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Developing Hearts on Fire Ministry
to Ignite Next Generation Leaders

A Research Portfolio
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by

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ABSTRACT

This portfolio examines how Hearts on Fire eV ministry developed. It assesses the ministry context of Hearts on Fire (HoF), its purpose and ministry values as a newly formed network that glorifies God and serves people. HoF is an interdenominational ministry based in the region of Franconia, Germany, focusing on the renewal of the heart and renewal of faith in Jesus Christ. The name, Hearts on Fire, is also the essence of our programme: to motivate Christians to restore their passion for Jesus, to equip them to serve, and to encourage them in their faith as Jesus did with the disciples. HoF partners with other Christian denominations to initiate new prayer groups and worship events, hoping to inspire the renewal of people's hearts and faith. The research project developed a seven-step framework to guide next generation leaders to implement change. This framework describes how we at HoF, bridge a ministry generation gap and how we can take the next generation on a journey toward a passionate Christian lifestyle by providing a platform for them to be involved in passionate prayer, dynamic worship, and sharing the Gospel through outreach. Gathering participant narratives was part of the research process of how to develop a heart on fire. Narratives were the tools used to engage the next generation in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives. The first research project outcome was this seven-step framework that can be used as a template to bring change and develop further ministry. The second outcome was the development of a next generation leadership day. This day became the platform to identify next generation leaders, to help them grow and learn how to pass on their experiences

with God. They learned how to expose others to the experience of prayer, worship, service and testimony, and came to understand how mentors could play a significant role in their development as leaders who are “on fire” for Jesus (Lk. 24:32).

DEDICATION

When I started Bible school in 1981, someone gave me an encouraging card with these words on it: Expect Great Things from God, Endeavour Great Things for God, and Experience Great Things with God. Those words became my motto for life and ministry.

In the DMin program at Tyndale, I have learned how to expect, endeavour, and experience great things from God to help me study, write, and learn. During the more than three years of the program, God has allowed me to reflect on my life and ministry, and this fills my heart with gratitude and thanksgiving. This opportunity for reflection has fine-tuned my life and ministry, and has refocused my thinking. The DMin program became a faith project in my life, allowing me to work through academic challenges with Jesus' help. From the beginning, I wanted this work to honour Jesus Christ who called me to be his friend and gave me the privilege to live with him, setting my heart on fire to serve him. Wisdom comes from the one in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That is why this work is dedicated to Jesus, the one who has inspired me and taught me to honour God. All the glory to him.

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GLOSSARY

Hearts on Fire eV (HoF): The abbreviation, HoF, stands for a new network that seeks to glorify God and serve people (eV is German for registered associations).

Hearts on Fire vision and mission: HoF encourages people to be passionate about Jesus Christ and having him inspire their lives. It implements Christ-centred ministries in order to be fruitful together in the region and beyond.

Hearts on Fire as an organization: This charitable organization is led by Helmut Jarsetz, the president, and myself as an executive assistant, and it is managed by six board members, including myself as a permanent advisor (see Appendix 12).

Hearts on Fire network: HoF is an interdenominational ministry. It networks with all Christian denominations and initiates new prayer groups and worship events to inspire the renewal of hearts and faith in Franconia.

WoW Time: WoW is an acronym that stands for ‘Worthy of Worship’, and it reflects the idea that when people are impressed or amazed about something and deeply touched, they say, “Wow!” Being in awe of God is a part of giving of glory to God, so WoW Time worship services are held bi-monthly to strengthen the worship and prayer movement.

Setting hearts on fire: Derives from the narrative of the disciples on the road to Emmaus saying to each other, “Were our hearts not burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk 24: 32 NIV). The different ministries of HoF focus on the renewal of the heart and serve to set hearts on fire. They help individuals to be passionate about Jesus Christ through prayer, worship and outreach.

Blessing: The word “blessing” is used in various ways. Most of the time, I use blessing in a general sense to express the goodness of God in my life. The word ‘blessing’ is also closely tied to my life story, in which I use it to describe what Jesus has done through my brokenness and weakness to restore my life. Blessing for me is God restoring favour in life through his grace and mercy; it turns the curse of life into a relationship experience. God is close and personal, loving and forgiving, and more powerful and greater than anything, always welcoming and working things out for his glory. This blessing will be passed on as a blessing to others, restoring the glory of God’s image in us and through us.

Abraham’s Blessing: In the narrative of Abraham, blessing is a promise received and demonstrated by kneeling. Blessing is given to pass along to others. Blessing, fulfilled in Jesus, is God's salvation plan from creation to revelation, and it echoes the great commission.

To be blessed and to be a blessing: Like Abraham, we are blessed in Jesus to go, to be blessed, and to be a blessing. It starts with the action to respond to God's call "Go". Blessing is received by the physical act of kneeling, and it is a sign of submitting to God's will. The outcome is to bless by serving others thereby impacting lives and the faith community to allow the Kingdom to come.

Streams of Living Water inspiration: This is derived from what Jesus said in the gospel of John "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (Jn 7:37-38 NIV).

Streams of Living Water concept: This is the name of HoF's initiative to develop a ministry to reach out and train the next-generation's leaders (22 - 38 years of age). HoF's project idea for a leadership kickstart day in Germany was to bring passionate young Christians together and to train and mentor them to minister to their peers, thereby bridging the gap between denominations and generations.

Streams of Living Water training day: HoF was the facilitator of a leadership training day which was designed to be a practical tool to take young adults on a journey to embracing a passionate Christian lifestyle. This leadership training day became the platform for next-generation leaders to grow, to be shaped and to pass on their experience with God.

Streams of Living Water training program: The first part of this program was designing and implementing inspiring worship and teaching sessions during Worthy of Worship Time. These sessions would help the next-generation leaders to enhance their relationship with Jesus. The second part was to expose next-generation leaders to the testimonies of Christians whose hearts were on fire for Jesus—people who had experienced God's presence, guidance, and power in real-life situations—and to encourage a passionate prayer life. The third part was to practice the Good News's compelling communication by presenting and explaining the salvation message in creative ways, by going out on the streets to pray for people, sharing the Gospel through testimonies, and blessing the people that were encountered. These next-generation leaders were to learn to expose others to prayer, worship, testimonies, sharing, while allowing mentors to play a significant role in their development as leaders through passionate serving, which led to being "on fire" for Jesus.

Next Generation: For us, the next generation is the generation of millennials born between 1982 and 1997 (Howe and Strauss 2000, 4).

Narrative Research: This refers to researching, collecting and using stories. Narrative inquiry is a vital contributor to the collection methods of ethnography, action research, and other qualitative tools. Narrative research is primarily a vehicle for understanding and explaining lived experiences (Sensing 2015a, 181).

Faith-based Leadership: This is developed out of a relationship with God, and it is also dependent on God. A faith-based leader serves God first and then serves others with a servant's heart, as Isaiah presents the servant leader (Isa. 50:4). The servant-leader exercises leadership with faith and obedience to God's leadership. He looks at Jesus' leadership because as leaders, Jesus is the best role model we can learn how to apply our leadership from. Servant Leadership is an important aspect and is explained by Northouse as:

Servant leadership is attentive to followers' needs, empowers them, and helps them develop their full human capacities. Furthermore, servant leaders make a choice to serve first. They build strong relationships with others; they are ethical and lead in ways that serve the greater good. Servant leaders shift authority to those who are being led. There are ten significant characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community” (Northouse 2016, 227–29).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My journey with Hearts on Fire eV (HoF) (eV is German for registered associations) began when I became part of its founding meeting on October 31, 2016, allowing me to follow my vocation and passion. Grace stories that illustrate God's guidance weave together the three projects that are part of this portfolio. Each project demonstrates a perspective on ministry, personal development, and discernment about how to be a blessing in life through ministry to the people we serve. It is a privilege to be an ambassador and influencer on God's behalf with HoF in Germany (2 Cor. 5:20). Our Hearts on Fire values reflect the ministry needs for a network for people with a burning heart for Jesus. HoF teaches and lives out God's Word in all truth and believes that people are set free, restored and transformed today through the power of the Holy Spirit. The network encourages and promotes friendship and reconciliation work for Israel, and other worldwide, national and inter-denominational works. The ministry focuses on honouring God and serving people through humility and love, with biblical teaching and practical discipleship and mentoring through prayer and worship to proclaim God's kingdom to go, be blessed, and be a blessing (see more Appendix 2).

This portfolio brought together my ministry's context, the leadership journey as a vessel that shaped me to serve God's purpose, and the research project as an opportunity for ministry. It helped HoF to train the next generation's leaders to

go, to be blessed, and to be a blessing. All this has been done for the glory of God.
Soli Deo Gloria.

In chapter 2, we will look at the context of the HoF ministry. This ministry was developed in a particular environment in Germany. It started as a regional prayer movement in Franconia, where Christianity is dominated by a traditional State Church that has lost the next generation. Out of this context of traditional Christianity came a need for a new network that focuses on renewing people's prayer and worship life and encourages them to share the Gospel in the region. It was important for me to see the world around me; it mattered whether I had compassion for people's needs and cared about what God cared about. The purpose of a ministry context assessment was to look at the ministry opportunity from different angles. The three vantage points I used were the human perspective, the divine perspective, and the ministry perspective.

In chapter 3, the second project, I describe my philosophy of Christian leadership. My leadership journey and the development that shaped and influenced me throughout my life reflect how God has used leaders as his servants to restore his blessing in this world. The leaders in the Bible who were called and shaped to serve God's salvation plan, are role models who showed me how to move on and find the time and place to serve. I will take a closer look at the Abraham narrative and its impact on my life and ministry. My Christian leadership approach and, specifically, how I developed as a leader are seen in my personal narrative, which ties together with God's narrative in my life.

I acknowledge that God created me, shaped me, and called me to go, be blessed, and be a blessing. In this way, the human and divine aspects of practical theology come together for one purpose: to bring glory to God. The full cycle of leadership begins with God, who is the ultimate leader and draws humans into his plan to be part of his initiative in order to restore the lost blessing. My concept of leadership begins with how God calls Abraham by revealing his plan to restore blessing throughout history. Through Abraham's seed, all humanity will be blessed.

Abraham's leadership journey begins with God's call when God says: "Go, and you will be blessed, and you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:1-3). I will demonstrate why Christian leadership must always begin with God, and that only those who are led by God can provide Christian leadership. Looking at how God calls Abraham and how Jesus calls his disciples allows us to discover some similarities. God says "Go" to Abraham, and Jesus says "Follow me" to the disciples. A leader's strength and power lie not in his skills, qualities, character, or leadership style, but in his willingness to be a servant and to be one who follows God's call to be obedient and to go wherever God leads. Christian leadership is about receiving and giving, and it is about being "more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Chapter 4 will describe the ministry research project and explain how it serves as an opportunity to develop the ministry of HoF. This research project looks at the renewal of the heart of potential next generation leaders. The project serves as a case study to show how I applied knowledge from the action research to get a new ministry perspective. It moved me from the more traditional ministry focus of

teaching and preaching to a more holistic approach that involves the five senses (1. Jn. 1:1). This approach serves the new generation, who have a deep desire for prayer and worship and mentoring by the Gospel's power, and keeps in perspective that Germany's next generation is called “a generation of worship” (in German Lobpreis Generation) (Faix and Künkler 2018, 48).

This project was developed in four stages. In stage one we recruited youth leaders and listened to their stories to discover what shapes them. In stage two, we collaborated and evaluated the youth leaders’ stories. In stage three, we implemented and developed a pilot project called Leadership Kickstart Day, as an action response. Finally, in stage four, we reviewed and enhanced the project as a model for future high-impact learning HoF Youth Leadership Kickstart Days.

The narrative research part of the project engaged six young leaders who shared their stories to give a better understanding of what the next generation's spiritual situation is in the areas of leadership, faith, community life, environment, personal challenges and struggles. Narrative research was used to engage these next generation leaders in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives and how streams of living water might flow from their lives. This project focused on reaching the next generation of leaders (22-38 years) through Hearts on Fire. HoF was the facilitator of the leadership training day designed to be a practical tool to take young adults on a journey to embracing a passionate Christian lifestyle. This leadership training day became the platform for next generation leaders to grow and be shaped and pass on their experience with God. The

training included three steps to guide youth leaders to learn how to set their hearts on fire for Jesus.

The first step was designing and implementing inspiring worship and teaching sessions during Worthy of Worship Time, which would help the next generation leaders enhance their relationship with Jesus, and their hearts and lives.

The second step was to expose next generation leaders to the testimonies of Christians whose hearts were on fire for Jesus, people who had experienced God's presence, guidance, and power in real-life situations, and to encourage a passionate prayer life.

The third step was to practice communicating the Good News by presenting and explaining the salvation message in creative ways by going out on the streets to pray for people, share the Gospel through testimonies, and bless the people that were encountered. In this way, mentors played a significant role as they taught next-generation leaders about praying for others, worship, testimonies, sharing, and passionately being “on fire” for Jesus ((Lk. 24:32 MSG).

The seven-step framework for implementing change for the next generation of leaders was developed through the research project. It was used as a template for bringing change and developing other ministries.

It is my hope this portfolio will inspire the reader to be on fire for Jesus - to go, be blessed, and be a blessing.

CHAPTER 2: MINISTRY CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

Context matters, especially in ministry. This chapter describes the ministry context for Hearts on Fire (HoF), a new German ministry based in the region of Franconia. This is an inter-denominational network that works with all churches, Christian groups, and organizations in the area, and seeks to glorify God and to serve people. I describe the general demographic analysis of Germany's fast-changing society from various perspectives. The general situation of the State Church is very traditional and leaves little room for contemporary worship. Germany has been disconnected from its foundation of faith. This is an opportunity to reach out to the next generation with the Gospel. The impact of the refugee crisis of 2015 opened Germany up as a mission-field among refugees. These new opportunities and challenges for churches and ministries need to be addressed.

