their confidence, not by shoring up their weaknesses but by highlighting and building up their strengths.

This project has also yielded a workshop that can be expanded and repeated within the community, leveraging this group's experiences to introduce others to the concept of mentoring and share some of the skills that they have learned. Alongside this, the Participatory Action Research cycle provides a process for evaluating and improving the workshop over time. This is also true for other elements of the mentoring project as it develops. Intentionally observing, planning, acting, and reflecting should create a sense of ownership among

participants and allow them to learn from successes and mistakes more consistently than they would if decisions were simply left to the leaders. I am already planning next steps with James, Carol, and Paul, with the intention of building on the work participants are already doing so they can “come together and do something,” as the one participant put it.

The fact that this research project increased participants’ confidence as mentors and produced a workshop that can be used to train new mentors in the future means that it was a significant step forward in our objective of equipping Cree adults to build relationships with and respond to the needs of their youth. It also deepened my ministry relationship with the participants, in a way that the camps never did because my focus was on the campers and volunteer leaders I brought with me. I am enjoying keeping in touch with people since the end of the study and look forward to seeing how those relationships develop in the months and years to come. These are two positive outcomes from this process.

Conclusion and Implications

In November 2018, I set out to identify what kind of training could equip Cree adults to mentor their youth. I believed this required increasing their confidence as they confronted complex issues within their relationships. Doing so required accounting for the distinctives of our context. With this objective in mind, I used Participatory Action Research (PAR) to observe what was already taking place in the community, plan out a workshop, facilitate the workshop, and reflect on the effects of the training. This involved participants filling out a

questionnaire, going through interviews, logging their interactions with youth, and discussing the project in group environments at different stages in the process. As it turned out, because participants were recruited via word of mouth, those who signed up were already sold on the concept and living it out. What they did not realize was how much the others in the group were also doing. By shifting to a peer-learning approach, participants were able to appreciate one another in a new way and envision a future where they work together to walk alongside youth in their community. This also resulted in a workshop that can be repeated and refined to train mentors in the future. As such, although the process did not unfold as I expected, my hoped-for outcomes were met and surpassed. PAR made it possible for me to take into account the distinctives of the context and create a workshop that increased participants' confidence, and can be used to equip mentors in the future.

I expect this project to benefit the ministry in a number of ways. First, the workshop can be expanded and repeated with other Cree adults so they can learn about mentoring from their peers. Alongside this, the participants are eager to work together on further mentoring projects, and the PAR process provides a framework for defining and evaluating those next steps. Finally, the project deepened my relationship with the participants because of the abundant opportunity it presented for me to listen to and communicate with them. These outcomes serve as an example of the good that can come from using PAR to lead change in First Nations ministries.

This is also useful to me personally. It taught me the value of PAR and other communal discernment processes. Even as this project was unfolding, I was able to take lessons learned from it and apply them to my other ministry settings. I believe that I am called to lead intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation, and doing so is facilitated by inviting groups of people to slow down and listen to each other so they can see what is actually taking place in their midst. This also ensures that historic power imbalances are reduced. Because I defined my role as a researcher and focused on facilitating group learning, I was able to partner with my Cree friends rather than making decisions for them. I also found the rigour required by the data analysis beneficial, because it forced me to take detailed notes, revisit them, and study them closely to maximize my learning. Although I doubt that I will be able to invest this much time and energy into projects all the time, I have learned why it is advantageous to do so when you can. These are just a couple of the ways that I have grown personally as a result of this project.

I believe this project is also useful as a Case Study for others who wish to enhance their ministry to indigenous people. PAR makes it possible for leaders to work more in step with the community's needs and empowers community members to participate in the decisions that affect them. This is necessary as indigenous people recover from the harm that was done to them. Alongside this, because PAR begins with observing what is taking place within the community, it by design allows leaders to account for the differences between contexts, which is important since every indigenous community is distinct. Although it would vary

from place to place, I also suspect that there are many indigenous communities where, like Mistissini, a great deal of good is being done already, but it is hard for locals to see because they are so used to deferring to outside specialists. In situations where this is the case, PAR may allow people to see more clearly the gifts and opportunities that they have, which surely lines up with the Apostle Paul's call for Christian leaders to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

In general, I recommend that Christian leaders learn to pay closer attention to the experiences and abilities of their followers, as a means of evaluating and enhancing their ministries. PAR is a good tool for doing so, although its implementation will need to vary and other communal discernment processes may be more suitable for contexts that differ a great deal from mine, such as large churches with a top-down leadership structure. It is worth noting that all of this assumes a preexisting ministry that is being strengthened. Although PAR could be useful in starting a new ministry, my experience was shaped by the fact that I already had a relationship with some of the participants and others trusted me because of my relationship with Carol, James, and Paul. As such, I can only speak to PAR's effects as a tool for strengthening a ministry, not starting a new one.

This project has, of course, left some questions unanswered and raised some new ones.

First, I wonder what kind of training would benefit the average Cree adult in Mistissini. Because the study ended up involving a highly engaged group of

participants, the content of the workshop was less important to them than it would have been for most people. I think the topics were good, and I suspect that hearing from people within the community will be equally encouraging to less-engaged individuals, but different teaching methods and topics may be necessary to benefit a different demographic.

Second, I wonder what the next steps should be beyond the workshop itself. I am beginning to discuss those next steps with James, Carol, and Paul, and some good suggestions have already emerged. However, I want to make sure that what happens next builds on this study's findings, including the importance of involving community members in decision making and evaluation. This will be especially relevant if a formal mentorship program emerges, because it will not only be the mentors who are affected but the youth, too, and paying attention to their experiences will be key to its success.

Finally, I wonder how this process would translate to other environments, in part because it may have relevance to my other ministry contexts. As I said before, I have already begun using communal discernment processes in my other work with students and First Nations people; might there be a time when something as rigorous as this study would be beneficial? If so, what would be the appropriate time and manner to initiate it? Another question is how this process would have worked with a more religiously diverse group, since the participants' Christianity may contribute to their resilience and perspective on mentoring. I am sure that other questions will emerge over time, but these are the ones that occur

to me now.

There are two changes I would make if I were to do this project again. The first is that I would time things differently, so the research began earlier in the fall and there was more time before Christmas to collect data. This was not our original plan, and the fact that circumstances forced us to start so close to Christmas dampened our initial round of logs, which makes it hard to gauge whether there was any change in people's behaviour between the beginning and end of the project.

The second change is that I would have reduced the logging frequency. Daily was too much for the relaxed pace of life in Mistissini, and it created a false sense of pressure. Because of this, the logs were the only aspect of the project that seemed to make participants uncomfortable. I suspect that asking for logs once or twice a week would have provided a satisfactory amount of data, while reducing that sense of pressure. I also recognize that at the start of the project I made a major assumption in thinking that it was the challenges of mentoring Cree youth that needed to be addressed in the training. Although I do not think it hindered the project, since I was able to adjust my expectations fairly quickly, this has taught me how important it is to avoid assuming and ask good questions. It would have been easy for me to focus narrowly on that original vision and miss the opportunity to empower these capable mentors to teach one another.

Finally, it would probably have been ideal for me to be in the community more often throughout the project. Part of the reason it took as long as it did is

because I could only go two or three times during the school year. If I had been able to increase that to five or six, it might have made communication more consistent and kept up the momentum so I could accomplish the project sooner. Again, in the end I do not think this detracted much from the outcomes, but it is worth keeping in mind for future endeavours.

Altogether I am pleased with how this project turned out. It was a good learning experience for me and the others who were involved. I will be using PAR and other communal discernment processes more regularly in my ministry, and recommend that other Christian leaders consider doing the same.

CHAPTER 5:
PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

The following is my Philosophy of Christian Leadership. It was written in April 2020 and reflects the contributions that the DMin program and my research project made to my thinking. Because of this, despite the fact that I have edited it to reduce redundancy, a number of details from the prior documents are repeated, in a manner that facilitates my reflections on leadership.

Introduction

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program has provided me with ample opportunity to reflect on what I believe about Christian leadership. It has forced me to wrestle with the question of what leadership is, how Christian leadership differs from other forms of leadership, what God has called me to do as a Christian leader, and how I can best fulfill that calling. In my Philosophy of Leadership, I would like to consider each of these in turn. I will first argue that leadership is a social phenomenon in which individuals take initiative, influencing others to achieve an impact. Then I will present the case that Christian leadership aims to glorify the Father by submitting to the Spirit and emulating the Son, which is what makes it distinctly Christian. After this, I will share how my upbringing, education, and ministry experiences have led to my sense that I am

called to lead intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation. Finally, I will share why I view communal discernment processes as a core part of how I carry out that calling. Together, these elements make up my understanding of leadership on a general and personal level. Ultimately, my philosophy of leadership is to lead intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation using communal discernment processes. To work towards this conclusion, I will begin by providing a general definition of leadership.

Defining Leadership

I believe that leadership is a social phenomenon in which individuals take initiative, influencing others to achieve an impact. This definition is a revised synopsis provided during our course on the Theory, Theology, and Art of Leadership (Krause 2018). It covers a number of different branches of leadership theory, each of which seeks to understand a different aspect of leadership. As such, I am going to consider each of the different elements of this definition. I will address the fact that leadership is a social phenomenon, is carried out by individuals with particular traits, involves taking initiative and influencing others, and is conducted with a desired impact in mind.

Leadership is a Social Phenomenon

The fact that leadership is a social phenomenon seems self-evident and yet it does not tend to feature heavily in leadership literature. Historically, leadership thinking tends to focus on the individual who leads, but individuals do not exist in

a vacuum (Harkiolakis 2017, loc 268). There is always a set of circumstances that leads to them having the capacity and opportunity to lead, and these circumstances are largely, though not entirely, social in nature (Harkiolakis 2017, loc 323).

The social dynamics that shape a leader exist on multiple levels. One is the broad context into which a leader is born. Inevitably, a leader's context shapes his or her values and opportunities. For example, a woman born in ancient China or renaissance England would have been afforded different opportunities than if she were born in twenty-first century France. A person's lineage and social development plays a similar role. One's friends, family, and neighbourhood all contribute to one's development, which will in turn shape one's capacities and possibilities. Someone born to poor parents can remain poor or become a self-made millionaire, but he or she cannot inherit a fortune. Finally, the immediate social situation of a leader also plays an important role in shaping him or her. Leadership in a Fortune 500 company requires a different skillset than leading a declining rural church, and the people in each of those contexts will, consciously or unconsciously, turn to a certain kind of person to provide that leadership. None of these assertions is to suggest that individuals cannot overcome the challenges presented by their context, development, or immediate surroundings, but simply that those challenges shape them and their leadership (Harkiolakis 2017, loc 305). Leadership is a social phenomenon.

The implication of this is that understanding leadership cannot be divorced

from understanding human beings on a more general level. Social sciences inform our understanding of how groups function, which will shape the kind of leaders they produce and demand. Biology teaches us about the role that genetics play in a person's personality and skills. Psychology informs our understanding of how individuals are shaped by their experiences, including the role that their families and communities play in this. Philosophy raises theoretical questions that can shape how leadership is conducted. Theology calls attention to the fact that God has a purpose for humanity and its leaders. Even the arts have a role to play in understanding leadership, since they encourage us to grapple with existential realities on a deeper level than direct communication. Although it is impossible for an individual leader to understand all of these fields deeply, the study of leadership inevitably involves each of them.

Leadership is Carried Out by Individuals

If the social element of leadership has been under-studied, the opposite is true of the study of individual leaders. Historically, the kind of individual who makes a good leader has been the primary focus of leadership literature. Even if it has been given too much relative attention, it is true that leadership is carried out by individuals. Even when leadership takes place in teams, each individual plays a role in how it unfolds. Because of this, understanding leadership requires understanding the individuals who lead. Trait theory, probably the oldest branch of leadership thought, seeks to do this by considering what traits make an ideal leader (Northouse 2016, 29).