Acknowledgment of Context

Everything in the Kingdom of God happens in a specific time and place. Reading through the Bible, we can find many particular places and times mentioned. Those times and places become very real when travelling to Israel and visiting the holy sites. It leaves a deep impression when you realize how God revealed himself in “Raum und Zeit,” which is German for “places and time” (Wenz 2019, 36). Time is God’s timing which is expressed in the Greek word *χρόνος* (Zodhiates 1993,

805). This is the context we need to comprehend in order to discern how we do ministry. The spiritual environment, social development, and the paradigm shifts in society need to be considered to keep track of what God is doing in this world. Context assessment becomes a listening tool to discern ministry opportunities. We need to keep in mind that a context assessment is to look out for the right wave to use a surfer's-idiom. The surfer does not need to create the wave, but surfers do need to learn to surf up and ride the wave. Leonard Sweet says: "Our job is to hoist the sail and catch God's wave" (Sweet 1999, 21).

Understanding Our Times

Understanding our times is a powerful exercise in ministry that helps us discern what to do. The awareness that God reveals it when He does something is important too (Maxwell 2007, 71). On October 31, 2016, such a moment occurred when I was invited to be part of the inaugural meeting of the HoF. The timing was crucial. It was 499 years after Martin Luther nailed his theses to the Wittenberg church's door, just before the celebration of the 500 year anniversary. The German government and the churches had planned a full year of celebrations with many events beginning Oct. 31, 2016. It was an excellent time to launch HoF in Germany, particularly in Franconia. It was a unique context because I was born and raised in that area, capable of speaking the same dialect and understanding the tight-knit culture that rejects outsiders. I was now on a reversed mission, transplanted as a Canadian, working in Germany.

What We Need to Know About HoF

To understand what Hearts on Fire is, we need to look at its history, the people behind it, and its vision for ministry. The HoF story goes back to 2005 when some passionate Christians from different denominations in Franconia, started a prayer movement for the region. The focus of the Regional Prayer Movement was to pray for a spiritual awakening in the area. As the prayer movement grew, so did the desire to start a network with people who had the same spiritual passion and the desire to encourage more ministries.

In 2016, Esra Air, a ministry that had flown missionaries to Eastern European countries since the iron curtain fell, was no longer needed because missionaries were able to use commercial flights for a very affordable rate. The Iron Curtain was a political boundary dividing Europe into two separate areas from 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1991. It was suggested that the regional prayer movement take over this charitable organization. One of Esra Air's last actions was a prayer flight over the area of the region's prayer movement. On October 31, 2016, people from the regional prayer movement met to brainstorm the next steps to develop the HoF network. I was invited to be part of this endeavour for that purpose. HoF's founding members were people from different denominations, passionate about forming a new network and seeking God's guidance through worship, testimonies, scripture, and prayer.

The vision was that HoF would become a prayer network to serve the region of Franconia and beyond. In the same meeting, a new constitution was drafted. The name was changed to Hearts on Fire eV. Soon after, HoF was established and

approved as a charitable organization by the German government. On December 13, 2016 during the first official meeting, I was called to join the leadership team of the HoF board of directors as an executive advisor to help develop the new ministry and prayer network using my ministerial experience and theological training. After that, I was appointed to be the executive assistant to the president as a front man to represent the organization in public and to communicate the mission and vision in order to make Hof known in churches and ministries of the area (see Appendix 12).

HoF's vision was to build an interdenominational network which would be able to provide the organizational framework to glorify God and serve people, focusing on three objectives:

1. Ignite people's hearts to be passionate about Jesus Christ
2. Encourage and implement a network of Christ-centered ministries
3. Bless people to go and to be a blessing

HoF desired to develop a community network that shared the same vision and collaborated within the network to enhance ministries. The goal was to inspire people, churches, and ministries to partner in the kingdom of God in a time when a revival in Germany's churches was needed.

Our mission states: "HoF seeks to glorify God and serve people" (Jarsetz 2017).

This statement was purposefully made generic to find common ground with Christians across denominations. HoF started as a worship and prayer movement uniting passionate Christians from different denominations. Our goals included regional evangelistic outreach, training youth leaders to work together, providing

workshops on training effective leaders, and bringing Christians from a range of denominations, generations, and backgrounds together. Particular emphasis was placed on encouraging local leaders to coordinate ministries and organize events which would help stimulate other Christian ministry events in the region. We needed to build trust with local church leaders first, gaining their goodwill in order to facilitate meeting places for our ministry in the region. However, there were three main obstacles to overcome: the division between Christian denominations, the generational gap, and most importantly, the lack of leaders representing the next generation leaders under 30.

Believing everything begins with prayer and worship (Phil.4:6), HoF brought passionate Christians together to pray and worship with each other, to find common ground, and to create a sense of belonging and community. The new leadership of HoF was encouraged to envision a movement where Christians would pray, worship, and serve together to overcome the denominational division that hindered collaborative ministry.

A significant challenge was to develop a worship and prayer network for all generations.

HoF had noticed a need to serve God's kingdom together in an environment of pluralism among Christians in Germany, where the percentage of committed Christians is 3 or 4 percent (Pulliam Bailey 2009, 1). Churches and ministries needed to discover and cultivate a new way of working together. HoF envisioned a training program where the strengths of those of the older generations would influence those of the younger generations. The idea was to use experienced

leaders to train younger leaders under 30. Both generations would work together to create a strong testimony in society, just as Jesus declared in Matthew 5:14:

“You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden.

Together, the city will be noticed and blessed by people, ministries, and other churches (Friesen 2009, 47).

The vision of HoF became more precise with the desire to provide training for the next generation’s leaders and to teach them to work together, which would establish an influential network. This network could then mobilize and build outreach teams to bring the Gospel back to this region. The idea of Streams of Living Water next generation training program was born out of this vision (see Appendix 3). HoF has used short phrases to communicate different ministries such as “burning hearts for Jesus,” “WoW Time,” “go to be blessed and be a blessing.” “Streams of Living Water” is another one of these phrases. It was inspired by what Jesus promised in the Gospel of John: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (Jn. 7:37-38 NIV).

Looking for People with Burning Hearts

The HoF story is closely tied to a biblical narrative. The mission statement comes from the story of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, where Jesus joined them in disguise. In the end, after Jesus reignited their hearts, the disciples asked each other: “Were our hearts not burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk. 24: 32 NIV). This story inspired us to

serve people as Jesus did: to set them on fire. The whole story is like a blueprint and a model of how we need to serve, train, and mentor Christians. We see in this narrative how Jesus works in the hearts of the disciples. He deals with the sadness of their hearts (verses 13-24), and removes the chains of their hearts, setting them free from confusion through the truth (verses 25-29). We also see that Jesus ignites their hearts by talking to them. In the same way, the various ministries of HoF serve to set hearts on fire and continue the ministry of Jesus in our times, blessing people spiritually to set others on fire for Jesus.

My Connection to HoF

I was born and raised in Germany's Franconian/Bavarian region, where HoF ministry is located. For many years I had a personal connection to many people that are now involved with HoF. In this way, God had prepared, connected and later reconnected me to the founding members of HoF. They knew about me and my ministry involvement in many outreach projects, especially during my time in Canada with the next generation, which prepared me for my HoF ministry. In 2012 I had worked together with Helmut Jarsetz, the current President of Hof, to develop an international outreach program for youth leaders in Toronto. Through those youth leader outreach camps, we developed the Crossover Nights project in North York. This project aimed to empower the next generation to reach out in their communities, together with other denominations. At that time, the crossover leadership team learned to use the Crossover Nights program as a platform to reach their fellow age groups through prayer, worship and testimonies. Enabling

and encouraging the next generation has been on my heart throughout all of my ministry life. It was also preparation for me to work with new ideas and new approaches in ministry.

Free to Be a Blessing with HoF

The desire to be a blessing came out of a deep crisis in my life. I had just finished my studies at a seminary, and the mission organization declined to accept me as a candidate to work abroad in the mission field. That triggered a crisis in my calling and my theology. One day I shared my frustration with a retired missionary and pastor. He helped me overcome my crisis with a powerful illustration. He said:

I was a missionary in Brazil all my life. Brazil has the longest river in the world called the Amazon. On its way to its destination, to the Atlantic Ocean, it has many winding, twisting, and curving paths, even sidearms. All the winding, twisting, and curving may look like a detour for the river, but exactly that is what makes the land around the river fertile. Think for a moment what would happen if the river flowed straight into the Atlantic Ocean? It would erode the fertile soil at high speeds and the currents would wash the soil out into the ocean. Then little land would be watered and little would grow. But each winding, twisting, and curving path, each sidearm, will make land fertile. (Riehl memory)

He then asked me, “Siggi, what is it you want to do with your life? Do you want to allow each winding, twisting, curving detour in your life to make the land fertile to see and experience how God turns it into a blessing?” From that day on, my goal in life and ministry changed. It became my desire to allow God to “make the land fertile.” Instantly my focus changed; it was all about being a blessing. My ministry was where God wanted me to be! I wanted to be what God wanted me to be. I became available to God and being a blessing became my destiny. Looking back on life and ministry, I am grateful for how God turned the many detours in

my life into blessings for me and the ministry. What I learned, and what guided me in preparation to serve at HoF are the principles summarized in the BLESS model (see appendix 9).

Overview of HoF Development

It helps to get an overview of how Hearts on Fire developed during the last three years.

In the first year, we agreed to start with the “gifts” God had already given us, which we could use to lay the ministry's foundation. The most substantial gift God had given the HoF team was the gift of prayer and worship, which included many creative worship leaders. Therefore, during the first year we focused our ministry on prayer and worship. There was an opportunity to bring people together to worship in a new way with new songs and creative elements like dance, painting, powerful messages and testimonies. HoF started the WoW Time ministry. WoW, an acronym for Worthy of Worship reflects the idea that when people are impressed or amazed about something and deeply touched, they say “Wow!” Being in awe of God is a part of worship. The responses to WoW Time was very positive. People from different denominations attended regularly and were very open to becoming partners of the HoF network. In this way, the HoF network was promoted, and the network of worship leaders and the acceptance among the various denominations grew. WoW Time was a ministry of encouragement that was welcome in the region and it was a great tool to bring people together, so we continued developing and repeating the WoW Time

meetings bi-monthly.

In the second year, we continued with WoW Time but realized we needed more people to be involved in the network's ministry. So we focused on growing the partnership with HoF by building up a stronger core group for the ministry. The HoF partnership was designed as a personal commitment, not as membership in a charitable organization, making it easy to allow the partners to be a part of the HoF movement. The partnership card was an invitation to be part of the movement and stated what partners do. A partner is on fire for Jesus, passionate to serve and involved in the HoF network. The response was positive, and about 30 partners joined the HoF network. The HoF leadership invited the new partners to serve with their gifts. In one of the WoW Time evenings, partners were commissioned and blessed.

In the third year of ministry, we realized we needed to strengthen the prayer movement. We focused on personal prayer by asking people to join the 10:02 movement at our first partnership meeting on February 9, 2019. Based on Luke 10:2, every day at 10:02 a.m., we asked people set their alarms and remember what Jesus said: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Lk. 10:2 NIV). Many joined the movement and prayed daily for missionaries, and for workers for the harvest. In this way, we encouraged our partners to practice what Jesus said. The immediate result was that three regional prayer meetings were started. The highlight of our third year of

ministry was our 2019 HoF Conference Day, where we invited our partners and friends to promote the HoF network. On this day, 30 years earlier, on November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down. We used this memorable timing as illustration for this day's theme in order to promote the spiritual breakthrough in people's personal lives. After three years in ministry, this conference day was the moment we understood that our next step was to expand the vision.

Digging Deeper

The ministry context for HoF has been challenging. First, HoF was a new ministry in the region with a focus on revival and awakening. Second, the context of HoF was in the secular country of Germany, where only three percent of the population attends church (Pulliam Bailey 2009, 1). HoF was a reaction to the need for revival: a ministry that reignites people's hearts for Jesus. Rooted in Jesus' ministry, we believe it is our calling at HoF to ignite the hearts of the next generation based on what the two disciples asked, "Were our hearts not burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Lk. 24:32 NIV).

Each generation needs to inspire the next generation to be a generation on fire for Jesus. It is a faith project that starts like a seed, tiny and powerless but has the potential to grow and branch out as described in the parable of the mustard seed. We are like a farmer sowing seeds in the field of society. Our seed is prayer and worship and the presenting of the Gospel.

HoF Ministry Context and Situation

In order to develop our ministry, we need to clearly understand that we live in an ever-changing world and that we need a new perspective and a new way of seeing things. Here are the interpretations of the demographic analysis that was mentioned earlier.

Demographic Analysis

In the demographic analysis, population size, gender, race, ethnicity, age distribution, births, and deaths are the factors that are considered. I narrowed it down by looking mainly at the rapid change in Germany's recent history and the opportunity for HoF. The national trends in Germany also had an impact on the region in which we work as a ministry. In particular, the refugee crisis left a profound effect on Franconia because the government placed many refugees in facilities that were available there.

Germany's Change Through Immigration

The record levels of migrants who came to Germany between 2015 and 2016 have changed Germany's demographic projections. This also impacted the context in which HoF operates. Germany's declining population is now on hold and even growing. (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). As a result, ministry opportunities were greatly affected (which I will explain as I describe more change in Germany). Statistics can be seen in appendix 11 in the graph on the population of Germany in 2020.

From my perspective, there is a double blessing for Germany's societal transformation. First, when the financial crisis of 2007/2008 hit Germany, the government rescued the labour force by allowing them to stay in their jobs with reduced hours and paying them for the lost hours, so they could continue to be employed. Afterwards, when the world recession stabilized in 2009, the economy in Germany picked up because they could fulfill the demand since Germany's labour force was still in place. Since then an "economic miracle" happened to Germany. The Institute for the Study of Labour writes:

The mild response of the German labor market to the worst global recession in post-war history appears as an economic miracle. In response to the crisis, Germany has shown to be a strong case of internal flexibility. We argue that important factors that have contributed to this development include the strong position of the German economy due to recent labor market reforms, the nature of the crisis affecting mainly export oriented companies in Germany, the extension of short work hours, the behavior of social partners, and automatic stabilizers. Another Economic Miracle? (Rinne and Zimmermann 2012).

Furthermore, in 2015, Germany responded to the Syrian crisis by welcoming refugees. Other European countries were struggling economically or politically and could not offer help to the magnitude of displaced people. When the refugee crisis hit, Germany had the resources to help people in crisis. It was able to fully sponsor and finance 1.5 million refugees.

Germany's economic growth continues because the refugee crisis prompted a stimulus package, growing the German economy even more. Germany's fast-changing society has opened up new ministry opportunities, especially for those ministries with approaches that address newcomers and refugees. The refugee crisis turned into a missions opportunity to reach out to Muslims in particular.

People who were almost unreachable in their home country came to Germany. Suddenly they experienced the freedom of religion and many showed interest in the Gospel. HoF was affected because it allowed us to start an outreach ministry among the Iranian refugees who are very open toward Christianity and Jesus. Let's look at the change in a religious demographic context.

Change in Established Religion

About 500 years after the Reformation, the State Church is in transition (Gesley 2017). The Protestant and Catholic Churches have long dominated religion in Germany and have benefited from the church tax system. The government deducts church tax of 8% of income tax from their church members in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, and 9% in the rest of Germany. This is one of the reasons the State Churches are losing members in huge numbers (Huggler 2015). By leaving the church, you save this tax. So-called “free” churches like Baptist and Pentecostal, etc., are outside of mainstream German culture and have to finance themselves through donations.

For example, about half of the population in a city like Nuremberg are members of a State Church (Franke 2017). Nuremberg, traditionally a Protestant city, is the largest city in the Franconia region where HoF operates. The number of active Christians in Germany is down to about three percent (Pulliam Bailey 2009). The biggest challenge for HoF is to reach the unreached, especially people of the next generation and people from all nations. The demographics in religion have dramatically changed formal church membership in the State Church in Germany. The State Church is no longer consider to reflect people's faith. The reality is that

ninety-seven percent of the population is unchurched. The style of worship in the State Church in Germany has seen little change in 500 years, pretty much following the order of worship from Martin Luther's time. This type of traditional worship is not reaching many people, especially not those in the next generation, including many refugees. We at HoF see this situation as an opportunity to reach out to the next generation and to the refugees.

Germany, the land of Reformation, is disconnected from its foundation of faith and the five Solas principles. On the website Christianity.com, Justin Holcomb describes the Solas in the following way:

1. Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone): The Bible alone is our highest authority
2. Sola Fide (Faith alone): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ
3. Sola Gratia (Grace alone): We are saved by the grace of God alone
4. Solus Christus (Christ alone): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Saviour, and King
5. Soli Deo Gloria (to the glory of God alone): We live for the glory of God alone (Holcomb 2012).

Reformation principles are essential to the ministry of HoF. As I explained earlier, Germany created an awareness of the Reformation's historical foundation because of the 500-year celebration that was going on throughout the entire year in 2017.

The five Solas became well-known again among many people, including the public. HoF was using those principles on HoF Day, Oct 31, 2017 as five fundamental Christian values for the “Reformation of the Heart” to help the next generation's leaders to live by those values.

Change in Missions

Let's look at the change in mission demographics next. After the Arab Spring of 2011, hopes were high that the 10/40 window could be reached. Instead, the 2015 refugee crisis brought millions of displaced Muslims into Europe. Suddenly it became clear for many Christians that Germany had become a mission field (Vranish 2003). The year 2015 marked the beginning of a significant shift in missions in Germany. Many traditional mission societies that used to send missionaries to the Middle East asked the same missionaries to stay in Germany and work among the refugees. Germany will continue to feel this significant impact on society, community, and people's lives in the future. Those developments need to be addressed by HoF, as a network. Because I was the cofounding Pastor of the Iranian Christian Fellowship in Toronto in 2006, I was prepared and capable of serving and developing a ministry among the refugees, reaching out to the newly arrived Muslims in Germany in 2018. With the support of my Iranian friend Pastor Saeed from Toronto, we visited Iranian bible studies and served at a conference for Iranians. Right now, we have more than 30 Iranians and Afghanis in our Al Massira bible course hosted by our team online (Al Massira 2021).

HoF Opportunities

In this context, we have seen that three great mission opportunities have emerged from the change that has happened through recent shifts within Germany's society. First, the massive growth through immigration in 2015 has been a success

story and has welcomed a demographic open to hearing the Gospel. The second opportunity arrived five years later, as refugees were integrating faster than expected into Germany's labour market (Brücker 2020). It was an excellent opportunity to serve newcomers and refugee's needs, and to integrate them into the local churches. Thirdly, the established religion's change has made Germany, the land of Reformation, a mission field. The established religion has lost its influence on most of the population, especially the next generation. This has created a vacuum for others to reach out and train the next generation of leaders to be on fire for Jesus. This change has brought millions of refugees, which has created an opportunity to reach Muslims in Germany. We at HoF understand our great commission, and we will explore more in chapter 3 where we take a closer look at Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 28:20, Jesus' great commission.

The Shell Youth Study

Another important resource that was very influential in getting a perspective on Germany's youth culture was *The Shell Youth Study* (Deutschland 2015). Since 1953, the international oil company Royal Dutch Shell has been conducting youth studies that document the attitudes, opinions, and expectations of young people in Germany. This report has provided material for decision-makers in politics and society. This study was necessary for the context of our project in Germany because it provided us with information on young people's living environments and explores how the current generation differs from its predecessors.

The next generation, which is allowed to work whenever they want, is more optimistic than ever. They have a great longing for doing their own thing. While they are suffering the effects of a national trend of failing marriages, they continue to see family as a high priority and consider it an asset. They are looking for security. The study found that the next generation is very concerned about world affairs and more sensitive to all of the issues in life, including God. They are looking for a stable value system, even as society has downgraded its standards for years. The study also looked at how this generation responds to advertising and other communication. It found that half will react to advertisements and other communication when humour is present. This is all a huge opportunity for the Christian community. This generation's desire to be a part of something meaningful is an excellent incentive for ministry, churches, and the HoF network to train and encourage next generation leaders to take a stand by strengthening them in prayer and worship, and through mentoring.

Because of the substantial shift in Germany, HoF needed to focus on a next generation leadership development strategy, which was central to the research project. This will be further developed in chapter 5 in the Streams of Living Water research project, where we seek to inspire, train, and encourage the next generation's leaders through HoF. The "renewal of the heart" is rooted in reformation history. It is urgent because the changes in demographics prompted the need for renewed vision to develop younger leaders.

The HoF mission statement says: "HoF seeks to glorify God and serve people" (Jarsetz 2017). Prayer for the renewal of the heart and a new way to worship and

inspire the revival of the heart became the core of HoF ministry. Later, a third ministry was developed through the HoF Day, where we brought prayer, worship, and training together. Like a three-legged stool, those ministries became pivotal to HoF.

HoF Prayer Network

Let me describe the three foundations of the ministry and how they developed in the context of HoF. As the partnership with others grew and the ministry branched out, it was essential to develop and deepen the base at the same time. First, a tree's metaphor with its roots helped us better understand how important it is for a tree with many branches to be rooted deeply. A tree with flat and shallow roots is easily ripped out of the ground. HoF started with deep roots as a prayer network. Since 2006, Christians from different churches have been meeting regularly in the central Franconian region to pray for an awakening and new outreach through the gospel in the area. Staying rooted included building and rebuilding the prayer network. The new branches of a ministry needed to be rooted in prayer. The idea was to start prayer cell groups to give the growing ministry the necessary depth in prayer. Those prayer cell groups kept the partners of HoF connected as the network was growing and new people were joining. We jumpstarted the prayer cell groups by declaring October 2017 as HoF prayer month. We used the final month of the 500-year anniversary celebration to pray for a reformation of hearts and to encourage our partners to start prayer cell groups in the region. Now we had three prayer cell groups that met once a month to pray for the renewal of the

heart, especially for the next generation. Expanding the prayer network was an excellent opportunity to grow deeper roots and face new challenges in society, locally and globally.

HoF WoW Time Opportunity

The second step was to develop a new worship ministry. We call this ministry WoW (Worthy of Worship) Time. In a video link via Skype, I explained the concept of WoW Time at our first meeting. Here are the key points I used:

Worthy of Worship (WoW) Time desires to marvel at God our Father, Jesus our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, a trinity who comforts, encourages, touches, heals and transforms human hearts. WoW Time seeks our lives' satisfaction in a relationship with Jesus, in community, worship, reconciliation, and commissioning, motivating us to live a lifestyle accordingly. (Jarsetz 2017)

Evaluating the responses to WoW Time was crucial. We looked at the attendance numbers, the comments, and the testimonies that came out of the WoW Time experience. From the beginning the attendance was better than expected, with approximately 60 people present the first evening. The experience was inspiring and uplifting, and the participation in worship and prayer was very encouraging. Many of the people were interested in connecting to the HoF network. This confirmed that there was a ministry opportunity that needed to be developed further and repeated regularly. We decided to schedule bi-monthly WoW Time events in order to strengthen the worship and prayer movement. By doing this, we were able to recruit more HoF partners which helped us to begin to grow the network. WoW Time became an excellent opportunity to glorify God and serve people and caused the ministry to grow at the same time.

HoF Network Day

The third step that tied all the ministries together like knots in a fishing net, was HoF Day. Each knot has given the net strength and has made it useful to do ministry and bring in the catch. October 31, 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It was another excellent opportunity to invite people to celebrate the reformation of hearts together. On this day, we accepted new people into partnership with HoF. HoF day became a day of celebration, training, and commissioning for new network members.

Later, the research project helped to develop this HoF Day as a training day to reach out to next generation leaders. The day was structured to reflect all aspects of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the morning, we conducted a contemporary worship service which focussed on welcoming the Father. The message on this day centred on the reformation of the heart and was based on Romans 1:16-17. The Good News of Jesus Christ is, and has, the power to change hearts. This was visually supported by a prophetic painting that depicted a broken heart healed by the cross with fractured parts bandaged together.

In the afternoon, we engaged in learning from Jesus by offering four workshops. The first, called “Experience Passionate Living,” was meant to encourage those who attended through passionate testimonies. The teaching segment focused on testimonies that ignited people to live for God, and the practical segment allowed people to share their testimony to encourage others. The second workshop, called “Outreach Today,” had a teaching segment explaining the Gospel, and a practical

component about sharing the Gospel in the city via outreach teams. The third workshop, “Accepting Blessing and Healing,” was about practising blessing and healing with each other. The fourth workshop was a creative seminar with practical training. As a result of this experience, we came to realize the need for a next generation leadership training program, which was later developed further in the Streams of Living Water research project.

HoF Dynamics

Ministry triggers different challenges we need to be aware of, especially spiritual ones. We see this in Matthew 4:1-11, where Jesus is tested by the devil with three challenges. The physical need for bread or "to be relevant" (Nouwen 1992, 15), the spiritual need for supernatural experience or the temptation "to be spectacular" (Nouwen 1992, 38), and the need to be successful or "to be powerful" (Nouwen 1992, 55). It is essential to be aware of these dynamics in the process of developing a ministry. When we began WoW Time ministry, we were challenged by some pastors in the region who were of the opinion that WoW Time ministry was unnecessary. Our biggest challenge at HoF was the fact that one of our co-founders and vice president had stepped down because they felt the need to be involved in more relevant and successful ministry. This was a shock to the HoF leadership, and a challenge to us to follow our values as a new ministry.

However, it was crucial for us to learn that these setbacks and growing pains allowed the ministry to grow and develop. We trusted that God could guide us through the process. Relying on spiritual principles and wisdom is necessary in

order to move forward and grow (Jas. 1:5), and teamwork is essential. In the case of HoF and WoW Time's development, our worship leader and his worship assistant, the president and I, as an executive assistant, were the team that was responsible for the actual implementation of change. The benefit was that we all collaborated for the performance. The people involved in that process could control how effective they were themselves, and the whole team could later celebrate the positive outcome together.

The Shape of HoF

In summary, HoF is not just a ministry idea. It is a ministry with real people in a real context. Through a network-based, prayer-focused organizational structure, we allowed God to shape us and the ministry, which then enabled the ministry's development process and allowed us to consider other ministry opportunities. This became the foundation of the seven-step methodology used later in the research project. I have attempted to look at the context of HoF from spiritual as well as human perspectives. I am aware that my view is limited, but I am convinced that applying the biblical and human perspective protects us from speculation and strange interpretations.

We focus on people who are willing to step out in faith and meet the challenges by reaching out to others with the same passion for taking a faith journey together to glorify God and serve people in order to be blessed and to be a blessing. The foundation of HoF ministry is that people who are inspired will get passionately involved. We expect God to provide everything we need. We expect great things

from God, we endeavour great things for God, and we experience great things with God (Hedland 1992).

CHAPTER 3: PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Introduction

My philosophy of Christian leadership is all about honouring a triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He has shaped and guided me all of my life. It is my testimony that the Father in heaven created, raised, and shaped me, and in Jesus Christ, he called and saved me, changed my personality, and continues to do so. The Holy Spirit drew me to the Father and Jesus, allowing a friendship and relationship with him. The Holy Spirit allowed me to hear his voice and has guided me through life. The Trinitarian foundation in my life is the red thread woven through my Christian leadership philosophy (Anderson 2001, 40).