Although there is a fair amount of fluctuation across time and cultures, there are certain traits which appear repeatedly, including charisma, ambition, teachability, integrity, and wisdom (Northouse 2016, 30-31). Leaders and their followers need to be able to identify whether they have these traits and how to develop them over time. The term character is often used as shorthand for these desirable traits (Banks and Ledbetter 2004, 97). Leadership occurs when characterized individuals are able to develop leadership skills and capitalize on the opportunities presented by their context. Leadership is carried out by individuals.

Leadership Involves Taking Initiative and Influencing Others

Another branch of leadership literature focuses on the skills required to lead (Northouse 2016, 56). These skills fall into two broad categories: taking initiative and influencing others. The latter is what we generally refer to when we say that someone is leading; leaders get people to do something that they would not otherwise. However, prior to performing this essential task, leaders must first become motivated to do something that others do not care to do. They must take initiative or, put in other words, they must lead themselves (Brown 2015, loc 192). As such, these two skills are two sides of the same coin, one inward-focused and the other outward-focused, but both essential for leadership to take place. Leadership involves individuals taking initiative and influencing others.

Taking initiative is closely connected with the character of the leader, and many of the skills associated with it are also associated with character

development. Leading oneself is a matter of being disciplined about pursuing health in one's private life, moral decisions, relationships, and work (Brown 2015, loc 571). A great deal of Christian leadership literature has this focus. These books recognize the value of intrinsic motivation, which requires cultivating a sense of calling (Guinness 2003, 8). It requires healthy habits and continuous introspection, so that one's strengths can be maximized and weaknesses minimized (Scazzero 2015, 55). Leaders must be active learners, seeking out wisdom from others so they can be equipped to fulfill their mandate, while at the same time being conscious of how their communities shape them so they can remain self-differentiated (Barton 2012, 128).

Leaders must also recognize their own limits and pace themselves so they can lead sustainably, while being willing to challenge false limits that may be imposed on them by others or themselves (Palmer 1999, 410). They also recognize their capacity for evil and the need to address the root causes for problematic behaviour (Mangis 2011, loc 100). They seek to cultivate private and group disciplines that aid in the process of discerning what is truly good (Barton 2012, 206). They prioritize their closest relationships as essential to their wellbeing (Scazzero 2015, 87). All of this falls under the category of leading oneself or taking initiative, and shapes the way that leaders, Christian or otherwise, should carry out their responsibilities. Although all of these skills are inward-focused, it is worth noting that they also play a role in influencing others because people learn through modelling, and as such, what leaders do will be

observed and imitated by their followers (Brown 2015, loc 192).

When the time comes for a leader to influence others, a number of approaches can be taken, each requiring a slightly different skillset. Leadership exchange theory views the relationship between leaders and their followers as mutually beneficial, focusing on the way that leaders and followers negotiate their needs and ultimately benefit one another (Northouse 2016, 137-139). Situational leadership emphasizes the role that the leader plays in directing and supporting his or her followers to motivate them to grow (Northouse 2016, 217). Path-goal theory focuses on leaders setting goals and equipping their followers to achieve them (Northouse 2016, 267). Authentic leadership focuses on earning followers' trust by building intimate relationships (Northouse 2016, 430). Finally, transformational leadership focuses on the role a leader plays as a catalyst for change (Northouse 2016, 161-163). The latter has been the most influential in popular leadership literature. According to transformational leadership theory, leading change requires guiding people to envision a better future (Nelson and Dickens 2015, 71), pressuring them enough to keep them motivated (Heifetz and Linsky 2017, loc 1783), and developing the group's internal capacity so they can achieve the desired outcome (Heifetz and Linsky 2017, loc 2017). Leading change in this way is a common enough challenge that models have been developed to provide leaders with a framework for doing so (Kotter and Rathgeber 2006).

Christian theorists have also called attention to a distinctly Christian

approach to leadership called servant leadership, which considers the example Jesus set and challenges the way that leaders often wield their power, focusing instead on influencing others by putting their needs first and earning their trust (Northouse 2016, 496). These different approaches to influencing others are not mutually exclusive. There are times when a transformational leader will need to resort to transactional methods, and servant leaders can still gain something by earning the trust of their followers as per leadership exchange theory. However, each approach will prioritize certain aspects of leadership over time, and as such they may be more suitable for particular leaders or contexts. Regardless of one's preferred approach, however, a leader by definition influences others to do what they would not otherwise.

Leadership Aims to Achieve an Impact

Finally, having acknowledged the importance of a leader's social context, character, and skills, it is important to recognize the teleological aspect of leadership. Leadership always has an aim. It serves some sort of a purpose within the community in which it takes place. Wielding power without an end in mind is not the same as leadership (Northouse 2016, 41). A sociopath takes initiative and influences others but rarely with any objective besides his or her narrow self-interest. Leaders, on the other hand, have a vision for what their community can become and try to lead in a way that maximizes the possibility that that vision will become reality. Within an organization the primary leader's task is to "clarify the mission, keep the institution on mission, and assure that all new personnel

believe in the mission” (Smith 2015, 46). Leaders do what they do in order to achieve an impact.

To acknowledge the fact that leadership is teleological in nature raises the question of ethics, since ethics is rooted in teleology. Is there such a thing as an objectively good or bad leadership objective, and if so, how do good and bad objectives relate to our tendency to label leaders as good or bad themselves? Although there are some commonalities that span ethical frameworks and most people would agree that leaders should be ethical (Northouse 2016, 496), it is inevitable that there will be some—perhaps substantial—variance in what leaders regard as good based on their personal views and context. As such, I think that understanding leadership as a general phenomenon requires treating the teleological aspect of leadership and its ethical dimension separately.

Teleologically, a “good leader” is simply one who successfully guides his or her community towards a more desirable state. In this sense, goodness and effectiveness are synonymous; a good leader is one who achieves a desired impact. However, this leader may still be regarded as ethically bad based on the evaluator’s worldview. As such, the wording “to achieve an impact” is suitable for a general definition. It does not delve into whether that impact is good or bad, although presumably the leader thinks it is when he or she pursues it. When it comes to Christian leadership specifically, of course, ethics inevitably plays a larger role.

Conclusion

In summary, leadership is a social phenomenon in which individuals take initiative, influencing others to achieve an impact. This general definition provides a foundation for my philosophy of leadership, but is insufficient in and of itself because it does not adequately reflect how I personally seek to lead. To understand that requires defining Christian leadership over and against other forms of leadership and then considering what God has called me to do personally and how I can effectively accomplish that. I will now seek to answer the first of these questions: what sets Christian leadership apart?

Defining Christian Leadership

Having provided a general definition of leadership, it is important to acknowledge that I am a Christian, which shapes the way that I understand my task as a leader. Although there are many ways in which Christian leadership is unique, the source of that uniqueness is the relationship we have with the triune God. In this sense, Christian leadership is distinct in the same way that other aspects of the Christian life are distinct. My summary of the relationship that all Christians, and, consequently, all Christian leaders are supposed to have with God, is that they should seek to glorify the Father by submitting to the Spirit and emulating the Son. Framed as questions, these criteria form an ethical framework that shapes the objectives and means of Christian leadership: “Does this glorify the Father,” “Does this line up with what the Spirit seems to be doing here,” and

“Does this resemble how Jesus himself would lead?” I would like to consider each of these and how they apply to leadership in turn.

Christian leaders should aim to glorify the Father

The Christian worldview begins with the understanding that God has existed eternally as a self-contained community that we call the Trinity—three beings who are distinct as persons but united in their essence (Aquinas 2002, 35). Within the Trinity, God the Father is viewed as the ultimate initiator or the “unmoved mover” (Aquinas 2002, 9). Even the other two members of the Trinity owe their existence to him despite the fact that they too have existed eternally (Aquinas 2002, 37). With this in mind, it is the Father who receives primary credit for initiating the creation of the cosmos and everything in it. The Father’s motive in creating the cosmos is to glorify himself—that is, to allow others to experience his goodness. In this sense, everything is created by the Father for the sake of glorifying himself (Piper 2001, 27). Sometimes the notion that God aims to glorify himself is pitted against the idea that God created the world out of love, but this is a false dichotomy. Since God is good, the most loving thing he can do is to share that goodness with others, and, in sharing that goodness with others his goodness is recognized. Thus, the Father’s intention of glorifying himself throughout creation is itself loving (Piper 2001, 36-37).

In the creation narrative, human beings are given a special role in line with that purpose. God created human beings in his image (Genesis 1:27). Historically, this has been viewed as a reference to unique human traits, including our capacity

for relationships with God and one another, but contemporary theologians also view it as a reference to our role as God's representatives within creation (Wenham 1987, 173-180). We were intended to rule over and care for creation in the same way that he would (Wright 2006, 425). In order to achieve this, we were created with capacities that other animals were not, including relationality and what Christians refer to as "free will," which is not so much absolute freedom in decision-making as a choice to follow or resist God's will (Augustine 2002, 202). In this sense, God's intention in creating human beings was to have lesser partners in creating and caring for the cosmos. For this reason, Christians generally agree that people play a special role in the Father's plan to glorify himself. We are unique among earthly creatures in our ability to consciously recognize the Father's goodness and to emulate that goodness in the way that we live (Wright 2006, 422). This is what we were created for.

That being said, because the original human beings rejected God out of fear and pride and set in motion a pattern that we would be beholden to (Mangis 2011, 105), our lives no longer fulfill their original purpose as fully as they should. Rather than glorifying the Father we fall into idolatry, worshiping other things that we think will satisfy us (Keller 2009, xix-xx). But instead of abandoning us or destroying us, the Father chose to rescue us by initiating a covenantal relationship with Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites (Wright 2006, 199). In Genesis 12:3, God declares to Abraham that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." He revealed his glory throughout his relationship

with them and, through them, brought his Son into the world, “ushering in the age in which all the nations will be blessed” (Wenham 1987, 283). Following Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension, his earliest followers began to call people from all people groups to glorify the Father by following his Son (Acts 10:34-43). In this sense, those who choose to follow Jesus turn away from their idols and fulfill their original purpose of glorifying the Father and, in so doing, experience a renewed relationship with him, one another, and the cosmos (Wright 2006, 313). This is the aim of the Christian life, and our desire, like God’s, should be for all people to be saved this way (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

How does this relate to Christian leadership? The primary effect is teleological. As I argued above, all leadership has an aim. Leaders seek to achieve an impact within their communities. However, the aims of the Christian leader can never be divorced from the Father’s purpose of glorifying himself by restoring humanity and creation to its original goodness. Christian leaders will certainly have differing motives and objectives based on their particular contexts, but they are motivated and constrained by the overarching mission of God. Because of this, Christian leadership cannot simply be evaluated based on its effectiveness in achieving an anticipated impact, it must also be evaluated based on whether it glorifies the Father.

As such, for the Christian leader, the teleological and ethical dimensions of leadership are inseparable. Christian leadership is only good if it conforms to a higher standard. The church is intended to serve as a “sign, instrument, and

foretaste of God's redeeming grace for the whole life of society" (Newbigin 1989, 232). There are many passages that summarize what this entails. Perhaps the most well-known is the "great commandment," to love God with your whole being and to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40), but the one I turn to most often is Micah 6:8, which reads: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" I will return to the topic of social justice at a later point, but for now it is worth highlighting that this synopsis contains three elements: creating a just society; providing for one another's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs; and humbly acknowledging God's goodness (Baker et al 1989, 245). In other words, Christians—including and especially their leaders—should seek to glorify the Father in the things they say and do, individually and communally, so the world might come to know him too.

Christians leaders should submit to the Spirit

Although traditionally the second person of the Trinity is the Son, in scripture the Spirit of God makes an appearance long before there are even hints of the Son's existence. The first biblical reference to the Spirit is found in Genesis 1:2, which states that "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." This suggests that the Spirit played an essential role in ordering the cosmos according to the Father's plan, almost as if he is incubating an egg about to hatch (Wenham 1987, 17). Throughout the remainder of scripture, the Spirit

shows up frequently and in a variety of ways, but always towards this same end: to enact the Father's plan within the world. Most often, this occurs via the Spirit doing something that enables people to live in a godly manner. This includes empowering people to create sacred objects (Exodus 35:30-34), prophesy (1 Samuel 10:9-13), exercise wisdom (Ephesians 1:17), see visions (Revelation 1:9-11), interpret dreams (Daniel 4:18), preach (Acts 4:8), confront sin (Acts 5:1-11), and endure suffering (Acts 7:54-60). The Old Testament also contains a number of promises that God would "pour out his Spirit" on people *en masse*, which the New Testament authors describe following Jesus' ascension. Jesus himself is also described as operating in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14-15).

All of this shows that the Spirit plays an important role in God's purpose being fulfilled among people. Notably, the Bible also shows that the Spirit empowers individuals to lead God's people (Numbers 11:17). Ephesians 4:11 even contains a list of leadership roles within the early church that Paul saw as being a gift from Christ, notably made possible by the Spirit that unites God's people as one so they can grow to be more like him (Mitton 1973, 151). In other words, godly leadership is made possible by the Holy Spirit.

Despite the myriad of functions that the Spirit plays throughout scripture, it would appear that human beings bear some responsibility for the way that they respond to him. There are a number of dire warnings throughout scripture against "grieving the Spirit" (eg. Ephesians 4:30), and a handful of individuals serve as

examples of what happens when this takes place, including Saul, who is rejected as king and tormented by an evil spirit (1 Samuel 16:14), and Ananias and Sapphira, who are struck dead for their deceit (Acts 5:1-11). The reverse is also true, however: there are great promises for those who walk in step with the Spirit and many examples of the positive transformation that takes place when people do, including David, whose willingness to listen to God differentiates him from Saul and his brothers (1 Samuel 16:7) and results in God promising him an eternal dynasty (2 Samuel 7), and Paul, who goes from Christianity's greatest foe to one of its greatest advocates (Acts 9).

As such, it appears that people are responsible for submitting to the Holy Spirit. Doing so allows a person to glorify the Father joyfully, whereas refusing to do so means serving as a cautionary tale. This is summed up beautifully in Romans 12:1-2, which says, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

How does this relate to Christian leadership? It reveals something of the mechanics of how godly leadership takes place. If Christian leaders want to glorify the Father, they need to be alert to the Spirit's activity, in their own lives and in the community around them, so that they can give themselves over to it. This requires developing spiritual discernment, which is facilitated by a practice

of listening prayer (Nouwen 2013, 5). It also requires robust self-awareness, since it is easy to be deceived by bad guidance and harmful messages (Nouwen 2013, 23). This is especially true when you have failed to address a pattern of sin or woundedness, both of which make it significantly more difficult to identify what the Spirit is doing in a given circumstance (Nouwen 2013, 126). This, too, is facilitated by a practice of listening prayer (Nouwen 2013, 24), as well as surrounding oneself with true friends who enable us to see God more clearly (Nouwen 2013, 72). When decisions will have a significant impact on a community, it is also important to guide them through the process of discerning what the Spirit is doing (Scazzero 2015, 188), a topic which I will cover in more detail later. This helps individual leaders know whether they are discerning God's will correctly and also unifies and promotes greater ownership within the community. All of this enables "waiting on a God who waits on us" (Nouwen 2013, 8). Submitting to the Spirit allows leaders to glorify the Father.

Christian leaders should emulate the Son

What does submitting to the Spirit in order to glorify the Father look like in practice? Understanding this requires understanding the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son. In the Gospel of John, Jesus teaches that he is the perfect portrait of the Father (Carson 1991, 494). This is the practical outworking of the incarnation—the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was God in the flesh—which is a major theme throughout John's Gospel (Carson 1991, 95). Everything Jesus did and taught further revealed God's goodness, to such a degree

that when Jesus' disciples asked him to show them the Father he responded by asserting that "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Scripture also states that Jesus' ministry was empowered by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14-15). Given these two claims, I believe that Jesus models what every Christian aims for when he or she tries to submit to the Spirit in order to glorify the Father.

Obviously there are too many things that Jesus taught and did to consider them all in a single paper. Christians have been studying Jesus' life for millennia and still glean new things from doing so. However, certain themes are worth highlighting because of their relevance to the topic of leadership. The focus of Jesus' ministry was the poor and disenfranchised members of his community. He began his work in rural Palestine and offered hope to those who were suffering because of economic exploitation (King 2016, 14). He lived alongside those people and often put his own reputation and wellbeing at risk to serve them (King 2016, 152). He also spent time with people regarded as sinful or traitorous by mainstream Judaism (King 2016, 116-117). When religious leaders challenged him on these decisions, he stated that they, not he, were out of line with God's will (King 2016, 119). Ultimately, these repeated confrontations led to him being crucified because of the threat he posed to their power (Wright 2006, 310).

Despite this, Jesus also expressed love and forgiveness for the leaders that turned against him (Luke 19:41-44). He taught his followers that they, too, should love their enemies (Matthew 5:44) and stopped them when they sought to defend him using violence (Matthew 26:47-56). He made it clear that he had the authority

to put an end to the religious leaders' opposition but would die willingly to prevent them from facing divine judgment. He also predicted that God would validate him by raising him from the dead, which he did. Jesus spent his whole life surrendering power in order to demonstrate his love for people, and he expected his followers to do the same. Given the oppression that he and his followers faced, this message of forgiveness would have been scandalous in a way that is hard to appreciate for those of us who are relatively wealthy and powerful (King 2016, 69).

What does this have to do with Christian leadership? It establishes servant leadership as the standard for Jesus' followers. The concept of servant leadership was not new with Jesus; throughout the Old Testament leaders are referred to as servants because they serve God (Bell 2014, loc 741). Servant leadership stands in contrast with "power leadership" (Bell 2014, 761). It holds that leaders should influence others by earning their trust through service rather than demanding adherence through coercion. It hinges on a paradox that Jesus teaches: "Everyone who exalts himself [sic] will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself [sic] will be exalted" (Luke 18:14). As Jesus demonstrates, the most powerful means of earning people's trust is intentional sacrificial love (Bell 2014, loc 4023).

What this means is that Christian leaders should welcome meaningful opportunities to put their followers' needs ahead of their own. Note the careful way that I have phrased this. Sometimes, the concept of "sacrificial love" is misused by leaders to justify total disregard for their own needs. This is not what

Jesus modeled in his ministry. He took time away from his work (Luke 5:16), spent time with friends (Luke 10:38-42), and avoided physical harm most of the time (Luke 4:30). When Jesus practiced sacrificial love, it was always intentional. He risked his health and reputation to touch lepers (Luke 17:11-19), visited tax collectors' homes (Luke 5:27-32), and let women learn alongside men (Luke 10:38-42) because he knew these were things they had been denied. In the same way he allowed the religious leaders to kill him when the time was right (Matthew 26:46) so that they and others might recognize it as a willing act of forgiveness. These were all meaningful opportunities that Jesus seized on, not idle disregard for his own needs. Only when you have the ability to say no do you have the ability to demonstrate sacrificial love (Cloud and Townsend 2012, 51).

Although this kind of love is costly to the leader in the immediate sense, in the long-term it earns him or her loyalty and allows his or her leadership to transform people in a way that coercion cannot (Bell 2014, 7521). Christian leaders should also be mindful of the ways in which coercion harms people within their immediate and broader context and do what they can to push back against coercion and empower those who are oppressed (Keller 2010, 127). This, too, will be costly for the leader, since it will inevitably require confronting sinful leaders and social structures, but as Jesus and his earliest followers showed, God is glorified when leaders and their communities treat people better than the society around them (Keller 2010, 140). Christian leaders should submit to the Spirit and emulate the Son in order to glorify the Father.

Conclusion

In summary, Christian leadership can never be divorced from God's purpose for humanity. Christian leaders should aim to glorify the Father by submitting to the Spirit and emulating the Son. Defining Christian leadership this way yields questions that I use to evaluate my leadership: "Does this glorify the Father," "Does this line up with what the Spirit seems to be doing here," and "Does this resemble how Jesus himself would lead?" By embracing this ethical framework, I hope to contribute to the transformation of the communities in which I serve, so they can be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's kingdom. However, my philosophy of leadership is also shaped by my personal walk with God and the desire to fulfill my calling effectively. With this in mind, I will now consider how my context and experiences have shaped my sense of calling.

Describing My Calling

In order to fulfill my mandate as a Christian leader, I believe that I am called to lead intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation. I have reached this conclusion primarily by allowing God to tell me who I am through my life experiences (Palmer 1999, loc 78). I benefited from intergenerational and intercultural interactions growing up, sensed a call to extend the same kind of ministry to others as a young adult, and have developed experience in these areas through my ministry work and studies over the past ten years. Perhaps most importantly, I believe that this ministry addresses prominent needs within our

culture and have sought to develop a deeper understanding of how my calling and context relate over the past few years.

The role of my upbringing

My upbringing made a ministry of intercultural reconciliation possible by cultivating an openness towards other cultures. Although I was born in a rural community west of Toronto, I was raised primarily in Ottawa throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Although I did not know it at the time, I grew up in the midst of the global diaspora that has led to so much visible change within our culture over the past few decades (Krause et al 2018, loc 171). This was reflected in my neighbourhood and school, both of which were on the outskirts of the city in an area that attracted many waves of new Canadians over the course of my childhood. I also had a mother who enjoyed learning about other cultures and an evangelical upbringing that taught that all people are equal in God's eyes.

Despite this, my experience with other cultures was mostly on a surface level. The result is that I was raised with what the Intercultural Development Index refers to as a "minimization" mindset: "Minimization highlights commonalities in both human Similarity (basic needs) and Universalism (universal values and principles) that can mask a deeper understanding of cultural differences" ("IDI General Information" 2020). The effect is that I would need to develop my awareness and acceptance of other cultures down the road, and I was open when the opportunity emerged.

Alongside this, my upbringing taught me the importance of

intergenerational relationships, planting the seeds for a ministry of intergenerational reconciliation. As described in my Leadership Narrative, my father was a pastor who experienced a difficult first pastorate and, after moving to a new city, failing to find a new position, and working for years in a group home, had an affair that brought an end to his already-struggling marriage. At the time I was eight and the oldest of five children. My father was overwhelmed by and disengaged from us, and hostile towards our Christian faith, which led to me resenting him. However, my mother remained a committed Christian and kept us involved in the church, and intentionally sought out mentors to spend time with us as role models.

Over the course of my life, I have had at least five older men walk alongside me as mentors and many others who serve as examples of godly manhood. As a result of their investment and supernatural encounters, I was able to forgive my father, build a positive relationship with him, develop my own faith, and discern a call into ministry. My upbringing is a testament to the impact that positive intergenerational relationships can have.

The role of my education

My education also played a role in nurturing my passion for intercultural reconciliation. As shared in my Leadership Narrative, I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Politics at Trent University (Trent). I chose Trent because I had extended family members in Peterborough and my then-girlfriend-now-wife was already going there. What I did not know at the time was that Trent specializes in

Indigenous studies. During my four years there, I became aware of Canada's history of cultural genocide and the ongoing work of repairing the damage that has been done to indigenous peoples (Sinclair et al 2015, 5). I was also involved in a student ministry and church that recognized the importance of social justice. This complemented the critical lens of my political studies, so I began to take interest in the intersection of Christianity, social justice, and culture. After graduating from Trent I earned a Master of Theological Studies from Tyndale University, which emphasizes missional theology. Missional theology stems from Newbigin's teaching that the church exists to be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's kingdom (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 51), and thus insists that Christians must seriously engage with the concept of social justice (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 107). In authors like Newbigin, Christopher Wright, and Timothy Keller, I discovered a theological framework that allowed me to embrace the interests that had begun to develop during my time at Trent. Although my education alone was not enough for me to determine that I was called to lead intercultural reconciliation, it took the foundation that was laid during my upbringing and provided me with an intellectual framework that prepared me for the eventual ministry opportunities that came my way.