In the following chapter, my philosophy of Christian leadership is developed in three parts. Part one is my journey toward a philosophy of Christian leadership that tells my story and looks at the values and people who shaped me. Part two develops the biblical and theological foundation and focuses on the promised blessing as given in the call of Abraham. Part three looks at the key elements in leadership theory that support this approach.

Part One

My Journey Toward a Philosophy of Christian Leadership:

Shaped to be Blessed and to be a Blessing

Reflecting on my journey, God has always been part of the story of my life and ministry. I can say that my story is “his” story with me, clarifying that a Christian’s leadership philosophy must start with God to get the story right. I acknowledge that everything begins with God. The Bible begins with the words, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1 NIV). Starting with God is like buttoning up a jacket: if the first button is not right, the whole coat is lined up incorrectly. God's perspective on my life matters; that is why Psalm 139 is an excellent road map of God’s outlook on life. Wiersbe says, “What we think about God and our relationship to Him determines what we think about everything else” (Wiersbe 2004, 366). Getting God’s perspective on life is part of a better understanding of one’s own life. Psalm 139:1 says, “O LORD, you have searched me, and you know me.” Here is where my philosophy of Christian leadership begins. We are not what we think of ourselves; we are not what our family, society, and/or culture say about us. We are what God sees in us and how he shapes us. In the first section of this philosophy of Christian leadership, I will try to examine what shaped me, even as I request God to "search me" and “examine me."

My Story: Past, Present, and Future

One's story can be seen from many different angles, however it is essential to look at the chapters, the people, and the experiences that shaped my life and my thinking from God's perspective. Writing a life story has to do with remembering those who have shaped my life and have influenced my faith and decisions. I have paid attention to the phases of life that I have gone through, and have looked at the growth of my inner life, the developing stages, and the maturing stages. This will provide a better understanding of my vocation and calling. It shines a light on my life and ministry journey which will help keep me accountable and faithful, all of which is required of a good servant. My life story is also crucial to discovering my grace story by focusing on what God is doing in me, with me, and through me, in spite of all my weaknesses and shortcomings. It is vital to remember that God is faithful in all his ways and he should get all the glory. Remembering God's faithfulness shifts the attention to what he is doing and how his faithfulness makes us authentic. I will attempt to tell my life story with grace and humility. My focus is to show what faith can do: faith can do what God can do. When we look at life, we see that we are "God's workmanship," or we are God's masterpiece. He is the master and we are his creation. It is beyond my capability to fathom why God wants me, but it makes me grateful. I marvel at what the master accomplishes and not what the masterpiece achieves.

Shaped by Experiences of Grace

Growing up in a small farming village in Germany, going to school, helping on the farm every day, and taking on chores that were for adults, cut my childhood short, but gave me the confidence to know that I was not useless. Struggling in school, especially in reading and writing, taught me early that I must use my strengths and not look at my weaknesses. In my case, my strengths were math, science, and sports. I couldn't do much about my shortcomings in reading and writing. My parents worked hard and had little time; tools like computers, or after-school programs and tutors, were not available to me. I had to deal with many bad marks, but my strengths helped me survive and develop in other areas of my life. My mom still tells me that my graduation from school was a great surprise to her. She was not sure if I would graduate at all. She was stunned when I graduated as the third-best in the class and received an award.

Looking back into my early years and childhood, it seems like God had set me up so that I would have no other way but to follow the path he had prepared. During the transition time from childhood to manhood, God reached out to me at least three times. Growing up in a Christian family was influential to my character and my journey of faith. My parents had found faith at a Billy Graham crusade in Nuremberg on June 26, 1955. They responded to his preaching and dedicated their lives to Christ. After the Second World War, many young people were disappointed, looking for something that could be trusted. For my parents, it was Jesus. When Billy Graham, at the crusade in Nuremberg, asked them to give their lives to Jesus, they responded to the altar call and made that decision for Christ.

I was exposed to my parents' faith, but I grew up in the traditional State Church environment. Confirmation in the Lutheran Church marked, at that time, the end of childhood. After confirmation, young people stopped going to church. They would only go to church on special days such as Christmas and Easter. For me, however, confirmation was a real challenge. It was like God was asking me personally, "Do you want to follow me?" My "yes" to follow Christ was sincere, but I did not know how to implement it in my life. Nonetheless, God was continuing to work things out. On my confirmation day, I received a confirmation Bible verse, but I did not understand what it meant for me: "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live" (Dt. 30:19 NIV). I did not know that I must choose. I was taught God had chosen me in my baptism as a baby, and now I just needed to confirm it, but confirmation had no impact on my life. The result was that I reduced my Christianity to occasional church visits.

God then stepped up his efforts and surrounded me with Christians everywhere. After I finished school, my parents signed me up for an apprenticeship as an electrician. I agreed and spent the next three and a half years learning that trade. During this time of training, many things changed in my life. God used different people and circumstances to plant the seed of faith in my heart. The most significant change was the invitation to a newly founded youth group. Some teenagers of my age in the village had become Christians by responding to an altar call at a Christian retreat, and they were on fire for Jesus. After that, they had

a passion for starting a youth group and invited all the young people in the village, including me. I went because I did not want to help on the farm. However, I didn't really want to go and decided to go past the house where the youth group would meet. I didn't want more exposure to Christianity at that moment. I didn't know that an inner battle was taking place to keep me from going to the youth meeting. At that moment, a car pulled up beside me. It was the youth pastor who had been invited to come to the start of the youth group. He asked me for directions, which I gave to him, but he did not understand my explanation because he could not understand my dialect, so he asked me to come along in his car. Now there was no escape. I had to be there—and God started to touch my life in spite of my resistance. I wanted to be in control of my own life and not give someone else control over me. I struggled and couldn't open up to God. The invitation into a Christian youth group changed that. I noticed that I was like the prodigal son who was invited into the father's open arms. It shocked me, and I was challenged to let God become the Lord of my life.

One day on the way home from my newly found youth group, I began to speak to God. I said, "God, if you are there, you have to help me find you." As I looked up into the night sky and saw all the stars and constellations, it was as if God was saying, "I created those and gave each one of them their purpose and place. Trust me; I can do that for you too." I responded, "Okay, let me see that!" From that day on, I had all kinds of experiences with God in various ways. I felt compelled to accept Christ but had a hard time committing my life fully. After all, I was still doing my things, influenced by friends who didn't care about faith and God. But

something life-changing happened the day God laid before me “life and death” and allowed me to choose “life,” as it said in my confirmation Bible verse, which I had never understood. It was the day I had a nearly fatal motorcycle accident on my way home. I was driving through the village in a 50 km zone, when a drunk driver suddenly entered the village at 120 km per hour, driving on the wrong side of the road. I saw him coming but had no chance to escape a head-on collision. In that split second, I realized that that day would be the day of my death. I wondered what would happen to me. I was a young man with good intentions but reluctant to commit my life to Christ. My whole life ran through my head like a film and there was no assurance that I belonged to Christ in life and death (Heidelberg Catechism 1563, 1). The only thing I could do was to cry out to God, “Lord, save me!” and then I was hit head-on by the car. Everything was pitch black. I was wondering, “Will I go to the right place?”

The next thing I saw was a person dressed in white, and I thought for a moment, I must be in the right place. After a while, I realized the person in white was a nurse, and I was in the hospital. God had answered my prayer. He had saved me. He was there when I needed him! That was proof enough for me that God exists. He had saved my life! I promised, “Lord, you have spared my life. The rest of my life belongs to you. Do whatever you want with my life.” This experience led to the next question in my life: “What is it, Lord, that you want me to do?”

During the time in hospital and in rehabilitation, I had a lot of time to think about what had happened. I was in awe. God was there when I needed him most, so I was ready to give him my full commitment. My heart changed, and my faith

changed too. I was willing to surrender my entire life after he had saved my life. This experience led me to the decision to make a new commitment to serve God. I was on fire for Jesus like never before! I wanted to become a missionary because I felt that people needed to know that “God is there if you need him.” I said to God, “Here I am” (Isa. 6:8).

After my recovery, I got involved in my youth group and took the first steps into ministry. I realized then that everything that had happened was preparation for serving God full-time. God worked in my heart, shaped my faith, and developed my character as I learned to apply his Word in my life. I had a passion and was determined to serve God and people. My heart's desire was to reach people with the Good News, so I got involved in several youth outreaches and co-founded other youth groups in the area.

God used many people in my spiritual development at that time. Other Christians played a tremendous role. Next to my parents, the most significant impact on my early Christian life came through role models. One, in particular, was an elderly Christian lady. I am still profoundly touched by how God used her. We all called her Aunt Greti. She was a believer and lived in my village. She was a prayer warrior and prayed for years for a revival among the younger generation. When revival came, she opened her house to be the centre for youth ministry for many years. Her ministry was to pray and bless people. I believe these prayers have shaped me and my ministry throughout my entire life. This lady was instrumental in shaping me, my personality, and my character. Her prayers and the blessing of her ministry left a legacy in my life and ministry.

There were more key people who influenced me, including my pastor and my youth pastor. They helped open my heart and mind to the power and richness of the Word of God. Through their ministry, I realized that God's Word was reliable, trustworthy, and authoritative. I came to realize that it was always encouraging, guiding, and renewing my faith and my relationship with Jesus. They planted a seed of love in my heart that grew into a passion for sharing the message with others. I developed a lifelong friendship and ministry partnership with my youth pastor, Helmut. He and his wife have been by my side during the most significant challenges of my life and ministry. Helmut is now the president of Hearts on Fire. It is our passion to pass on the legacy that was planted in our hearts many years ago. We are working together to develop this into a ministry that serves people so that they can experience a revival of the heart.

Among the many people who have contributed to and influenced my life and passion for serving Jesus were the missionaries. Missionary stories have shaped me, inspired me, and influenced me profoundly. This list of people who have influenced me is still growing, and I am still learning from them as I move through the different seasons of ministry life.

Shaped by Growing in Grace

In many ways I felt like Moses when God called me into a life of ministry. I felt unworthy and lacking the gifts to serve in ministry. I felt like a broken jar and clung to the promise of God, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor .12:9). God's calling gave me a new focus in

life. In spite of my lack of qualifications, I developed a deep desire to let God shine through my weakness instead (2 Cor. 4:6). Applying biblical principles in my life and ministry became a priority. Prayer and dependency on God became essential to everything. Living by faith became my primary focus throughout the challenges of life and ministry. God gave me a great love for people and a healthy attitude which helped me believe that—with God’s help—everything, including conflicts, would be resolved. I learned that trials are tests that can be passed successfully with God’s support. As Kierkegaard says, “If it is a spiritual trial, go straight toward it, trusting in God and Christ. When you are weak, he is strong” (Kierkegaard 2014, 380). I was encouraged to serve God because I learned that his grace would be sufficient.

God put the desire in my heart to serve him full-time, and he guided me to Liebenzell Mission Theological Seminary in Germany. During my official years of training, I learned another lesson: if God wants to do something through me, he will do it first in me. Five years of training were a challenge and a test for me: a time of shaping and reshaping my personality. My calling was refined by “God’s strength in weakness.” Conflict resolution became faith resolution. Ministry application grew out of biblical principles, and I was given a personal philosophy of ministry, which I called the BLESS model (Appendix 9)

After ordination, I was placed in a dying inner-city church with many challenges. There I experienced that God always had a unique way to change any situation. Through a humble approach and simple preaching, the ministry began to flourish. However, after a short time, jealousy triggered a conflict in the leadership and led

to my removal from this first ministry position. I learned to appreciate that if one door closed, God would open a new one. I was able to move on into a church-planting project, which was an excellent fit for me and allowed me to serve effectively and to develop my ministry.

My desire for ministry was always to be a blessing. This desire came out of a crisis experience in my life, which I explained earlier, and it shaped my thinking in a new way. The moment my mentor, a missionary from Brazil, asked me, “Siggi, do you want to experience how God turns challenges into a blessing?” I was on fire again. From that day forward, my goal in life and ministry was changed. It brought me back to my roots. It was all about being a blessing. It became the foundation of my life.

Spiritual Reflection on Being Shaped

It is important to reflect on my life story from a biblical perspective. I am convinced that what shaped me had a significant influence on the way I became a leader, and it shaped and formed my character, thinking, and action. In his book, *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker J. Palmer says:

Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent (Palmer 1999, 3).

When I look at my life’s story, I see that I have been prepared for the next step every time. Because of this, I would like to take a look at three concentric circles that have shaped my life: first, what God did; second, how people influenced my life; and third, how Scripture shaped my thinking, my actions, and my ministry.

Shaped and Healed by the Potter

The best way to see what God has done in our lives is to look at them through the lens of Scripture. Scripture helps us to understand how God has worked. Jeremiah was encouraged to do this in the potter's house. I quote from *The Message* translation:

GOD told Jeremiah, "Up on your feet! Go to the potter's house. When you get there, I'll tell you what I have to say." So I went to the potter's house, and sure enough, the potter was there, working away at his wheel. Whenever the pot the potter was working on turned out badly, as sometimes happens when you are working with clay, the potter would simply start over and use the same clay to make another pot. Then GOD's Message came to me: "Can't I do just as this potter does, people of Israel?" GOD's Decree! "Watch this potter. In the same way that this potter works his clay, I work on you, people of Israel" (Jer. 18:1-6 MSG).