My education also played a role in developing my passion for intergenerational reconciliation. Although intergenerational relationships did not factor into my studies at Trent, I benefited from positive relationships with my teachers and mentors during those years, and being away at university made it

easier to explore my family background and its effects on me. My relationship with Shoshanna also flourished and this raised conversations with my peers about why we were so committed to one another at such a young age. Up until that point in time I had assumed that my evangelical family values were normal. Although I had non-Christian friends in elementary and high school, I wrote off their differing relationships with their parents and romantic partners as immaturity. But at Trent, I began to realize that I was the oddity, not them, and in reflecting on it I realized it was, in part, because I saw how my mentors' commitment to their families prevented them the kind of hurt that I went through as a child.

Because of this, during my time at Trent, I consciously began to look for opportunities to mentor others, and did so frequently within the campus ministry. During my Master's degree I studied Western culture's shift towards post-Christendom and came to recognize that one of the byproducts of this was a shift in how people relate across generations. A comprehensive study involving multiple denominations and evangelical ministries called *Hemorrhaging Faith* was released during this time. It highlighted the fact that Canadian children raised in the church were much more likely to remain in the church if they had Christian parents and mentors (Penner et al 2011, 52). This drove home the importance of my relationships with older people and my desire to be a parent and mentor.

I mentioned that intergenerational relationships did not factor into my studies at Trent. This is true with one exception: the disruption of intergenerational relationships played an important role in the attempted cultural

genocide of indigenous peoples (Miller 2000, loc 1950). During my time at Trent, I learned about this, primarily through conversations about residential schools. This would eventually yield a common thread that would bring together my passion for intercultural and intergenerational work. That being said, at the time I was not conscious of the connection between that historic reality and my own experience with mentoring; it would take a few years before that realization dawned on me.

The role of my ministry experience

If my upbringing laid a foundation for a ministry of intercultural reconciliation and my education provided an intellectual framework to build towards, my ministry experiences have been a process of building towards that calling without realizing exactly what it was that was taking shape. As I shared in my Leadership Narrative, my first opportunity to work closely with another culture arose immediately after I finished my Bachelor's degree, when Paul invited me to lead a six-week-long sports camp in Nemaska, Quebec. It was a difficult endeavour, in part because we did not receive much cultural training and none of our team members had any significant experience doing intercultural work.

Being surrounded by people speaking another language and living by a different set of values was overwhelming at first, but over the course of the summer we began to see the good aspects of their culture and how we could learn from that. We also witnessed firsthand the intergenerational trauma as we worked

with the children, most of whom were between five and ten. One memory illustrates this well: we asked the group to share what they wanted to be when they grew up, and one of the six-year-olds commented that he would probably just party like his dad. By the end of those six weeks my wife and I agreed that we wanted to do what we could to heal those wounds. Two years later Paul invited me to recruit a team for the teen program at Sonrise Camp. Thanks to the expansion of this ministry over the years, my family and I now spend the entire month of July up north running camps, and I make semi-regular trips there throughout the year. Some of our most meaningful relationships have come about because of this ministry.

Over the last few years, I have had an increasing number of opportunities to work with other people groups. I oversee a campus ministry at Trent and as part of that, I help prepare and host a weekly meal for international students. Last summer I was also invited to speak at a camp for Chin youth, which may become a repeat occurrence. Most recently, I have been invited to pastor a church at Curve Lake First Nation alongside a veteran pastor who wants to work towards retirement.

The result is that a good portion of my life is now spent ministering to people from other cultures. Because of this, I have come to recognize how different people are across cultures, and yet how much good can come from working through those differences to cultivate understanding and love (Livermore 2009, 20). Alongside this new pastoral opportunity, I have begun promoting

awareness about First Nations issues throughout my church network, which has allowed me to preach, lead workshops, facilitate focus groups, and participate in planning a conference on indigenous issues. After these events, white people often tell me that it was the first time they had considered the topic of racial reconciliation, despite the fact that the government formally adopted the term in 1998 and indigenous people have been attempting to raise awareness about it for decades (Miller 2000, loc 5419). This shows how big the gap between people groups within our society is. I want that to change, and have been learning to contribute to that over the past ten years. This is what I mean when I say that I am called to lead intercultural reconciliation.

Similarly, while my upbringing and theological training contributed to my appreciation of intergenerational relationships, my ministry experience has been a journey of working to promote intergenerational reconciliation, even though I did not always think of it as such. Even before I began vocational ministry, much of my time was spent meeting with people one-on-one and offering them what wisdom I could. During my time at Trent, this included mentoring younger students as a volunteer leader with the campus ministry. Then, after graduating and leading the camps in Nemaska, I applied to be an interim youth pastor at a local church. I spent two years in that role, and realized that the part that I loved most was the deep relationships I formed with individuals, rather than running the group functions, which felt like more of a necessity than ministry.

During my time as a youth leader, I focused on developing a team of teen

and young adult leaders and encouraging them to take responsibility for much of the programming while I focused on mentoring them. After moving on from that position, I had the opportunity to reboot the campus ministry I had been a part of as a student and deliberately structured the ministry in a similar fashion, with my role being focused on mentoring the student leaders as they ran events and witnessed to their peers. I have now been serving in this capacity for seven years and have mentored multiple generations of students as they lead Christians For Trent. Many of them have expressed how meaningful it was to have an older person intentionally investing in them. These experiences have allowed me to witness firsthand what *Hemorrhaging Faith* describes: those who have received guidance from parents and mentors before going to university are often significantly more mature emotionally and spiritually than those who had to fend for themselves (Penner et al 2011, 52).

It is a little heartbreaking how often I have been told by students that I was the first person to offer to mentor them. Mentoring university students has also shown me the accuracy of a follow-up study by the same group that argues that the generation gap in the Canadian church stems from significant developmental (Heimstra et al 2018, 21-30), behavioural (Heimstra et al 2018, 31-42), and value shifts (Heimstra et al 2018, 107-117). In recent years, this has led me to seek out opportunities to encourage churches to invest more heavily in intergenerational ministries, rather than focusing solely on age-specific programs. This has included preaching, running workshops, and consulting with churches and individual

leaders on the topic of mentoring. Interestingly, as I lead these conversations I often hear from older people that they assume young people have no interest in what they have to offer, despite the fact that young people regularly tell me that they wish they had had a mentor growing up. This reveals how deep the generational gap in our society is. I want that to change, and have been learning to contribute to that over the past ten years. This is what I mean when I say that I am called to lead intergenerational reconciliation.

Although I have distinguished between these two aspects of my calling, it is important to note that the two go hand-in-hand. This is demonstrated most clearly by the camp ministry, which involves settlers and First Nations people working together to care for campers, and the international meals at Trent, which involve a diverse group of adults and students working together and building relationships over food. The church I pastor at Curve Lake has expressed a desire for me to develop intergenerational ministries as well. This shows that the intergenerational gap is one that spans people groups. This is partly because the needs for intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation stem from the same core issues in our society: the bloody history of western empires, the breakdown of intergenerational relationships because of trauma, and disorientation caused by rapid technological and social change (Tickle 2012, 57-87). The result is that Christendom has declined and as of yet, no alternative has emerged as a rallying point, with only a loose ethical code binding people together (Heimstra et al 2018, 107). While there are benefits to this kind of privatized faith, it makes it difficult

to have serious conversations about social values and to bridge differences between groups, a trend that has been developing for decades (Newbiggin 1986, 24) and is reflected in the polarization of contemporary politics.

Despite the fact that the Church is reeling from these changes too, it also has an important role to play within this new normal. The Apostle Paul called his followers to embrace their “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:16-21), and, in so doing, to embrace those in other social, racial, and economic categories than themselves (Galatians 3:27-29). It is worth noting that the latter verse, which is often used to justify the modern notion that distinctions between people groups do not matter, is actually premised on our differences being an enduring element of society (George 1994, 289-291). It is the mutual recognition that we are fellow heirs of salvation despite our differences that allows us to be “liberated from the demonic forces of racism, materialism, and sexism” (George 1994, 292). In other words, while deep differences exist, they must not be allowed to divide the Church, a conviction that seems to drive Paul’s ministry.

Paul’s focus on reconciling ethnic/cultural groups is particularly striking, given the fact that first-century Judaism—including Jewish Christianity—was characterized by fierce nationalism in response to persecution (Dunn 1990, 137-148). His refusal to subject the Gentiles even to nominal adherence to the Jewish law ultimately resulted in the Jerusalem church embracing mixed communities of Jewish and Gentile believers rather than insisting that Gentiles become functional Jews (Dunn 1990, 162), which is reflected in Luke’s record of

the Jerusalem council's decree (Acts 15:19-21). My sense is that a similar commitment to the ministry of reconciliation is needed in our age, as the gap between people groups grows. The Church must call for people groups to love one another across deep differences, while modelling what that looks like.

Although there are certainly more groups that need to experience reconciliation than those of different cultures and generations—contemporary battles over sexuality come to mind—my conviction is that God wants me to focus on these two divisions in particular, and not just as an individual, but as one who leads Christian individuals and communities to reconcile with those of other cultures and generations.

Having detailed why I believe that God has called me to lead intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation, I want to consider one last question to round out my philosophy of ministry: what do I think is the best means of accomplishing that objective? Or, put in more technical terms, what kind of praxis will allow me to realize the reconciliation I have envisioned? This is an important question for anyone to ask as he or she reflects on what it means to be a Christian leader.

Describing My Praxis

Leading intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation requires careful consideration of one's praxis. The reason for this is simple: any leader is from a specific culture and generation. This may seem obvious, however, it is easy to forget when you are engaged in leading others because leaders often feel set apart from and, by consequence, superior to their followers. Leaders are generally

among the most educated and experienced individuals within their community and, when challenges arise, pressure to find a quick resolution makes it easy to default to determining solutions by themselves. When this is the norm, it can result in a small group of people from a particular culture and generation disproportionately influencing everyone else. This can be partly addressed by cultivating diversity within leadership teams, but this is surprisingly difficult to achieve. Because like attracts like, leadership teams tend to develop an internal culture that makes it hard for deep differences to manifest, and leadership qualifiers tend to be easier for people from a dominant culture or generation to achieve. In my experience the result is that, while the final authority in most churches is a board, and most boards espouse the value of diversity, they still tend to be relatively homogeneous and hire pastors who suit their preferences.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that this is malicious or even conscious on their part. However, even well-meaning leaders can unwittingly create a situation in which certain groups are favoured over others, which exacerbates historic tensions. For this reason, if I want to achieve my calling of leading intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation, it is essential for my praxis to include communal discernment processes. Three aspects of church leadership are particularly affected by incorporating communal discernment processes: theology, leadership decisions, and social justice. Each of these aspects of church leadership stands to benefit from leveraging the diverse experiences that exist across cultures and generations, which communal discernment processes permit. I would like to

consider each of these in turn.