Leaders do not fall from heaven. God raises leaders up by shaping and reshaping their lives. The potter is working the clay. It is always in his hands and, even when it turns out badly, the potter starts over by using the same clay to make another pot the way he wants it to be. This is a great illustration of what happened to me. God's shaping hands can be traced throughout my life story. God uses everything to shape our lives. The place we were born, the culture that influenced us, the family and relationships we have, the education we receive, the belief systems that surround us, and the life experiences we gain are all in God's hands as he shapes and reshapes us. The forming of a leader can be compared to the shaping and reshaping that occur on the wheel in the potter's house. Our life experiences have a tremendous impact on the kind of leader we become. As leaders, the way we respond to life events has a significant effect on how our character is formed

and shaped. If God is our potter, he will reshape our attitude and belief systems even if some things go badly. Even when life traumatizes and wounds a leader, or is difficult and breaks a leader, it is still in the potter's hands. Reshaping needs to take place when the clay becomes misshapen—the pot breaks—in the potter's hands; nevertheless, all of this has a purpose. In *The Wounded Healer*, Henry Nouwen says:

They are each called to be the wounded healer, the ones who must not only look after their own wounds, but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others (Nouwen 1979, 88).

Why is God shaping and reshaping our lives? Isaiah has an answer. He says, “Still, GOD, you are our Father. We're the clay, and you're our potter: All of us are what you made us” (Isa 64:8 MSG). Here it becomes clear: he is our potter, and we are the clay. A leader agrees to be in God's hands at all times.

What is it that has shaped our hearts, souls, and minds to enable us to serve him? The Word opens and forms our hearts, love touches and forms our souls, Jesus changes and develops our minds, and the Holy Spirit is the transforming power. This happened to me when I became a Christian. I grew up in a good Christian family, in a protected environment in a German village. A competitive school system exposed my limitations and weaknesses more than my strengths. The school system made me feel like a loser. I experienced low self-esteem as a teenager, which led to a deep depression and constant suicidal fantasies. I was often sitting in the hay barn of our farm, looking for a place where I could end my life. Every time I failed a school test, I had thoughts of ending my life. I became so depressed that I had already hung a rope over a cross beam in the barn in case I

would need it quickly one day. My heart was broken, my soul was desperate, my mind was depressed, and my strength was weak.

The shaping of the vessel had failed, but it was time for reshaping. This began to happen when I was invited to the youth group I mentioned earlier. That reshaping occurred in different stages, but began the day I accepted Jesus into my life. The depression and suicidal fantasies were gone, and profound joy entered my heart. It was like someone had turned on a switch and the light came on, even though it took a while to replace my low self-esteem with new confidence in Christ. A new attitude began to replace the brokenness in my life: “apart from Him, you can do nothing” (Jn. 15:5). I can still feel the scars that the low self-esteem left, but I also know that I am what I am by God's grace, and that he reshaped me. The narratives of a leader should show, reflect, and confirm Scripture. A leader needs to allow God to change his heart so that he can become what God wants him to be: “A man after the heart of God” (Acts 13:22).

What is the healing power of this lesson? Just before God invited Jeremiah to go to the potter's house, Jeremiah prayed, “Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise” (Jer. 17:14 NIV).

Jeremiah was invited to the potter's house where he learned a lesson that became his healing therapy. It helped him to understand what God was doing with him and with Israel. God was reshaping the same clay that had gone bad into something new. How does a leader heal? He heals when he begins to understand that he needs to be shaped and reshaped, that God is the potter, that we are the clay, and that we are in his hands.

The life story of a leader needs to reveal that he has become a learner (Mt. 11:28). What do leaders need to continually learn? They need to learn to trust, learn to listen, learn to ask God, and learn to pray. Leaders need to learn the steps that God used in the Potter's house that led to healing. Throughout their whole lives, they need to make room for reshaping. They need to go, to see, to hear, to understand, to believe, to be touched, and to be shaped. In this way, their lives become a masterpiece formed and reshaped by God.

Shaped by People

God uses many things to shape lives. One of his favourite tools is people. People shape people. Family and relationships are crucial and very influential. One proverb says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prv. 27:17 NIV). I learned this lesson early on in life while growing up on a little farm where my grandfather still used a scythe to cut the grass on some hilly slopes. One day I asked him, "What is that stone you always carry around?" My grandfather told me this was the most important tool he had. It was a whetstone he used to sharpen his tools—dull tools made work challenging and slow. Sharpening the tools was the most important thing he could do. This is a crucial lesson for leadership. Leaders need constant sharpening to be effective. They need to be sharpened through people and relationships in order to bring out the best in others. Not everyone brings out the best in us. People can be a bad or a good influence. It is possible to make your tool dull if you don't know the proper way to use a whetstone or a grinder to sharpen it. You can make the edges rough, or you can sharpen them.

Relationships have damaged many leaders, making them dull, causing friction, and bringing out the worst in them.

Friendship is one of the most effective ways to form and shape a leader. It is better to get advice from a friend than from a stranger. We find an excellent example in the friendship between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 18. Jonathan's friendship is described as “one in spirit with David” (1 Sam. 18:1 NIV). The Hebrew word for spirit, נֶפֶשׁ (*nepesh*) means “life, soul, creature, person” (Zodhiates 1993).

Friendship encompasses reaching the whole person. It can shape the heart of leadership. Leaders are weakened by loneliness, but strengthened and sharpened by friendship. In my case, good friends helped me to become a better leader. Jesus encouraged friendship with his disciples in leadership. In John 15:14, he says, “You are my friends.” Then, Jesus went even further: he called and sent his disciples out in pairs. These principles are vital for me in my Christian leadership. Partnership and working together in teams is also supported through the wisdom that comes from the OT. “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Eccl 4:12 NIV). Two are also better than one when it comes to prayer. Christian leadership is always in need of prayer. This is also addressed in the gospel. Jesus promised, “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Mt 8:19-20 NIV).

God's grace is necessary to develop Christian leaders. I can say with Paul, “But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect” (1

Cor. 15:10 NIV). The shaping takes place in relationships, and it is an act of God's grace.

Shaped by Scripture

God shaped my life as a leader using Scripture. A Christian leader needs to be a person of the Word. Growing up in a heavily influenced Christian culture, the Word of God had a substantial impact on me. "Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us the truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way" (2 Tim. 3:16 MSG). Leaders need to see their lives in the mirror of Scripture. It mirrors the truth so that we can become truthful; it exposes our rebellion and teaches us to submit to God; it teaches us how to humbly correct mistakes and shows us how to live God's way. Scripture has shaped my thinking, understanding, and reflection throughout my entire life.

Looking for Leadership Principles

What can be learned from my own life story, and the shaping process I have gone through? What are the key lessons for my philosophy of leadership?

Looking for Leaders who Choose Blessing

I previously mentioned Deuteronomy 30:19 as the confirmation Bible verse that guided and inspired me to make the right choices for my life. This Bible verse encourages us to focus on choosing a blessing. Leaders need to know how to

choose to bless. In my portfolio, “blessing” is a key term that occurs several times. The word “blessing” is used in various ways. Most of the time, I use the word blessing in a general sense to express the goodness of God in my life. But the word blessing is also closely tied to my life story, in which I use it to describe what Jesus has done in my brokenness and weakness in order to restore my life. Blessing for me, is God restoring favour through his grace and mercy, which changes the curse of life into a relationship experience. God is close and personal, loving and forgiving, and more powerful and generous than anything. He is always welcoming and working things out for his glory. This blessing we receive will allow us to pass on a blessing to others, thereby restoring the glory of God’s image in and through us. Further on in this paper, we will look at Abraham’s blessing and see that it is received and demonstrated by the posture of kneeling, and that it is given to us so that we can pass it along to others. Blessing is God’s plan from creation to revelation, and it is fulfilled in Jesus. I have had to learn how to choose blessing throughout my entire life. Because I was following a cultural Christianity, the hardest thing for me to unlearn was the habit I had of thinking of what was best for me first, before I thought about what would be best from a “kingdom perspective,” (as we see in Mt..6:33). This thinking led to a selfish Christian lifestyle in which I presented my ideas to God and said, “bless me, me and me.” I had to come to understand that it was not about me. Blessing is about God and the restoration of his will; choosing to bless is choosing life. More of what I learned is found in the Bless Model (see Appendix 9). The context of Deuteronomy 30:19 tells us, “and that you may love the LORD your God, listen

to his voice, and hold fast to him” (Dt. 30:20 NIV). Love has the power to shape a leader's heart, soul, and mind, and provides the strength needed to lead.

Looking for Leaders with a Burning Heart

The HoF story and my life story are closely tied to the biblical narrative in Luke 24. The story tells us that Jesus ignited his disciples' hearts and that they asked each other later, “Were our hearts not burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk. 24: 32 NIV). What does it mean to have a burning heart? In the context of this narrative, it means three things to me. First, faith needs to be restored, second, prayer needs to be restored, and third, worship needs to be restored. In Luke, before that could happen, they urged the stranger Jesus strongly and asked him: "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." He then went in to stay with them (Lk. 24:29 NIV). These words from Scripture were engraved into my heart as a child because it they were a part of my father's daily prayer routine. Every day when the church bell rang for evening prayer, he stopped his work, took off his hat, bowed in prayer, and finished with the words, "Lord stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." Later in life, I included these same words in my prayer time and added, “Jesus ignite my heart as you did with the two disciples as you talked to them on the road and opened the Scriptures for them.” Leaders need to pray for desire, passion, and a “burning heart” in their faith and ministry. This is like a blueprint of how to serve.

Looking for Leaders from whom Streams of Living Waters Flow

Another Scripture that shaped and formed my life is John 7: 37. “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (Jn. 7:37-38 NIV). As a young Christian, I read a book by Hermann Bezzel, a very influential theologian from my region of Franconia. One day I visited his gravesite in the cemetery where he was buried. On his gravestone, John 7:37 is cited. In the book *Die Herablassung Gottes* (The Incarnation of God) (Bezzel and Vollmer 1972), I found some theological insights that have shaped my biblical thinking throughout my life. They triggered a more in-depth study of the biblical text. Streams of living waters flow from people who are thirsty for God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that makes people long for living water. In Revelation 22 we read, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the gift of the water of life” (Rev. 22:17 NIV). Jesus called the thirsty people to live in abundance (Jn. 10:10b). He invites believers to a life that produces streams of living waters. He also encourages us to believe according to Scripture. Streams of living water is a metaphor for a life of blessing, and Jesus Christ is the source of the headwaters that fill the stream with fresh water from the well. Streams of living water refer to a Christian living from the source. Streams of living water are about the satisfaction and fulfilment of spiritual needs in us that flow to others, where they cause a ripple effect. A ripple effect occurs when an object is dropped into water and ripples expand across the water. Streams of living water are like faith that

impacts life and people. They are like the Amazon River, flowing through the land, making it fertile.

In Genesis 12:3 we learn that through Abraham's "seed," all the earth's nations would be blessed. Finally, in Jesus, all the nations of the earth will be blessed because streams of living water will flow from Jesus. Here we see the connection between Abraham's blessing and a world mission that will be explained later in my study of Genesis 12:1-3. According to John 7:39, this Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in believers. Jesus explains, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV). The Holy Spirit causes streams of living water to flow out of a leader's life.

Shaped to Bless and be a Blessing

I had explained earlier that I use the word "blessing" in a general sense to express God's goodness in my life. Out of this grew a deeper understanding of my calling. When I left my home church to study theology, the elderly lady Aunt Greti blessed me with the words, "Be blessed and be a blessing." Later my youth pastor blessed me and many others as well. My father always prayed a prayer of blessing when I visited him. The old missionary from Brazil helped me through my crises and helped restore my vision to be a blessing in life. God turned the many detours in my life into blessings, and many times the ministry was also blessed. In this way, my vision and desire became a blessing in life and ministry. The words from

Genesis 12:1-3 summarize what was spoken into my life many times. This became the foundation for my philosophy of Christian leadership.

Part Two

Biblical and Theological Foundations:

Exegesis of Genesis 12:1-3

The focus on the blessing in my ministry derives from the story of Abraham and his call. The key text is Genesis 12:1-3, a foundational text on a blessing. This is my study of the biblical account which is central to my philosophy of ministry.

Introduction

Genesis 12:1-3 ties together my vocation in ministry, my personal life story, and my philosophy of leadership. My understanding was that God had blessed me to be a blessing. People had been speaking this into my life: “be blessed and be a blessing.” In return, I spoke it into other people’s lives: “be blessed and be a blessing.” Examining this text will clarify the scope of Abraham's promise, his messianic fulfillment and dimension, and its relevance to my life and ministry.

Listening to the Text and Translation

The exegesis of Genesis 12:1-3 begins with one of the most significant prophecies in scripture. God spoke blessing into Abraham's life, and he wanted to extend his blessing into the life of his community. After reading the context, the text is crucial. I have read the text in various translations, including Hebrew. I have chosen to use the New English Translation called the NET Bible.

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father’s household to the land that I will show you.

² Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, and all the families of the earth will bless one another by your name” (Gen. 12:1-3 NET) (Richardson 1996).

Textual Matters

Listening to the text and discerning what God says to Abraham and all of the listeners after him is crucial. The reference texts differ in wording and give us a bigger picture of what the text reveals. As a result, I have taken a look at five related texts: Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4-5; 28:14. For this study, three things are essential: first, the context of Genesis 12:1-3; second, the text and its meaning; and third, the keyword “bless” and its meaning in the context of “be blessed and be a blessing.”

Genre and Structure

In Genesis, God is telling the world a story through the human author. It begins in eternity and stretches into eternity. The story explains what God is doing in this world. It reveals God's actions in history and show how they become a reality. We need to read the story again and again, so that it can have an impact on us. Stories inspire and create the freedom to imagine. This story from the Bible influences real people from a different time and place to engage in God's story. As a genre, the narrative is important because a story is an invitation to allow God’s story to become our story, and to allow the God of HIStory to inspire and shape us.

Historical Context

As a book of beginnings, blessings, and broken blessings, Genesis introduces the biblical creation and redemption stories (Barker 1995). The stories involving Abraham begin with the genealogy of Genesis 11:27-30. The family of Abraham ends in barrenness (Gen. 11:30). This is the “Life Setting” when the call of God comes to Abraham. The magnitude of God’s call to Abraham, and the promised blessing comes in the midst of hopelessness (Brueggemann 1982, 114).

The context of the call of Abraham is found in Genesis 11:26-31. According to Acts 7:2-8, Abraham received his call before he went to Haran. (Witherington 2018, 105). The spiritual context of the curse and blessing in Genesis 1 through 12 is important too. Walter Kaiser explains that the Lord offers to renew the blessing after each crisis and failure (Kaiser 2012, 17). In this portion of Genesis, we notice that God had given words of grace and promise three different times: in Genesis 3:15, in Genesis 9:27, and again in Genesis 12:1-3. After the fall, the flood, and the Tower of Babel, “blessing” Abraham, his seed, and all the families of the earth is repeated five times. Walter C. Kaiser concludes:

Three major crises and three words of promise filled these early millennia of witness for the One who was variously called the Man of Promise, the Seed of the woman, the One who would dwell in the tents of Shem, and the One coming through Abraham’s seed by which the whole world would be blessed. The key word in this section was the “blessing” of God. This is how the promise-plan of God got started (Kaiser 2012, 22).

There is a significant break in the narrative between Genesis 11:32 and 12:1. Historically it marks the break between the history of humankind and the history of Israel. Spiritually it marks the history of the curse and the history of the

blessing. God's call, in 12:1-3, marks "the new beginning by the power of God's word" (Brueggemann 1982, 116).

Analysis of the Text

Genesis 12:1-3 is the most important promise God gave to Israel and the nations. God explains how he will implement his plan of redemption and blessing.

Christopher J. H. Wright, in *The Mission of God*, calls this a pivotal text (Wright 2006, 205). Walter Brueggemann confirms the importance of this Scripture and calls it "the most incredible announcement in the tradition of Israel" (Brueggemann 1982, 117).

Similarly, in the beginning, God spoke, "Let there be light, and there was light." Then here, God speaks to Abraham, and a new beginning starts. The fact is that God speaks. It is the foundation of the Good News. When God speaks, faith, obedience, and change are possible, and promises become real. God speaks the future into this family that has no hope of a future (Brueggemann 1982, 117).

There is a threefold blessing to Abraham: the hope for a great nation, personal blessings, and making his name great as an action of God. The purpose was that Abraham's blessing will flow to those who bless him and all the people on earth may be blessed (Kaiser 2012, 23).

We need to note a sevenfold structure, according to the NIV Study Bible.

(1) "I will make you into a great nation," (2) "I will bless you," (3) "I will make your name great," (4) "you will be a blessing," or possibly "you will be seen as blessed," (5) "I will bless those who bless you," (6) "whoever curses you I will curse," and (7) "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you," or possibly "all peoples on earth will use your name in blessings" (Barker 1995).

God's mission of world redemption begins with Genesis 12:1-3. God desires to bless Abraham and to be a blessing. Abraham's calling falls into two major parts, and each begins with an imperative: "Go out" and "Be a blessing." Each imperative is followed by three sections which clarify the implications of fulfilling the commands. The second half is a promise that follows Abraham's obedience, introduced by "and be a blessing." Christopher J. H. Wright notices:

The flow of thought in our passage is either "Abraham, you go . . . and I will do the following . . . and in that way you will be a blessing (as a result)." Or, "Abraham, you go . . . and I will do the following . . . so that you may be a blessing (which is my intention)." Either way, the message of the combined halves of the text clearly is that if Abraham does what he is told, and if God does what he says he will do, the result will be blessing all round (Wright 2006, 212).

The Important Words are "Go Out"

The call of God for Abraham begins with the imperative "Go." It means you leave—go to the land that I will show you. The Net1 Bible notes explain the words that are important to notice:

Abram's call begins with an imperative לֵךְ-לְךָ (*lekh-lekha*, "go out"). It is followed by the *lamed* preposition with a pronominal suffix (לְךָ, *lekha*) emphasizing the subject of the imperative: "you leave" (Richardson 1996, v. 1).

The Lord's instruction to Abraham is threefold: leave your country, relatives, and father's household, but the instruction is not specific about where he should go.

The letter to the Hebrews explains that it requires faith. "By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without understanding where he was going" (Heb. 11:8 NET1). The blessing, which begins with God's call to "go", and Abraham's

response to be where God wants him to be, is the foundation on which God fulfills his promise to bless him.

The Second Word is “Blessing”

Here the keyword is “blessing.” The Hebrew term for blessing (בָּרַךְ) occurs five times in these three verses, clarifying that blessing is at the heart of the narrative. The story of Abraham's call can be summarized: “Go, be blessed, and be a blessing.” God desires to bless people so that they can accomplish the purpose that God wants to accomplish through his blessing בָּרַךְ. According to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, the word reflects on a posture to kneel, which is the position to receive in relation to submission and obedience. It is a great formula of blessing used in the Aaronic benediction for the Lord's presence, grace, and keeping power (Nm. 6:23-27).

“ בָּרַךְ (bārak) <H1288> to kneel, bless, praise, salute, curse. God demonstrates from Genesis 12 onward that he alone has power to bestow this blessing (Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, Bruce K. Waltke 1980).

What does “I will bless you” mean for Abraham? For example, the Abraham narratives show direct blessing in the Melchizedek narrative, as do the three angels narrative and other numerous narratives. God will make Abraham into a great nation, not like the nations that wanted to make a great name for themselves by building Babel's tower (Gen. 11:4). In this way, Abraham will be a blessing. The blessing begins here with Abraham and will flow through him and his descendants to all nations. The Net1 Bible notes explain:

If the statement “be a blessing” is understood in the same way in Gen. 12:2, then it means that God would so bless Abram that other nations

would hear of his fame and hold him up as a paradigm of divine blessing in their blessing formulae (Richardson 1996, v. 2).

Since the Lord binds himself to Abraham by a covenant, those who enrich Abraham in any way will share in the blessings, whereas whoever treats Abraham and the covenant with contempt and as worthless, God will banish from the blessing.

The blessing here is received and demonstrated by a kneeling posture and it is given to pass on to others. Blessing is God's plan from creation to revelation, and it is fulfilled in Jesus. Blessing is about the promise that Abraham will experience the goodness of God. Blessing is God's promise to restore his relationship with all people created in his image. This blessing will pass on a blessing to others, restoring the glory of God's image in us and through us.

Main Themes and Theological Message

The central theme of Genesis 12:1-3 is "go and be a blessing." This is the foundation of God's mission. It reveals God's plan to bless all nations through Abraham.

The Christological Component

It is important to get the big picture first. The promise to Abraham goes far beyond Abraham and his family. It is evident that this promise has a Christological dimension and finds its fulfilment in the Great Commission. Jesus announces the fulfilment of the promises that were given to Abraham in Genesis

12:1-3. Jesus says the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel (Mk. 1:14-15 NET1). “The time is fulfilled” refers to the salvation promised in the OT, including the promise to Abraham. Jesus claims that through him, the kingdom is near. Christopher J. H. Wright, in *The Mission of God*, confirms that blessing is multinational and Christological.

This universal scope of the Abrahamic promise is the clinching argument for recognizing the missiological centrality of this text—which is already quite explicit anyway in the command “Be a blessing” (Wright 2006, 227).

Here Abraham is a prototype for the disciple of Jesus. “Abraham stands as the prototype for all disciples who forsake everything and follow” (Mk. 10:28) (Brueggemann 1982, 121).

Kingdom of God Component

Trevor Potter, in his thesis “Blessed to Build God’s Kingdom,” concludes that God builds his Kingdom through blessing, בְּבִרְכָּהּ.

God works through people that ‘bend the knee’ to Him; people that recognize the Lordship of God. God blesses these people with the ability/capability to rule rightly, to rule as God’s representatives on the earth in a non-coercive, non-tyrannical way, a way that extends the Kingdom of God. What does it mean for Abraham to be a blessing (Gn 12:2)? It means that Abraham has submitted himself to the true King (bent his knee), and has accepted the commission to extend God’s Kingdom rule (Potter 2014, 157).

New Testament Perspective on Abraham

The NT gives us an important perspective on Abraham. The letter to the Hebrews echoes this text in a powerful way.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without

understanding where he was going. By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 11:8-10 NET1) (Richardson 1996).

Faith is a journey, and we are invited to join. In the NT, Jesus invites us to this journey by saying, *Follow me*. Jesus is the way: this is the metaphor for the journey of faith (Jn. 14:6). God invited Abraham to go on a journey, be blessed, and be a blessing. Brueggemann points out:

1) Christian discipleship is understood as a following of “the way” (Mt. 8:22; 9:9; 10:38). 2) In the great recital of pilgrimage in Hebrews 11, Abraham and Sarah are presented as people who claimed no home. They only pursued a risky promise (Heb. 11:8-12) (Brueggemann 1982, 122).

In Hebrews 11, we learn three critical theological implications:

First the promise of a land is made to a landless people. Abraham has no place of his own. Second the promise of an heir is made to a barren, hopeless couple. Third Abraham is tested by the command to offer Isaac” (Brueggemann 1982, 110).

Paul’s Perspective on Abraham

The apostle Paul sees Abraham as “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13) and as the father of all who believe in Christ (Gal. 3:29). In Galatians 3:8, Paul confirms Genesis 12:3, that in Abraham’s seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed, which was what the gospel revealed to Abraham ahead of time.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the gospel to Abraham ahead of time, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.” So then those who believe are blessed along with Abraham the believer” (Gal. 3:8-9 NET1).

In the sermon of Peter (Acts 3:25), he appeals to Israel “that they embrace the gospel of Jesus” (Brueggemann 1982, 119). In that context, the statement of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:9 may be mentioned.

...and don't think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones!" (Mt. 3:9 NET1).

Theological Implications and Application

What is the message from this text for us today, especially for me, my life, and my ministry? In Genesis chapters 1 through 11, the context of which took place before Abraham's time, we find the application to our lives and meaning for today. After the fall, the flood, and the Tower of Babel, God repeats five times that he will “bless” Abraham, his seed, and all of the earth's families. Today we live in a broken world—a broken creation, broken people, and broken families—but God's plan hasn't changed. He overcomes the curse and restores his blessing. This plan to overcome the curse and to bless Abraham and all nations is still valid today. In Genesis 12:1-3, we find cross-cultural and timeless principles applicable to our lives and our faith. The call to Abraham was, “Go, be blessed, and be a blessing”. Blessing in Abraham's life is promised and later fulfilled. The blessing of the land, the offspring and a covenant become a reality in Abraham's life and Israel's history. God overcomes the curse and restores his blessing. The blessing then flows through Abraham and on to us through Jesus, so that we can bless others. In this sense, blessing restores our relationship with Him in order to restore others.

In this way, the other metaphor of streams of living waters is also used to indicate blessings that will flow through those who believe in Jesus as the Scriptures say (Jn 7:38). Faith ignites people's hearts to go, to be blessed, and to be a blessing. The next chapter will show how this has been the foundation of the renewal of the heart training program for the next generation of leaders we developed with HoF.

God Speaking is the Beginning

The implication for the renewal of the heart is important to notice: as we saw in Genesis, the beginning starts with God. The creation begins with God; the salvation of Noah begins with God, and Abraham's calling also begins with God. When God speaks, it happens. We notice that Abraham goes because God speaks. The renewal of the heart begins when God speaks. Faith is Abraham's response to God speaking, and should be ours as well. Romans 10:14 tells us that faith begins with listening to God. This speaking and listening is ongoing in Abraham's life. It begins when he is in Mesopotamia before settling in Haran, and it continues throughout his life, as we see in Genesis. God keeps on talking, correcting, encouraging, deepening his promises, negotiating, and walking alongside him.

Faith is a Journey

God said "Go," and Abraham began his journey, and God walked with him (Gn 18:16). As a result, Abraham became a role model of faith for us. In Hebrews 11:8:10, we read that faith is a journey. It is illustrated by Abraham going out to receive an inheritance. Faith begins with God's promise, and becomes a journey

like it did for Abraham. When Jesus invites his disciples, he says, “Follow me” (Mt. 8:22; 9:9; 10:38). This as an invitation to a journey. Jesus also tells his disciples that he is the way, and that the journey with him will lead to the Father. This journey has one goal: that all “knees will bow” (the term for blessing) before Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:10-11) and confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.

The renewal of the heart is also a journey. It can be jumpstarted, as in Abraham's case, when God speaks into someone's life. This was a part of our purpose in using HoF Day to expose the next generation of leaders to the vision of HoF through prayer, worship, and testimonies in order to bring about renewal in their hearts and lives, so that they would be a blessing to others.

Passing on Blessing

Five times God repeats that he will “bless” Abraham, and that through him all nations are blessed. Blessing is very personal for Abraham. “I will make you” means he will become who God wants him to be: a blessing to the nations.

Making Abraham a great nation is the way God refers to removing his barrenness.

God makes Abraham's name great—Abraham is not self-made. God will bless those who will bless him through him. He will also bless all the nations through him. God's blessing brings about the kingdom of God. People who bow their knees, pray, worship, and learn to go, will be blessed and will be a blessing.

Jesus, the Good News

This blessing from Abraham points to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who will be the greatest blessing for all. Paul sees this blessing as fulfilled in Jesus. “Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ” (Eph. 1:3 NET1). In Jesus, the promise to Abraham is fulfilled. Further, in Matthew 24, Jesus tells us in his Olivet Discourse that even though the love of most people will grow cold, the gospel will be preached to the nations (Mt. 24:12-14 NET1). Passing on blessing is passing on Jesus, and both the ministry context and the Great Commission teach us the urgency of this. This is the challenge that HoF faces. I will explain this further in chapter 4 when I outline training next generation leaders to be on fire for Jesus in the research project.