Using communal discernment processes

to shape a community's theology

Communal discernment processes can deepen a leader and community's understanding of God. In making this assertion, I am assuming what practical theologians maintain: that theology is not merely an exercise in understanding and applying scripture and tradition, but requires interpreting our ongoing experiences of God's action in the world (Ward 2017, 225). Although scripture and tradition serve as important guardrails to ensure that our experiences do not mislead us, too often theologians lose sight of the purpose of theology, which is to answer two critical questions: "What should we do?" and "How should we live?" (Anderson 2001, 38). As the narrative portions of scripture demonstrate, answering these questions is not merely a matter of expositing normative sources—in fact, that is more in line with the Pharisees' approach than with the Apostles'—it is a process of understanding how those normative sources relate to our ongoing experience of God's grace in a fallen world (Anderson 2001, 32). This is how the Old Testament authors treated the Abrahamic covenant and Mosaic law as they went through the exile (Isaiah 1:11) and this is how the New Testament authors treated the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as they witnessed the reconciling work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10). Far from diminishing the importance of scripture and tradition, practical theology is rooted in the conviction that the God who is revealed by our forebears is still alive and active today and revealing himself to us

so we can participate in his redemptive mission (Ward 2017, 229). Understanding God requires interpreting our experiences and allowing them to dialogue with normative theological sources.

The question is, how should we go about this, and how is our approach affected by seeking reconciliation between people groups? My answer to the first question is that communal discernment generates this kind of theological reflection. The New Testament makes clear that the Holy Spirit is active among the church community as a whole, not simply those with a leadership position. Many metaphors are used to illustrate this: the church is the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5), a priesthood (1 Peter 2:5), a family (Ephesians 2:19), and so on. Underpinning all of these is the conviction that “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matthew 18:20). Jesus makes this assertion to teach his disciples that they need to be united when confronting sinful behaviour, but it also seems to establish that Jesus is present with unified groups of believers, and that they have the authority to call upon him and expect a response (France 2007, 1034). In other words, whenever Christians are united, the potential exists for God to reveal himself—this is not exclusive to those with a leadership office (France 2007, 1037).

This does not diminish the importance of godly leadership, which is one of God’s primary tools for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). It means that understanding the living God requires more than just trained theologians who can teach people about the Bible and historic doctrines. These trained leaders

must hear and interpret how God is revealing himself in the lives of laypeople. This is not simply a matter of valuing laypeople, it requires processes for inviting them to share and reflect upon their stories. Ray Anderson provides a model of how this takes place:

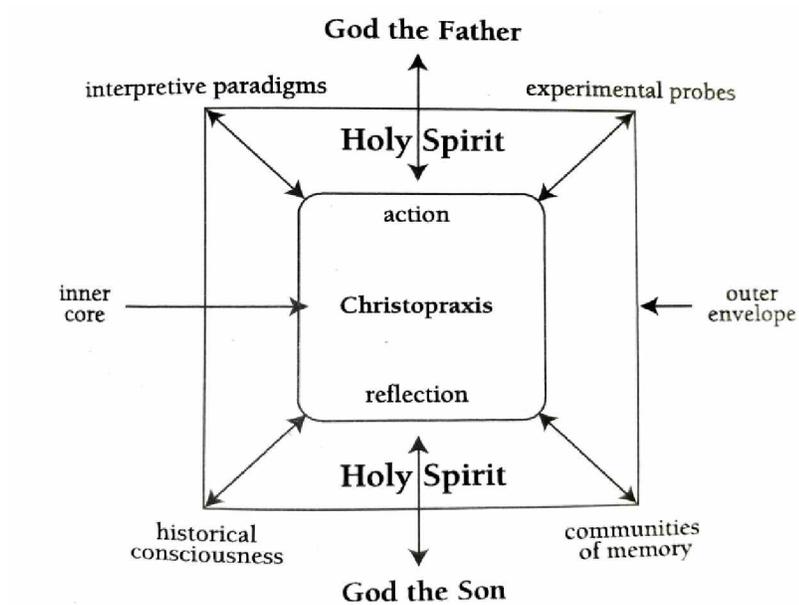


Figure 13: Anderson’s Model of Practical Theology (Anderson 2001, 29)

In this model, Christians regularly experience Jesus’ ongoing ministry (“Christopraxis”) as they live out their faith and reflect on it. This forms the “inner core” of theological awareness. That nascent awareness then needs to dialogue with the “outer envelope” of theological knowledge: our interpretive paradigms, experimental probing, historical consciousness, and current communities’ shared memory. Together, this creates a mutually-sustaining tension between the past and present understandings of who God is and how he relates to humanity. I find this model useful for visualizing what should take place when I

invite a group of people to reflect on how they have experienced God throughout their lives.

One communal discernment process that lines up well with Anderson's model is Theological Action Research (TAR). TAR aims to generate theological reflection by inviting a group to plan a project together, do it, and discuss how what they witnessed during that activity relates to their traditional beliefs (Cameron et al 2010, 40). It includes questions that allow participants to consider how their experiences relate to their normative theology, formal theology, espoused theology, and operant theology, which roughly line up with Anderson's categories of historical consciousness, interpretive paradigms, communities of memory, and experimental probes (Cameron et al 2010, 73). Although I have not used TAR specifically, I have used its secular equivalent, Participatory Action Research (PAR), with a group of Cree Christians and can see how that kind of shared project lends itself to experiencing Jesus' ongoing ministry. I will consider PAR more closely later; for now, it is sufficient to say that I see TAR as a relevant means of generating theological reflection as I seek to live out my calling. This kind of communal discernment process allows Christian leaders and their communities to understand God in ways that expositing scripture and tradition does not.

How is our approach affected by seeking reconciliation between people groups? My experience is that this kind of ministry makes communal discernment processes even more important, because they allow people groups who might

otherwise be overlooked to contribute theologically. This enables a richer understanding of God, as well as encouraging a healthy power dynamic between different groups. As I described previously, leadership teams are often less diverse than the communities they lead and because of that, it is easy for them to assume that other people's experiences are similar to their own. Listening to laypeople's stories allows leaders to check their own biases and hear how God is at work in the lives of those who are different than themselves, which, over time, will lead to a deeper understanding of how God actually works, which will in turn enrich their ministry.

Anderson provides a poignant example of this in sharing how a divorcee in his congregation asked him to bless her second marriage despite the fact that she did not view herself as the aggrieved party in her divorce. He had never considered the possibility that taking a rigid stance on what constitutes an "acceptable remarriage" might deny the restorative work Christ was doing in someone's life, and presumably never would have recognized this if he had not paid attention to her story (Anderson 2001, 27). The opposite is true as well. It can cause severe harm when this tendency towards groupthink is ignored and leaders assume that their perspective is the only right way to think about God.

Indigenous theologians are quick to point out that one of the historic sources of harm against their people is that ethnocentric European theology allowed Christians to justify demeaning them (Jacobs et al 2008, 26). Although the examples are not as extreme when considering the differences that exist across

generations, in my experience, young Christians often feel like their skills are more valued within the church than their experiences and theological perspectives, which leads many of them to pursue ministry roles outside of established churches. This tension is exacerbated by the fact that our culture at large has moved in the opposite direction, devaluing elders and relegating them to retirement homes while youthfulness is celebrated. Incorporating the insights of different cultures and generations equips leaders to avoid these harmful power dynamics. Although leaders should make a habit of listening to others' stories in their personal lives, having formal processes for hearing from their community ensures that everyone's voice is heard. Intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation makes it even more important for our theology to be shaped by communal discernment processes.

Using communal discernment processes

to shape leadership decisions

Alongside theological reflection, communal discernment processes can be valuable in shaping leadership decisions, for similar reasons. Just as God reveals himself in a myriad of ways by ministering to people, he grants people a wide range of different abilities, all of which are important to take into account in decision making. Too often, churches value certain gifts over others, which can lead to a small number of people making decisions without giving due attention to the needs and insights of those who differ from themselves. This is out of step with the Apostle Paul's assertion that "on those parts of the body that we think

less honorable we bestow the greater honor” (1 Corinthians 12:23). This principle should guide decision making in the church. Those who are naturally less valued by the society at large need to be given extra attention by church leaders so that their gifts can be developed and utilized to further the church’s mission. This is what Paul meant when he said that Christ “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:11-12). These leadership gifts were not given so leaders could hoard the work of ministry, they are an important part of how God nurtures growth in the church, empowering believers to develop ministry skills of their own and thus multiplying the ministry of Christ (Hirsch 2017, loc 1287).

Again, the question arises, how should leaders do this, and how is that affected by the pursuit of intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation? And again, communal discernment processes feature heavily in my response. Before making major decisions, it is wise for leaders to invite their followers to share what they are observing in order to discern what gifts and opportunities need to be factored into the decision. Leaders can never independently have a full understanding of how people are affected by decisions and listening allows them to consider the effects more carefully. At times, people are also capable of contributing creative ideas and volunteering their time, energy, and skills, but only do so when they are asked. In this sense, communal discernment processes function as a means of information gathering and dispersion. When it comes to significant decisions, leaders must cultivate a shared vision for the future, which

is also facilitated by communal discernment processes, since it increases people's sense of ownership about the decision. Finally, communal discernment processes also increase the level of accountability for leadership decisions, ensuring that bad decisions are addressed instead of compounded over time. Three relatively straightforward communal discernment processes are Appreciative Inquiry, Asset Mapping, and guided feedback processes such as 100 Days of Prayer.

Appreciative Inquiry is best done every few years to cultivate a shared vision for the community (Harder 2013, 87). In it, participants are invited to share about their experiences, values, and perceived opportunities to discern where God is at work in the community and what new possibilities might be emerging as a result (Harder 2013, 84-86). Asset Mapping is more detailed and strategic, and as such may be most useful as part of a revitalization project. In it, participants are asked to take an inventory of all of the gifts in their midst in order to see what untapped potential exists within the community that can be turned into new endeavours (Harder 2013, 124-127). This pushes back against a consumerist tendency to track only easily quantifiable things such as money and attendance (Harder 2013, 115). Guided feedback processes such as 100 Days of Prayer allow leaders to seek feedback on a wide range of issues in a short period of time, and as such are best used as an accountability tool (Bullard 2005, 2). In it, participants are asked to go on a "spiritual journey" by meeting in small groups and prayerfully discussing various aspects of the church's life, with written reports being sent back to the leaders so they can discern what is going well and what

needs to be changed (Bullard 2005, 17). None of these approaches is mutually exclusive and all will have a similar effect of empowering the community to contribute to leadership decisions.

How is our approach affected by the pursuit of intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation? Again, it increases the value of considering laypeople's experience in decision making and, as such, increases the usefulness of communal discernment processes. Just as theology has often failed to incorporate diverse perspectives and been used to justify harming others, centralized decision making often disempowers those who are negatively affected by the decisions. Surely the fate of indigenous people would have been different if Canada's government, churches, and schools had seriously considered their perspective before deciding how they were to be governed, converted, or taught. Similarly, young people often feel like their opinions are discounted by those in leadership, which is exacerbated when they are siloed off into age-specific programs and treated as a means of propping up the functions in which older, wealthier congregants are more heavily invested.

These cultural and generational gaps can be bridged, in part, by using communal discernment processes, which allow leaders to understand the perspectives of those who are different than themselves. In fact, in my experience, they are more effective at doing so than the typical solution, which is to try to build fully representative leadership teams—a task that is more difficult than many leaders anticipate because “cultural practices are not just lodged in

cognition, but also embodied feelings,” (Priest and Edwards 2019, 532). Thus, as with any intercultural activity (Livermore 2009, 326), disorientation can ensue and cause tension as leadership teams become more diverse.

Communal discernment processes are designed to account for that disorientation, and as such can empower those whose experiences are not usually taken into account, even in settings where those with leadership offices are culturally and generationally homogenous. I have had the opportunity to use both Appreciative Inquiry and an adapted version of 100 Days of Prayer during the past year, both as a result of my transition from a white church to the congregation at Curve Lake. As I prepared to leave the white church, I led them through a guided prayer and feedback process, which provided us with ample information for determining next steps in terms of staffing and other strategic decisions. Alongside the valuable information, there were a number of people who felt like the process revitalized their church engagement because it gave them an opportunity to build relationships with people they would never have pursued otherwise.