Last Thoughts

In Genesis 12:1-3, we have looked at one of the key narratives in Scripture to get a clear understanding of God's plan for Abraham and all of the nations that will be blessed through him. The study of this text confirms God's promises, and that their fulfilment is ongoing and has a Messianic dimension. Like Abraham, we are blessed by Jesus to go, to be blessed, and to be a blessing. This impacts our personal lives and faith community; it shows us how we ought to live and develop the ministry. It starts with “Go”. This is the foundation of “Go, be blessed and be a blessing.” God's call provides vision and blessing. It is both the foundation and the inspiration at the same time.

Part Three

The Practice and Example of Leadership:

The Transition from Theory to Practice

After the exegesis of the core texts on the blessing, it is essential to find the transition to the practicing of theology as "faith seeking understanding." What matters is that this study leads to the transformation of myself and other leaders, which will impact society and the Christian community (Ward 2017, 177).

Transition happens when knowledge and theology are put into practice, as Jesus explains in Matthew 7:24. It becomes the foundation of a lifestyle as a leader.

According to Jesus, transition begins with hearing with the heart, soul, and mind.

By putting it into practice, life is changed; the transition is empowered by the Spirit, who is the power behind transformation (Rom. 12:2). Practical theology is a function of theological reflection as we practice our faith and focus on bringing glory to God. Practical theology is transformative when it is implemented, and the cycle is complete. Ward writes,

Practical theology is not just a class taken as training for ministry; it is about changed lives. So the purpose and the eventual product of practical theology should be the transformation of individuals and communities” (Ward 2017, 168).

Faith needs to be expressed to become real in life. It is necessary to look at our lifestyle and see how faith is expressed in our “Menschsein” (being a human). The incarnation is God's practical theology: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn. 1:14 NIV). Jesus is described as the one who became

human (Phil. 2:7). Ward says, “The most fundamental product of practical theology will always be lives changed by the work of God” (Ward 2017, 169). My practical theology follows a three-step model: believe it, pray it, and claim/proclaim it. I see claim/proclaim it as one step because only what has been claimed should be proclaimed. Practical theology teaches us to understand how God works in people’s lives. God acts, so I believe it, pray it, claim it, and proclaim it.

Believe It, Pray It, Claim It, and Proclaim It

My life experience is that the call into leadership is compelling, encouraging, and life-changing. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, the call is power.

“Jesus calls his twelve disciples and sends them into the harvest. He makes them his ‘apostles,’ his messengers and fellow-workers. ‘And gave them power, for the power is all-important’” (Bonhoeffer 1963, 22).

Once again we see that the transformation of Abraham as a leader begins with the word, “Go”. The transformation of Jesus' disciples begins with the instruction, “Follow me.” Faith-based leadership begins with God's call to become a leader, and to be transformed as a leader. According to John the Baptist, the leadership of Jesus is given, not made by man: it is a gift from heaven. “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven” (Jn. 3:27 NIV).

Believe It

Biblical leadership begins with God as the ultimate leader. Only a person who is a follower of God can be a leader. The creation story begins by depicting God as a

leader and shows us the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Biblical leadership is the call into this relationship because we are created in his image. Following him is answering a call to follow his leadership.

Acknowledging that God has a plan for someone's life is a call to believe in him.

Theology tells us who God is, what he does, and what he promises. Practical theology encourages us to believe what God says. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us to build our house on the rock. “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on a rock” (Mt. 7:24 NET1). God urges us to believe it.

Pray It

“Imago Dei” means we are made in the image of God and reflect him as people and as leaders. We as Biblical leaders are not perfect, but as we follow him, he shapes and reshapes us, and his leadership will be reflected in us. Every time God desired to do something, he called on people: Moses, the Judges, and all the prophets. Almost all of these people were miserable failures when God called them – they were not perfect leaders, but God shaped and changed them, and used them anyway. They became leaders because they followed and served God. Jesus called disciples. He shaped and transformed them to reflect him in discipleship and ministry (John 13:34). Today God still calls people in order to shape and transform them so that he can equip them to become servant leaders (Eph. 4:11-12). Leadership gifts are developed and shaped when leaders depend on God’s strength in weakness. Through the prayer of Ananias, Paul was assured of his calling to be a servant leader before the nations, kings and before Israel (Acts

9:15). Following Jesus does not automatically put everyone into a leadership position. However, as I understand it, following Jesus does qualify everyone to become a leader according to the priesthood of all believers, which is a foundational concept of Christianity (1 Pt. 2:9). In this way, Jesus himself told us to pray for harvest workers. “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest” (Lk. 10:2 NET1). We need to pray that God brings people into ministry. We need prayers for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11,12 NET1). We need to pray for harvest workers. This is the reason why we asked prayer missionaries to join the 10:02 (Lk. 10:2) movement.

Claim It and Proclaim It

Based on the priesthood of believers, we need to claim and proclaim that leadership is a call for everyone. We need a paradigm shift about what biblical leadership is. If leadership is for all, then it is a way to serve by being led by Jesus, by leading more like Jesus, and by leading people to Jesus” (Brown 2015, 209).

I am using the word leadership here as a synonym for followers of Jesus, servants, or people willing to do God’s will, because in my understanding, biblical leadership is not possible without it. Claiming it for yourself and proclaiming it to others are both necessary. In this way, we are considering the priesthood of all believers. Jesus expressed it in the following way, “You are the salt of the

earth . . . You are the light of the world . . . Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:13-16 NET1). Everyone can have an impact. The Leadership Bible states, “leadership is for all” (Maxwell 2014, 23). We need to encourage everyone to allow God to be their leader, and to allow faith-based and incarnational leadership that follows Jesus’ leadership model in Phil. 2:5-11. It is urgent to claim it and to proclaim it.

Blessed to be a Faith-based Leader

When I started my apprenticeship, I learned the difference between a theorist and a practitioner. A theorist knows more than he can do, and a practitioner can do more than he knows. It is one thing to talk about theory and another thing to put into practice. For me, it matters that I practice what I believe. Practical theology is faith-based action. With this perspective in mind, I am looking for practical ways to apply my leadership theory to ministry and to the leadership role I am involved in. The objective is always how I can go, be blessed and be a blessing.

Finding the Starting Point

My leadership theory begins within me. To find my leadership theory, I had to do some listening. I learned most from two sources: first, from biblical models, and second, from people who became my role models. What I learned was that leadership is not merely a skill or a gift. Instead, leadership is developed over a lifetime by having role models. Leadership needs to be exercised in humility

while learning from these role models. The Jesus model of leadership is servant leadership. Let me explain what that means to me.

Leadership Theory

A biblical approach to leadership theory needs to be holistic. It starts with God, who is the ultimate leader and developer of leaders throughout history.

A New Approach to Faith-based Leadership

Leaders in the Bible were people who were led by God. This is very important in a faith-based leader's life. No one can lead without being led. Faith-based leadership is developed out of a relationship with God, and is also dependent on God. Faith-based leadership serves God first and then others, with a servant's heart, as taught by Isaiah (Isa. 50:4). The servant-leader must exercise leadership with faith and obedience to God's leadership. Faith-based leaders are transformed and changed because they always look to God first. They look to Jesus because he is the best role model to learn from and they must follow his footsteps. Looking at him encourages leaders to engage in the race God has set before them. Keeping their eyes on Jesus is foundational because he is the ultimate role model (Heb. 12:1-3).

Looking at Servant Leadership

The closest leadership theory to my life story and my biblical perspective on leadership is the servant leadership model. For me, servant leadership is not a

paradox. In our world, leaders influence and servants follow. However, Biblical leaders must do both. They must lead and serve. A Biblical leader can only serve others when he serves God first. Tony Morgan writes,

Leaders are servants. It's counterintuitive. Servant leadership sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? It may be unlike the leadership you've experienced in the marketplace . . . or even the church for that matter. But biblical leaders cannot be anything but servant leaders (Morgan 2012, 7).

Northouse explains:

Servant leadership is attentive to followers' needs, empowers them, and helps them develop their full human capacities. Furthermore, servant leaders make a choice to serve first. They build strong relationships with others; they are ethical and lead in ways that serve the greater good. Servant leaders shift authority to those who are being led. There are ten significant characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community” (Northouse 2016, 227–29).

Servant leaders are facilitators, allowing people to grow and make decisions by themselves. The goal of Christian leadership is to serve the king and the kingdom. A Christian leader's role is to serve God, so that others can also be empowered to serve God and his kingdom. Servant leaders seek the kingdom of God first by serving as Jesus did in John 13:15. This is the example he has given us and therefore we need to put it into practice. In Isaiah 52:13-53:12, we see the servant of the Lord. *The Leadership Bible* explains,

The suffering Messiah provides the ultimate model of servant leadership. Jesus understood His followers' need, defined what was required to meet the need and gave His life so we could live (Boa, Buzzell, and Perkins 2007, 350).

Servant leadership so unique to me because servant leaders make a deliberate choice to serve first. Servant leadership is practiced through mentoring, coaching

and encouraging others to be servant leaders. Jesus was, and is, the most influential leader and agent of change the world has ever known. Jesus, himself was an example of this new kind of leadership. He washed the feet of his disciples. This is the ultimate illustration of servant leadership.

Then He asked them this question: “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (Jn. 13:12-17 NIV).

Servant leadership is best summarized and expressed as incarnational leadership in Jesus' six steps of servanthood (Phil. 2:2-11). Jesus stepped through these six levels as he moved toward us. Both Jesus and Abraham practiced servant leadership. Comparing Jesus' incarnational leadership with Abraham led me to the following findings.

Jesus giving up his divine form (v.6) can be compared to Abraham leaving his country, his people, and his father's household (Gen. 12:1). Jesus emptied himself of any rights (v.7), just as Abraham obeyed God's call to go to a country where he was a stranger and had only God to depend on. Jesus became a man (v.7) or, as John puts it, he became flesh. Abraham was also human. He was promised a son, but his wife Sarai was barren. Jesus became a true servant (v.7). Abraham was a servant to Melchizedek, king of Salem, honouring him by giving a tenth of everything. Jesus was obedient to the point of death (v.8), just as Abraham was obedient. “He obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going” (Heb. 11:8). Jesus was willing to die on the cross (v.8), just as Abraham

was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham was a shadow of servant leadership, which we see when we look to the servant leadership of Jesus (Heb. 12:1-3). An important part of Jesus' servant leadership was that he was led by the Spirit (Matt. 4:1), and he promised the same for his disciples: to be led by the Spirit (Jn. 16:13; Rom. 8:14).

Coming back to Abraham, he was a servant leader who led his men into battle to rescue Lot. He refused any personal gain and was generous to others (Gen. 14:21-24). His leadership was based on God's promise to bless him. This is faith-based leadership. Abraham left a legacy, and his leadership went far beyond him and impacted many generations. Servant leadership also empowers the next generation and enables them to be what God wants them to be. Each generation is responsible for passing on the blessing to the next generation. The research project Streams of Living Water, in chapter 4, provided the necessary insights to help develop the renewal of the heart in order to train a new generation to pass on the blessing to their generation.

Looking Beyond My Style

Having explained the key leadership theory that reflects my style shows that I have moved to a more holistic leadership style that I called faith-based leadership. Leaders use different approaches to motivate followers, but leadership is not a one-size-fits-all style. There is always the need to adapt to the situation and to carefully consider the context in order to lead effectively. We are living in disorienting times in which to lead. Dr. Gary Nelson says, "We need leadership

that [includes] having a range of approaches and being aware of when to use which approach” (Nelson et al. 2015, 84).

Other Aspects to Consider

The foundation of my thinking came out of some biblical lessons I had learned. First, each generation is responsible for having a positive impact on the next generation. The Bible often tells us that one generation brings forth the next (Ps. 145:4). Every generation should tell its children what God has done. The prophet Joel has a similar message: each generation needs to pass the message from God on to the next generation (Jl. 1:3). The biblical perspective is that faith is passed on from one generation to the next. In 2,000 years of church history, there has not been a generation that has stopped passing on the faith altogether. So far, it has not been possible to silence any generation. Second, in Isaiah 40, Isaiah speaks to a new generation. The Bible translation *The Message*, (Peterson 2016) says this:

Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening? GOD doesn't come and go. God lasts. He's Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath. And he knows everything, inside and out. He energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts. For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon GOD get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, they run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind (Is. 40:28-31).

This Bible text was vital to this research as it gave us a biblical framework and a good perspective of the next generation. We see both things here. On the one hand, the new generation has a massive thirst for values. On the other hand, they are very sensitive, weak, powerless, and in need of help. When I asked a young woman from the next generation what upset her most in life, she responded with

the German word *angst* (anxiety). Anxiety is a very real problem for young people in Germany. Reaching out to the next generation was on my heart just as it was on Isaiah's. Each generation has gifts that can help the next one. When one generation does not support the other, they both lose. This keeps the youth powerless, and causes strong men to stumble. The illustration of the eagle that grows mighty wings teaches us something powerful about faith. Those who have faith can fly. We know eagles do not flutter their wings like sparrows. They stretch them out fully and fly. Isaiah challenges the next generation to grow wings again, and to learn to stretch out their wings toward God.

There are three things we learned from Isaiah here. First, God wants the next generation to be a listening generation. As such, we should become role models, listening to God so that the next generation can learn that too. Isaiah called people to hear what God says.

Second, God wants all generations to become worshippers (Jn. 4:23). The next generation can only change if worship transforms them (Rom. 12:1). If we show them how great God is, they can become great people.

Third, the crisis among young Christians is that they are having a difficult time finding their calling. The next generation cannot find their calling if no one calls them. Isaiah dared to call people on behalf of God. It is crucially important that people find their calling (2 Cor. 5:20).