Then, soon after I arrived at the Curve Lake congregation, I was asked to lead a planning meeting. I proposed using a light version of Appreciative Inquiry, and the group took to it very naturally. The outcome was a few ministry ideas, including the proposal that we hold occasional fundraisers. This was an interesting proposal because I could tell that the white congregants, including myself, were hesitant because conservative evangelical churches often view overt

requests for money as a lack of faith. However, all of the First Nations people thought it would be a positive experience for the broader community, not just a means of earning some money for the church. One of the ladies volunteered to run one soon thereafter and in the end, over \$1000 was raised and it was evident that everyone involved had a good time, including the people who bought into the event. This reminded me that the things that will and will not work at this new congregation will differ from my previous one. Communal discernment processes make this kind of learning possible, as well as generating new relational connections. As such, I believe that they should be an important part of my praxis.

Using communal discernment processes

to pursue social justice

There is an increasing awareness within evangelicalism that social justice is not just a side concern once the primary task of evangelism is complete, but an important aspect of how the church fulfills its mission. This, too, is facilitated by communal discernment processes. God has always been in the business of empowering those who suffer due to others' sin.

Perhaps the clearest demonstration of this is the Exodus, in which Yahweh defeats another divine being in order to rescue a group of slaves from one of the world's mightiest nations (Dempster 2003, 97) and then wars against empires to provide them dominion over their own land (Dempster 2003, 127). This concern continues throughout the Old Testament, when God disciplines the Israelites and allows them to be exiled, in part because their idolatry led to rampant injustice

(Dempster 2003, 173). In the midst of exile, however, God promises to send a deliverer for his now re-oppressed people (Dempster 2003, 220-221). Jesus proclaimed himself to be that deliverer (Luke 4:16-19) and although he refused to become a governmental or military leader, he challenged the authority of the Jewish and Roman leaders so much that they worked together to kill him (Wright 2006, 310). This challenge came through his teaching (Matthew 16:6), relationships (Luke 7:36-50), actions (Mark 11:15-18), and miracles (Mark 3:1-6). Perhaps most significantly, when they did eventually kill him, Jesus' resurrection proved that God can and will overcome any weapon of injustice to rescue his people, including death itself (Romans 8:31-39). This led to his earliest followers creating equitable communities that sought to care for the disenfranchised members of their society as a reflection of God's kingdom (Acts 2:42-47). The Old and New Testaments are united in their conviction that righteousness and justice go hand-in-hand (Keller 2010, 10-11). The words of Micah 6:8 bear repeating: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Social justice is part of the mission of God's people.

So how are we to accomplish this, and how does leading intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation affect our methods? Again, communal discernment processes have an important role to play. For many Christians, pursuing social justice simply means being charitable. The evangelicals I know are relatively good at supporting charities with their time and money. However,

charity is often ineffective at addressing the root causes of injustice and sometimes even perpetuates a power imbalance between those with the means to be charitable and their beneficiaries (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 86). As such, leaders should think critically about how they pursue justice and seek to empower those who stand to benefit.

This is not an easy sell in evangelical circles, however, because our history has led us to be skeptical of social justice movements (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 60). Communal discernment processes are a good starting point. By inviting beneficiaries of service projects to share their experiences and insights, the projects can be improved and those leading the project can begin to understand the people they serve better, and perhaps even relate to them (Corbett and Fikkert 2012, 82). One process that has been used to accomplish this is Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR seeks to empower communities to improve their quality of life by designing a project together (Stringer 2014, 14). It begins with facilitated discussions to determine what opportunities exist in their context. Then, once an opportunity is identified, the group plans to do something about it. Once plans are in place, they carry out the plans, then close off with some guided discussions to reflect on what they learned and what needs to happen next. This repeating cycle of observing, planning, acting, and reflecting can lead to lasting change, especially when the cycle is allowed to continue for a number of iterations (Stringer 2014, 10). Within PAR, leaders still have an important role to play as facilitators, but they seek to leave as much of the decision making in the

hands of the project participants because it maximizes ownership and skill development (Stringer 2014, 20). PAR is one of a number of communal discernment processes that can be used to carry out our mission of creating just communities.

How does a pursuit of reconciliation affect things? Again, communal discernment processes can play an important role when trying to enact justice across cultures and generations. Young people and racial minorities have often expressed to me how frustrating it is when other people try to fix them instead of building relationships with them. They are acutely aware of the fact that often, those with societal power are prone to view those less fortunate than themselves as projects, which perpetuates the power imbalance. Most of the time, these comments are not meant as an attack on well-meaning individuals, they are simply meant to express a desire for a better approach to correcting our societal issues.

When I have had the opportunity to work on correcting issues with those most affected by them, it has always proven worth the effort. As stated previously, I used PAR to design a workshop for Cree mentors as my Doctor of Ministry research project. Originally, I anticipated that I would teach the workshop alongside other experienced instructors. Instead, as the PAR process unfolded, I realized that the participants were already doing many of the things that a mentor needs to do, and so I invited them to teach one another. Although the presentation quality may not have been as good as what a team of experienced teachers could

have pulled off, the content was good. More importantly, the participants were deeply encouraged to see that they were already doing so much for the youth in their community, and could work together to build on that instead of starting from scratch. The process also deepened my ministry relationship with the participants, since it gave me an opportunity to listen to their stories and affirm the work that God was doing in and through them. Although I do not know how often I will employ PAR rigorously, this experience taught me that simply inviting people to share their experiences with one another can bridge the gap between people groups over time.

I have seen a similar thing take place in my campus ministry. A few years ago we were considering ways to meet the needs of international students. One of our student leaders was close to the international community so instead of planning something ourselves, we called together a group of his friends and they proposed that we start hosting weekly meals. They believed that this would complement the activities of the various international student groups by providing a regular point of contact for everyone from abroad. Knowing that this would be a significant endeavour, we partnered with local churches and international groups and it yielded many meaningful intergenerational and intercultural relationships, alongside feeding fifty to one hundred students most weeks for the past two school years. Would we have come up with the idea of meals if we had simply planned something ourselves? Possibly. But by consulting with the students our purpose became clearer and we were able to partner with the students from the

start. I have learned that communal discernment processes can enhance efforts to meet people's needs and correct social issues, and for this reason, I am committed to using them as I try to lead intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation.

As I stated above, I am convinced that communal discernment processes are a key element of how I am to fulfill my calling. As a Christian leader, I recognize that it is vital to listen to people's experiences and invite them to contribute to the church's theology, leadership decisions, and social justice endeavours. Intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation requires this even more than most pursuits because of the need to overcome the gap and power imbalance that exist between these groups. For this reason, communal discernment processes are increasingly part of my ministry praxis, which, in turn, has deepened my understanding of leadership.

Summary

Leadership is a social phenomenon, in which individuals take initiative, influencing others to achieve an impact. Christian leadership is distinct in that it aims to glorify the Father by submitting to the Spirit and emulating the Son. For me personally, this involves leading intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation using communal discernment processes. This is my philosophy of leadership, which I have arrived at based on my upbringing, education, and ministry experiences. To succeed, I will need to continue growing personally and developing my skills, as well as prioritizing my relationships with those under my leadership and God, since I play just a small part in his global mission. I am

certainly not perfect at carrying out these responsibilities but I believe that I am improving, and am grateful for the role that the Doctor of Ministry program has played in facilitating personal reflection and sharpening my focus. Hopefully, I will be able to continue leading intercultural and intergenerational reconciliation using communal discernment processes for a long time.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

And thus, I arrive at the conclusion of my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Research Portfolio. As I indicated in the Introduction, I believe that these four documents reflect how much I have grown as a leader thanks to the DMin program. My Leadership Narrative describes how my life experiences prepared me to lead in a number of distinct, yet similar, ministry contexts. My Ministry Context Analysis describes the camp ministry I lead in Mistissini and shows how I arrived at the decision to train Cree mentors as my research project. My Project Report details how I went about doing so, including the role that Participatory Action Research played in challenging my assumptions and empowering participants to teach one another, which increased their confidence in ways that I did not originally anticipate. And my Philosophy of Leadership outlines why I believe that I am called to lead intergenerational and intercultural reconciliation using communal discernment processes. These four documents reflect more than three years of work and growth. I have grown in my sense of calling, my competency, my capacity, and my relationship with God. This growth happened because I learned about leadership in my classes, applied the ideas in my various ministry settings, and used my coursework and research to integrate my new understanding into other areas of my life. This is the effect that the DMin program

had on my life and leadership.

Many positive ministry outcomes have resulted from my time in the program, too. As mentioned in my Project Report, my ministry relationships in Mistissini were deepened due to my collaborative approach. This is significant because Paul has indicated to me that he wants me to carry on the ministry there after he retires. He is not eager to do so, but since he is over sixty now, he knows that it is important to have a transition plan, and I am a key part of that.

Paul and I are also exploring how to build on the initial success of the mentoring workshop. As I described in the Ministry Context Analysis, our original aim was to build a standalone mentoring program that we could filter youth into via the camps. Now, thanks to the research project and leadership development efforts we have made at the camp, we are in close contact with a number of people leading youth programs, and we are shifting our vision to centre around what they are doing. Since their activities already require volunteers, we hope to offer the mentoring workshop as a component of their volunteer training. Then, we can track with the program leads and trained volunteers to help them put the skills they learn in the workshop into practice. We were hoping to implement this idea over the summer in anticipation of programs launching this fall. Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, travel to and from the Cree communities has been restricted and our plans have been delayed. However, once we can visit Mistissini again, I am excited to try this new approach. If possible, I would also like to research this next stage of our work, because the findings could be

significant for other First Nations ministry practitioners as they seek to repair intergenerational relationships in their context.

New opportunities are also emerging outside of Mistissini. Over the past few years, my relationship with the leaders of Nemaska Bible Camp has also deepened, and we have been discussing how to involve local volunteers in that ministry. As I mentioned in my Leadership Narrative, I am also now pastoring a church at Curve Lake First Nation. One of the reasons they invited me to serve in that capacity is because of my experience with First Nations youth. I am currently exploring the possibility of launching a youth ministry there, using communal discernment processes from the outset. Alongside this, I have had the opportunity to lead a number of discussions about the intersection between Christianity and indigenous teachings over the past year and I anticipate that this will be an important part of my ministry at Curve Lake.

The ministry benefits extend beyond my hands-on work with First Nations people, too. A handful of churches in Peterborough have asked me to preach and lead workshops on mentoring over the past couple of years. Alongside this, I have begun leading discussions with other pastors that are engaged in indigenous ministries throughout my church network, and the leaders of the network have indicated that they may enlist me as a consultant if the need arises.

Through this same network, I was invited to speak at a camp for Chin youth in 2019. The Chin are a persecuted people in Burma that have immigrated to Canada en masse over the past couple of decades, and their church leaders are

worried about the changes they see in their young people. They asked me to speak on a wide array of topics, including drugs and alcohol, romantic relationships, respecting their elders, and even apologetics, since some youth have been expressing intellectual doubts. Fortunately, these are all topics I have encountered in my student and First Nations ministry, and what I said was well-received by the youth and leaders alike. Between this and the work I have been doing with international students at Trent, it seems like I may have intercultural leadership opportunities beyond First Nations people moving forward. None of these opportunities is as clearly defined as the steps we are taking to facilitate mentoring in Mistissini, however I anticipate that some, if not all of them, will play an important role in my ministry moving forward.

Alongside these personal outcomes, I hope that my journey through the DMin program has provided a learning opportunity for others. My portfolio includes changes in my psychology, spirituality, and leadership, all of which makes it a portrait of deep life change, which is the aim of most ministries. Along with this I detailed how my theology changed over the years, which invites readers to think about how they arrived at their own theological convictions. It also includes details about the generational and cultural divides that exist in our society and churches, which I hope motivates readers to explore these issues more fully. Finally, I have shared some of the wisdom I have gleaned from my leadership experience and studies, including the impact that communal discernment processes can have on a ministry context. I would like to think that

this wisdom can be adapted and applied to other ministry contexts, and in so doing, that other Christian leaders are able to pursue what the Apostle Paul refers to as a “ministry of reconciliation,” encouraging people who differ to value each other as an expression of God’s reconciling love (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). The value of communal discernment processes may differ depending on one’s ministry context. For example, larger churches looking to develop ministries may find that they need to take a different approach than the one I used in my research. Nonetheless, I think we should all strive to understand those who are deeply different than ourselves, and ministry leaders always need to be mindful of the effects that their work is having on the less prominent members of their community. This is especially important for those working with indigenous people, since historically their perspective has been undervalued. I encourage those who see a resemblance between their ministry context and mine to seriously consider communal discernment processes like Appreciative Inquiry, Asset Mapping, and Participatory Action Research. I suspect that utilizing them will prove fruitful. Because the ministry of reconciliation is so important in twenty-first century Canadian society, I would be pleased if that was one of the effects of my doctoral work.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Project Participants List

Table 2 contains the full list of participants with relevant details. When someone is listed as a “full participant” it means that they participated in every form of data collection and taught in the workshop. If someone is listed as a “full participant until workshop,” it means that they participated in every form of data collection during the Observation and Planning stages and were prepared to teach in the workshop, but for some reason were prevented from doing so and thus did not participate in the interview and logging during the Reflection stage.

Table 2: Participants List

Name	Gender	Life Stage	Point of Contact	Level of Participation
Angela	Female	Single young adult	Youth worker	Full participant
Carol	Female	Retired	FBC member	Part of the leadership team, and a full participant.
Cindy	Female	Married young adult	Youth worker	Participated in an interview and logs during the Observation stage.
Laurence	Male	Young family	Youth worker	Participated in an interview and logs in the Observation stage.

Name	Gender	Life Stage	Point of Contact	Level of Participation
Michael	Male	Married young adult	Youth worker	Full participant in the Observation stage, and part of the teaching team, although he was prevented from teaching because of an unexpected commitment that day.
Rhonda	Female	Young family	Youth worker	Participated in an interview and logs in the Observation stage.
Ruth	Female	Adult children	FBC member	Full participant
Sarah	Female	Young family	FBC member & youth worker	Full participant
Sharon	Female	Adult children	FBC member & youth worker	Full participant until workshop.
Steve	Male	Young family	FBC member	Full participant.

Appendix B: Mentoring Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire to let us know how confident you feel about mentoring youth in your community outside of your own children (if you have any). For the sake of this questionnaire the term youth refers to people 12 to 21 years old.

By completing this questionnaire you consent to the following information being used in "A Participatory Action Research Project Exploring Training for Prospective Mentors Among Eeyou Adults in Mistissini, Quebec" being conducted by Benjamin Peltz. Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. Neither your name or your age will be published as part of the final project and every effort will be made to ensure your confidentiality, although due to the small scale of the study and the tight-knit nature of Mistissini anonymity cannot be guaranteed. For more information or to voice any concerns please contact [Carol] at [Carol's phone number] or [Carol's email address].

1. Name

2. Age

3. Overall, how confident do you feel when it comes to mentoring youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

4. Are you currently mentoring any youth?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

5. On average, how many meaningful interactions do you have with youth per month? A meaningful interaction is any interaction between you and youth (individually or in a group) that is memorable to you.

6. How important do you think mentoring is?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Important	<input type="radio"/>	Very Important				

7. How well do you think you understand the topic of mentoring?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not At All	<input type="radio"/>	Very Well				

8. How confident do you feel sharing your life experiences with youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

9. How confident do you feel discussing addiction with youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

10. How confident do you feel discussing relationships and sexuality with youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

11. How confident do you feel discussing mental health and anxiety with youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

12. How confident do you feel discussing self harm and suicide with youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

13. How confident do you feel discussing spiritual matters with youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

14. How confident do you feel about praising and encouraging youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

15. How confident do you feel about offering correction to youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

16. How confident do you feel teaching communication skills to youth?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

17. How confident do you feel about teaching youth how to handle stress?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

18. How confident do you feel teaching youth how to handle conflict?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

19. How confident do you feel teaching youth how to make career decisions?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

20. How confident do you feel about teaching practical skills to youth? (eg. camping or cooking)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

21. How confident do you feel about doing activities with youth? (eg. hunting, fishing, sports, or making something together)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

22. How confident do you feel about attending special events to support youth? (eg. birthdays, athletic competitions, graduations)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

23. How confident do you feel about connecting youth to resources as needed? (eg. youth services, counselling, or addiction recovery services)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

24. How confident do you feel about setting healthy boundaries with youth? (eg. not giving them money if asked)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

25. How confident are you that you can mentor youth despite your personal struggles?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Confident	<input type="radio"/>	Very Confident				

26. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Appendix C: Stage One Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Study Participants

1. What was your relationship with Cree adults like as you grew up?
2. Did you have any mentors growing up? If so, what made them different than other adults?
3. What is your relationship with youth from your community like?
4. Do you think that any youth regard you as a mentor? If so, how did that relationship develop and what does it look like today?
5. How satisfied are you with your ability to mentor youth?

Interview Questions for Community Leaders Involved with Youth

1. What does Cree culture traditionally teach about how adults should relate to youth?
2. How do Cree adults tend to relate to their youth today?
3. How do you think that white people and their culture have affected the way that Cree adults relate to their youth?

Appendix D: Stage Two Focus Group Questions

1. What skills are required to mentor youth?
2. Which of these skills do you feel you are already good at?
3. Which of these skills do you want to grow in?
4. What kind of training on this topic would you find helpful?
5. What other support would you appreciate alongside training?

Appendix E: Teaching Guide

What topic are you speaking on? (one to three words)

Who's your audience? (number of people, age, gender, place of origin, education, unique needs)

What's the main idea you want your audience to learn in this lesson? (one sentence)

How did you learn this idea? (one to two sentences)

Why is this idea important for your audience? (one to two sentences)

What's a creative way to illustrate this idea? (circle one)

A story from my life A story I heard from someone else An object
lesson Image(s)

Chart(s) or diagram(s) A group activity Reflection/discussion
questions

What's a brief description of your creative illustration? (one sentence)

Teaching Tips

- The Teaching Guide gives you the skeleton of a lesson. To deliver it, follow these steps:
 1. Introduce yourself and your topic.
 2. Share your main idea.
 3. Share how you learned this idea.
 4. Share why this idea is important for your audience.
 5. Use your creative illustration to help your audience understand this idea.
 6. Repeat your main idea.
- Thinking about who your audience is can help when choosing what main idea to focus on. Ask yourself, “How is this idea helpful for people who are this age, gender,” and so on. Also ask yourself if there are any words that will be hard for them to understand or things you might need to explain for them that you might not have to explain to someone else.
- Try and use words you would actually speak out loud as you fill out the Guide, especially for your main idea. Making this easy to say and memorizing it makes it easy to be clear during your presentation.
- Depending on the length of time you have to teach, you may want to add more detail than you can capture in the one or two sentences you used for each question in the Guide. The Guide is still helpful, though, because it helps you identify the most important things to share.
- You may want to bring your Guide to use as your speaking notes, or highlight the things you identified in the Guide in any longer set of notes that you create.
- It can be helpful to speak with someone you trust and explain what you’ve written in your Guide before teaching it to a group.
- Most people feel nervous before public speaking. If you do, it can be helpful to remind yourself that nervousness and excitement are actually the same thing from your body’s perspective. If you find yourself thinking “I’m so nervous” try saying (in your head or out loud) “I’m so excited!” I (Ben) do this every time I speak in public and it really helps!

Appendix F: Workshop Debrief Questions

1. What stood out to you about the workshop?
2. Do you think this workshop would be worth doing again, perhaps with some of the people who were supposed to teach but weren't able to make it?

Appendix G: Stage Four Focus Group Questions

1. What was good about this process and what could be improved if we were to do it again?
2. How does the process we went through compare to other training processes you have been part of? (What is the same/different, better/worse?)
3. What should our next steps be?

Appendix H: Stage Four Interview Questions

1. How did you feel about your part in the process?
2. How did you feel about the process overall?
3. What effect, if any, do you think being part of this process has had on your life?
4. What effect, if any, do you think being part of this process has had on your ability to mentor youth?
5. Do you have any feedback for me as the one leading this process?

Appendix I: Coding Tables

Table 3: Descriptive Coding Breakdown

Code	Definition	Total
Int - Negative	Instances where participants reported a negative interaction with youth.	4
Int - Positive	Instances where participants reported a positive interaction with youth.	70
No Int - No Explanation	Instances where participants reported that they did not have memorable interactions with youth, with no explanation why.	70
No Int - No Opportunity	Instances where participants reported that they did not have memorable interactions with youth because they did not have the opportunity (eg. they were on a trip).	47
No Int - Personal Challenges	Instances where participants reported that they did not have memorable interactions with youth because personal challenges prevented them (eg. a severe illness).	15
Relational Investment	Interactions between me and participants that seemed like they contributed positively to their trust for me.	56
Relational Affirmation	Instances where participants expressed appreciation for their relationship with me.	22

Table 4: Emotion Coding Breakdown¹

Code	Definition	Total
Anger	Instances where participants expressed anger towards themselves or another person.	14
Concern	Instances where participants expressed concern about themselves or their community.	39
Confidence	Instances where participants made comments that implied confidence about themselves and their abilities.	87
Excitement	Instances where participants expressed excitement about something taking place in their lives.	24
Fear	Instances where participants expressed fear about something taking place in their lives.	18
Gratitude	Instances where participants expressed gratitude about something or someone in their life.	55
Hope	Instances where participants expressed a sense of hope or specific hopes for themselves or their community.	81
Joy	Instances where participants expressed joy because of something or someone in their life.	92
Pain	Instances where participants expressed pain because of something or someone in their life.	67
Regret	Instances where participants expressed regret that they had done something or something had occurred in their past.	41

¹ Note: I repeated these same codes with the label (Me) tagged onto the end so I could track my own emotions during recorded interactions and reflective notes, without those codes overlapping with the participants’.

Code	Definition	Total
Relief	Instances where participants expressed relief that something negative had ended in their life.	18
Respect	Instances where participants expressed respect for another person.	57
Surprise	Instances where participants expressed that they were surprised about something or someone.	9
Uncertainty	Instances where participants expressed uncertainty about something or someone.	73

Table 5: Evaluation Coding Breakdown

Code	Definition	Total
Project Affirmation	Instances where participants expressed appreciation for the project or the way it was being conducted.	75
Project Critique	Instances where participants expressed concern about the project or the way it was being conducted, or made suggestions about how to improve it.	15

Appendix J: Project Timetable

The following table lays out what took place throughout the project in sequential order, including who was involved in each step and how long that step took to complete, beginning with our preparations and concluding with the writing of this report.

Table 6: Project Timetable

Step Taken	Who Else Was Involved	Timing
Developed Context Analysis and Needs Evaluation	Professor and classmates in DMML 0941	May 2017 to September 2017
Developed Project Proposal	Professor and classmates in DMIN 0905 Leadership team ²	September 2017 to April 2018
Completed Ethics Review	Professor in DMIN 0905 Tyndale Research Ethics Board Leadership team	January to February 2018
Gained permission from Mistissini government via email	Leadership team Angela Angela's supervisor Chief Thomas Neeposh	February to October 2018
Finalized project plans	Leadership team	October 2018
Introduced participants to the project through an information session and one-on-one meetings; collected questionnaires	Leadership team All participants	November 24th to 28th, 2018

² "Leadership team" always refers to me, Paul, Carol, and James. Note that Carol and James were also project participants but I only list them individually if others on the leadership team were not involved in a step.

Step Taken	Who Else Was Involved	Timing
Interviewed participants	Leadership team (feedback) All participants	November 29th to December 12th, 2018
Collected daily activity logs via SMS or Facebook	All participants	December 11th, 2018 to January 10th, 2019, with a break for Christmas from December 22nd to January 2nd.
Provided a project update via Facebook	Chief's representative	December 12th, 2018
Led focus group	Angela Carol George Katherine Michael Ruth A one-time note taker	January 16th, 2019
Developed lesson plans with teaching team	Carol Crystal Angela George John Katherine Michael Ruth Sarah Steve	January to September 2019

Step Taken	Who Else Was Involved	Timing
Helped run Teen Week at Sonrise Camp ³	Leadership team Crystal John Ruth Sarah Steve	July 27th to August 3rd, 2019
Met with teaching team to confirm their participation and lesson plan	Carol Crystal Angela George John Katherine Michael Ruth Sarah Steve	November 4th to 7th, 2019
Led workshop and discussion about first impressions	Leadership team Angela Ruth Sarah Sharon (late) Steve	November 7th, 2019
Provided a project update via SMS	Chief's representative	November 13th, 2019
Collected daily activity logs via SMS or Facebook	Full participants ⁴ Sharon	November 13th, 2019 to February 2nd, 2020, with a break for Christmas from December 18th until January 7th

³ The camp programming was not formally part of the study and no data was collected during it. However, I thought it was worth including in the timeline because helping with the camp allowed me an opportunity to see some of the participants in person and to discuss their lesson plans, as well as furthering the ministry relationship I was developing with them.

⁴ "Full participants" refers to those who were part of the entire workshop and were later available for a closing focus group discussion and interview. This includes Carol, James, Angela, Ruth, Sarah, and Steve. Sharon is not included in this because personal challenges prevented her from attending the full workshop and participating in the closing focus group and interview.

Step Taken	Who Else Was Involved	Timing
Led closing focus group	Full participants Crystal John	February 4th, 2020
Interviewed participants	Leadership team (feedback) Full participants	February 4rd and 5th, 2020
Analyzed data and wrote project report	My wife, Shoshanna (editing)	March-May 2020

Appendix K: Project Data Types

Table 7: Data Sets

Type of Data	How it Was Collected	When it Was Collected	Who it Included	How it was analyzed
Notes from Leadership Meetings	I took detailed notes on my laptop during meetings	November 2018 to February 2020	Leadership team ⁵	Emotion and Evaluation Coding
Questionnaires	Participants filled out the questionnaire during the Observation Stage	November 24th to 28th, 2018	Fourteen participants	Basic quantitative analysis
Notes from Stage One Interviews	I took detailed notes on my laptop while interviewing participants	November 29th to December 12th, 2018	Twelve participants	Emotion and Evaluation Coding
Activity Logs from Stage One	I messaged participants daily to ask them whether they had memorable interactions with youth	December 11th, 2018 to January 10th, 2019, with a break from December 22nd to January 2nd	Twelve participants	Descriptive, Emotion, and Evaluation Coding

⁵ “Leadership team” refers to Paul, Carol, and James. Carol and James were also participants, which is why I specify “other participants” when the leadership team is included in a data set.

Type of Data	How it Was Collected	When it Was Collected	Who it Included	How it was analyzed
Notes from Stage Two Focus Group	A youth pastor from Ottawa took notes while I led the meeting	January 16th, 2019	Eight participants	Emotion and Evaluation Coding
Notes from Workshop (Stage Three)	I took detailed notes on my laptop immediately following the workshop	November 7th, 2019	Leadership team and five other participants	Emotion and Evaluation Coding
Activity Logs from Stage Four	I messaged participants daily to ask them whether they had meaningful interactions with youth	November 13th, 2019 to February 2nd, 2020, with a break from December 18th to January 7th	Seven participants	Descriptive, Emotion, and Evaluation Coding
Notes from Stage Four Focus Group	I took detailed notes on my laptop while leading the discussion	February 4th, 2020	Eight participants	Emotion and Evaluation Coding
Notes from Stage Four Interviews	I took detailed notes on my laptop while interviewing participants	February 4rd and 5th, 2020	Six participants	Emotion and Evaluation Coding

Type of Data	How it Was Collected	When it Was Collected	Who it Included	How it was analyzed
Notes on Self	Alongside interview, focus group, and leadership meeting notes I wrote down thoughts about my experiences and clearly marked them as such, then analyzed them separately.	November 2018 to February 2020	Me	Emotion and Evaluation Coding

Appendix L: Promotional Script

The following was stated in order to recruit participants through Faith Bible Chapel and an information session in November 2018:

In preparation for our mentoring program, Benjamin Peltz, one of our summer camp leaders and a student at Tyndale [University], is conducting a research project to develop an effective training program for volunteer mentors. This research project will be co-led by Ben, Paul, and [Carol]. They are looking for 5-10 Cree adults who are willing to participate in this study, which will involve sharing your experiences and thoughts about mentoring youth via interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and journaling, as well as going through a training program that will be developed collaboratively by the leadership team and study participants. If you are interested in participating in this study please contact Ben, Paul, or [Carol] for more information.

Appendix M: Information Letter and Consent

Form

Information Letter Regarding Research Taking Place at Mistissini Baptist Church by Pastor Benjamin Peltz exploring *Training for Prospective Mentors Among Eeyou⁶ Adults in Mistissini, Quebec* and request for your consent in participating in this study

Over the past six years, Mistissini Baptist Church has partnered with two White pastors, Paul and Benjamin Peltz, to run a week of programming at Sunrise Camp that is designed for teenagers from Mistissini and other Eeyou communities. During this time one challenge has been an ongoing barrier in ministering to campers: because many of the camp leaders are from Peterborough and Ottawa, they are not able to maintain an active relationship with the youth during the school year. In order to overcome this barrier and provide more effective ministry to the youth in Mistissini, [Carol] is planning on starting a mentoring program which would connect campers to Eeyou adults so they have a trustworthy person to turn to for support and guidance during the school year. As part of this program we want to provide training for those who are interested in serving as a volunteer mentor, and Ben and Paul have been invited to work with [Carol] to develop and run this, with Ben being the primary researcher and developer of the training program.

To help us develop a training program that meets the needs of Eeyou adults we will conduct a number of interviews and focus groups to find out what those needs are and what kind of training might best meet those needs. We are looking for ten to twelve Eeyou adults to be part of these discussions, go through the training program we develop, and provide feedback on how the program can be improved in the future. We hope that taking this approach will help us be respectful of Eeyou culture, focus on the unique needs found in Mistissini, and help others who want to train mentors in their own communities. This research will be supervised by the elders at Mistissini Baptist Church⁷ as well as Ben's

⁶ Note: At the beginning of this study I thought "Eeyou" was the traditional name for Cree people in Mistissini. I learned partway through that they actually identify as "Eenou" and "Eeyou" refers to Cree people in coastal communities. Since they tend to use the term Cree most of the time anyways, I ended up reverting to that in written and verbal communication.

⁷ Another thing I did not know at the outset of this ministry: the real name of the church is Faith Bible Chapel, as reflected throughout the Project Report. Because of the small size of the

Program Director Mark Chapman, and Project-Thesis Coordinator Michael Krause in the Doctor of Ministry Department at Tyndale [University] in Toronto.

This study will follow the requirements of Canadian ethical guidelines as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and the Tyndale Research Ethics Policy Manual.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants will be free to opt-out at any time without consequence. Participants will be invited to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with during these discussions and consent will always be sought before data is collected or used. Participants' privacy will be respected and all data will be collected electronically and stored on secure servers. Total anonymity in this study may not be possible because of its small scale and the tight-knit nature of Mistissini and the local church, so please do not agree to participate in this research if you are averse to such risk. You are not waiving any legal rights if you choose to participate in this study.

The study will take place between May 2018 and April 2019. Ben's final [portfolio] will be presented to the faculty at Tyndale [University] early in 2020. A paper describing the results of the study will be made available by April 2020 and alongside this a public presentation of the study's findings will be held in Mistissini.

If you have any questions please direct them to Benjamin Peltz at [Ben's phone number] or [Ben's email address]. If you have any concerns about this research please contact [Carol] at [Carol's phone number] or [Carol's email address]. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethical nature of this study please contact the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at Tyndale [University] at reb@tyndale.ca.

Thank you for considering participating in this study as we work together to minister to the teenagers in our community.

God bless,
Pastor Benjamin Peltz
Pastor Paul
[Carol]

community, people seldom refer to churches by their brand name, they simply call them "the Baptist church" and "the Pentecostal church."

Consent Form

Exploring Training for Prospective Mentors Among Eeyou Adults in Mistissini, Quebec

Name (please print): _____

I have read the above Information Letter outlining the purpose and details of this research project and have had an opportunity to ask any questions.

I understand that I will be participating in a study that involves sharing personal information concerning my relationship with teenagers in Mistissini. I will be asked to participate in focus groups and personal interviews, go through a training program led by Ben, Paul, and [Carol], and provide feedback.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without consequence. I am not waiving any legal rights by participating in this study.

I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future. The data may also be published in professional journals or presented at conferences, but any such presentations will be of general findings and will never breach individual confidentiality. A copy of the findings will be made available to me if I am interested.

I understand that due to the small scale of the study and the tight-knit nature of Mistissini and the church, complete anonymity may not be possible, but my privacy will always be respected.

I am aware that if I have any questions about study participation they may be directed to Benjamin Peltz at [Ben's email address] or [Ben's phone number]. Any concerns about this project can be directed to [Carol] at [Carol's phone number] or [Carol's email address]. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Tyndale Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, reb@tyndale.ca.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this study:

YES ___ NO ___

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix N: Volunteer Information Letter and Confidentiality Agreement

This confidentiality agreement is being used for volunteers participating in the research project conducted by Benjamin Peltz in Mistissini during the period of April 2018-March 2019. Nondisclosure of research conducted for this project and data management require a confidentiality agreement to be signed by volunteers. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in the following: interviewing, recording or editing image or sound data, transcribing, interpreting, translating, entering data, destroying data.

Thank you for volunteering to help conduct this research. If you have any questions about the research you can contact either myself or Mark Chapman at Tyndale [University]. You may contact us at any time if you have questions about this study.

Contact information:

Benjamin Peltz

[Ben's email address]

[Ben's phone number]

Associate Professor of Research Methods at Tyndale [University].

Mark Chapman

[Mark's email address]

[Mark's phone number]

Confidentiality Agreement

Exploring Training for Prospective Mentors Among Eeyou Adults in Mistissini, Quebec

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale [University]. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Board at REB@tyndale.ca.

Name (please print): _____

Role: _____

I agree to:

- Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than Benjamin Peltz or the project leadership team.
- Maintain confidentiality by not discussing or sharing verbal or written information from the one-on-one interviews other than with Benjamin Peltz or the project leadership team.
- Maintain confidentiality by not discussing or sharing verbal or written information recorded during focus groups other than with Benjamin Peltz, the researcher or the Design Team.
- Maintain confidentiality by not discussing or sharing verbal or written information recorded during the mentor training other than with Benjamin Peltz, the researcher or the Design Team.
- Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.
- Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to Benjamin Peltz when I have completed the research tasks.
- After consulting with Benjamin Peltz, the researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to Benjamin Peltz (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive, paper notes, journals).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix O: Group Covenant

Exploring Training for Prospective Mentors Among Eeyou Adults in Mistissini, Quebec

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale [University]. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Board at REB@tyndale.ca.

Name (please print): _____

As a participant in the focus groups that are part of the above project, I agree to maintain confidentiality concerning personal and other sensitive details that are shared within our meetings. I will do this by seeking permission from the affected party or parties before sharing sensitive details with anyone outside of the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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