Another aspect is John telling us how he holistically experienced Jesus. In 1 John 1:1, he writes, "What we have seen, what we have heard, what we have touched,

and what we have received, we will pass on to you." Here the "five senses" lead to an experience with the gospel in a holistic way.

A further aspect comes from a prophecy in the book of Daniel. During the On Fire 2018 Congress, I was asked what I envisioned for the next generation. What I found in Daniel 11: 32 and 33 answers this question. The coming empires and times, and the great distraction that is approaching is explained to Daniel by an angel. At the same time, Daniel notices a different movement that gives hope for the future. The angel says, "But the people who are loyal to their God will act valiantly. These who are wise among the people will teach the masses" (Dan. 11:32-33 NET1). Instead of "will teach the masses," other translations say "will lead many to faith." And "those who know their Lord" refers to people who worship God and are "wise and understand." These are the ones in whom faith turns into an authentic, honest, natural, and transparent lifestyle. This biblical perspective is linked to the vision which inspired our Streams of Living Water project.

Reflections

Looking at the ministry of HoF from a biblical perspective and through the lens of the servant leadership style has strengthened my leadership role and given me a new confidence. For this reason I would like to look back at my philosophy of Christian leadership from a different angle. Doing so will bring the three important foundations together. God is the ultimate leader and he still leads today by using human leaders to bring blessing into this world. Leadership needs to

begin with God, and must follow his way and his agenda in order to accomplish God's purpose. In this way the focus in leadership stays clear because it is all about honouring God.

CHAPTER 4: THE RESEARCH PROJECT

In this integration paper, I have brought three aspects of my recent ministry together. In chapter 2, I gave a detailed description of how HoF was developed. In chapter 3, a Christian leadership philosophy was developed, and then its application to the HoF leadership philosophy was explained. In chapter 4, I described that the purpose of the research project was to reignite and inspire the next generation of leaders through the ministry of HoF. The research project was a learning tool for discovering the needs and opportunities in ministry by lining up with God's agenda.

As we addressed the HoF ministry context and applied leadership principles, we recognized that HoF would need to work on a new approach in order to develop the next generation's leaders. The result was a seven-step methodology that described how we at HoF could bridge the gap between the generations in ministry. In order to do this, we also engaged in the process of narrative research based on the "five senses" model and Ignatian spiritual practices. This chapter will outline that process.

Abstract of the Research Project

At the beginning of this research project, we focused on narrative research to find out how we could develop a training program for the next generation. In order to do this, we had to develop a plan to implement change for the next generation of

leaders. The result was a seven-step methodology. This outcome of the research program was a big surprise. The seven-step methodology describes how we at HoF could develop the ministry. The research method of gathering narratives only became a tool to develop and advance the HoF ministry. Stories were only a tool used to engage the next generation in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives. This project researched and created a ministry to reach the next generation of leaders (22-38 years of age). HoF was instrumental in developing a leadership kickstart day in Germany. The ministry was the facilitator of a high-impact leadership training day designed to be a practical tool to take young adults on a journey toward embracing a passionate Christian lifestyle. The training included three steps which were to help guide youth leaders towards having their hearts set on fire for Jesus.

The first step was designing and implementing inspiring worship and teaching sessions during Worthy of Worship Time. The goal of these sessions was to help the next-generation leaders enhance their relationship with Jesus.

The second step was to expose next-generation leaders to the testimonies of Christians whose hearts were on fire for Jesus—people who had experienced God's presence, guidance, and power in real-life situations—and to encourage a passionate prayer life.

The third step was to practice the compelling communication of the Good News by presenting and explaining the salvation message in creative ways. This was done by going out on the streets to pray for people, sharing the Gospel through testimonies, and blessing the people that were encountered.

This research project engaged six young leaders. Through their narratives, we were able to get a better understanding of the next generation's spiritual condition in regards to leadership, faith, community life, their environment, and their personal challenges and struggles. These narratives were done in two steps. First, the young leaders who participated did a self-evaluation by asking themselves and each other a list of prepared questions (see Appendix 4). The second step was for the leadership of HoF to discern what needed to be done using their “five senses” and the Ignatian sensing model, and to implement a corresponding mentoring and training program. Narrative research was used to engage these next-generation leaders in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives and how streams of living water might flow from their lives.

Research Project: Streams of Living Water

Introduction

The HoF story was shared at the beginning of chapter 2 to give deeper insight into the ministry context. After Hearts on Fire was established as a charitable organization, the plan was to build up an interdenominational network which

would provide the organizational framework to glorify God and serve people by focusing on three objectives:

1. Ignite people's hearts to be passionate about Jesus Christ
2. Encourage and implement a network of Christ-centered ministries
3. Bless people to go and to be a blessing

However, HoF faced three main obstacles that had to be overcome. These were the lack of unity among Christian denominations, the generational gap and church participation in worship services, and most importantly, the lack of trained leaders among the next generation. The desire to provide training for the next generation of leaders and the passion for working together with them was the driving force for this research program. The Streams of Living Water project was birthed out of this idea for a training program. The inspiration came from the promise Jesus made in the Gospel of John: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (Jn. 7:37-38 NIV).

Innovation

Streams of Living Water became the name of the HoF initiative to develop a ministry which would reach out and train the next generation's leaders (22-38 years of age). The goal of HoF's project idea of a leadership kickstart day in Germany was to bring passionate young Christians together in order to train and mentor them so that they could in turn minister to their peers which would lead to bridging the gap between denominations.

Context

We understood and explained earlier that the context and the setting of ministry are vital. I shared this context story in chapter 2, under the heading of what we need to know about HoF. This knowledge revealed to us that we should look for people who were in need of a renewal of their hearts, and who were willing to have their hearts set on fire, so that they could turn other people's hearts toward Jesus.

Understanding Community through Narrative

Listening to community stories is a vital method to discovering the needs of the community. Carl Savage and William Presnell believe that faith communities can know what to do in ministry by understanding the multiple stories that intersect with a given ministry situation in their specific context (Savage and Presnell 2008, 25).

In the fall of 2017, I heard the following story during my time in Franconia, Germany. It sparked a passion for revival and provided new insight into understanding the needs of the community. The story influenced me to envision this research project with HoF. I shared it with HoF board members in order to highlight the need for the training program Streams of Living Water, which became the working title of this research project.

One of my former classmates from elementary school invited me to her home. I had gone to the same youth group she attended, where we both experienced a youth revival during which many young people gave their lives to Jesus. The

young people began sharing their faith with great compassion. At that time, hundreds of young people were touched by the gospel. Many were on fire for Jesus and a large number of them went into full-time ministry. Forty years later, there is still some evidence of this revival in the region.

While I was visiting her, my former classmate told me her recent miracle story. In 2016 she had a brain aneurysm that left her in the hospital in a deep coma. It triggered many complications, from heart failure to multi-organ failure, and required many dangerous medical procedures. During her six week stay in the hospital, she was often close to death but each time, somehow pulled through. The prayer support from her church at the time was extraordinary. Even people from the Lutheran church where she worked joined in intercessory prayer for her. Unexpectedly, from one day to the next some of her organs stopped working, but then suddenly, one by one, her organs miraculously started to work again. She woke up as if nothing had happened. “It was like one day God switched off the light, and six weeks later, God turned it on again,” she explained. Full of gratitude to God and overwhelmed by what had happened to her, she started to share her story with everyone. As a result, many people were touched. She then said something that made me wonder, and has inspired me ever since. She said, “I thought by sharing my story with people, God would use this miracle in my life to bring an awakening, changing people and bringing them back to God. So far, after one year of sharing, nothing seems to have happened. Many heard my story, but revival did not happen.” She was very disappointed, but she did not stop sharing what Jesus had done in her life. This was an example of a heart on fire.

This story helped us to realize that three things—prayer, worship, and testimonies are a driving force in changing people’s hearts. We determined that this would be at the core of our Streams of Living Water initiative. This woman, with her powerful testimony of being touched by the living God and on fire for Jesus, was passing on the living water that had filled her life and transformed her whole family. A miracle had blessed her and she passed on the blessing. Her experience left a great impression in her Christian community, but it seemed it would not have a great impact on many people’s faith and life. Even so, we at HoF learned that God had provided a story to lead us in the right direction to discover a specific need that had to be addressed. God had revealed a tremendous spiritual need in the region through this miracle story, and HoF was being called to serve in this context.

Biblical Questions and Inspiration

The HoF leadership team began to talk about the question of what happened to the streams of living water that Jesus promised in the Gospel of John. Here Jesus describes a reviving process, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (Jn. 7:37-38 NIV).

The outcome of my conversation with this former classmate led to a threefold insight. First, we noticed streams of living water flowing around people who are thirsty for God. A revival begins where people are thirsty for God. If people are thirsty, they will be more open to accepting the invitation to a relationship with

Jesus, and they will then pass on living water to others. This is the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit that makes people long for living water. “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the gift of the water of life” (Rev. 22:17 NIV).

Second, we discovered that with this call, Jesus invites believers to a life that produces streams of living water. “Come to me” is a personal invitation (Matt. 11:28). People need a personal invitation to come into a personal relationship with Jesus.

Third, we discovered that Jesus encourages us to believe. According to Scripture, he set the hearts of the disciples from Emmaus on fire by opening Scripture to them and going back to Moses and the prophets. He revealed to them that according to Scripture, he was the Messiah. Streams of living water could be released, as was promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Be blessed and be a blessing, and all the nations will be blessed through him.

The Streams of Living Water project inspired others to be thirsty for God, to respond to the call into a relationship with Jesus, and to serve people.

Models and Other Course Material

My ministry life journey provided excellent preparation to take on this ministry challenge and to develop the Streams of Living Water project for HoF.

Certain biblical narratives helped me to discern the direction I had to go in my own life, and many stories emerged from this process. Writing my own leadership

story in the DMin (Doctor of Ministry) program turned out to be a great lesson for a narrative research project. As I began to understand my own life story, I found that God's story was embedded in my own narrative. I understood that everything I learned was built into stories. Researching the stories in my life taught me to focus on what God was doing in me and through me. However, being familiar with narratives is not the same as using narratives in research, which I will explain later.

Looking for Thirsty People

For this research project, we began to look for thirsty people. Some questions helped us in the process of finding these people. In the book of Isaiah, God himself was looking for thirsty people by asking, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost" (Is. 55:1 NIV). In John 7:37, the question of who was thirsty was raised again. It included the question: who accepts the call of Jesus as Scripture says? And it asks the final question: who would allow streams of living water? The word for Abraham was "go" in Genesis 12:1, and the verb we find here is *הלך* (*halakh*), the same word translated as "come" in Isaiah 55:1. We see here that God is looking for thirsty people, and that we should do the same.

Looking to Plant a Seed

This research project was also a faith project. Sowing a seed had a promising outcome. The entire research was considered as the seed. By trying to understand our narrative, we discovered what God had planted in our lives. Therefore, this research project was a great tool to encourage the next generation to move forward to become a thirsty and hungry generation for God, desiring to grow in relationship with Jesus and to be on fire for Jesus while reaching out to the next generation.

Looking for a Movement

There is one additional scriptural reference that needs to be mentioned. Jesus started a great movement with his great invitation: “Come to me, all” (Matt. 11:28-30). In this research project, we needed to discover what wearies and burdens the next generation and what gives them rest. If transformation happens through engaging in a process and joining the journey, then Jesus’ call of “come to me” would trigger the process and engage the next generation in a journey. Those whose hearts were on fire would set others on fire and cause a chain reaction. The next generation would be invited to join the movement that Jesus started.

Other Literature and Cases

Many years ago, I read a book by Leighton Ford, *The Power of Story*, rediscovering the oldest, most natural way to reach people for Christ (Ford and Denney 1994). This book helped me to tell my own stories more effectively. It became a great tool for me as I taught the amazing story of God's grace. Later, I

studied the book, *Because God Loves Stories: An Anthology of Jewish Storytelling* (Zeitlin 1997). This is an exciting treasury of Jewish stories and storytellers from ancient tales. It answered why human beings were created, and responded with a traditional Jewish saying: “because God loves stories.” Storytelling has been part of the Jewish religion and Jewish custom from the earliest times, and it remains a defining aspect of Jewish life. This was important information for the research project because it explained how stories were tools which could answer the life questions that people have today.

Tim Sensing’s book, *Qualitative Research*, gave me an excellent overview of how to use narrative research effectively (Sensing 2015, 182). The list from Van Manen below shows seven aspects of a story that are relevant to this study:

1. Story provides us with possible human experiences
 2. Story enables us to experience life situations, feelings, emotions, and events that we would not normally experience
 3. Story allows us to broaden the horizons of our normal existential landscape by creating possible worlds
 4. Story tends to appeal and involve us in a personal way
 5. Story is an artistic device that lets us turn back to life as a lived experience
 6. Story evokes the quality of vividness in detailing unique and particular aspects of a life that could be my life or your life
 7. Stories transcend the particularity of their plots and protagonists, etc.
- (Sensing 2015,184)

The book *Narrative Research in Ministry* from Savage and Presnell explained in detail what narrative is and how it can be used in different cases (Savage and Presnell 2008). This book was the reason I chose to use narrative research in my project: it taught the postmodern approach which my project needed. The

following words written by Carl Savage and William Presnell were important for my research project:

The human thirst for God and the hope, guidance, healing, and transformation God brings to human life is great. But where do we find God? How do we discern God's presence with assurance? When we attempt to answer these questions, we cannot help but tell a story. Theology is a story that expresses our experience with God (Savage and Presnell 2008,67).

The narrative research approach was different from the traditional research model.

Savage and Presnell suggested narrative research as a new approach:

That seeks to begin the process, not by identifying the location of a problem that needs resolution, but by evoking a conversation between the student and her/his ministerial setting that will lead to a mutual collaboration addressing the concerns of the participants and moving them to a new understanding and relationship that may affect a positive outcome (Savage and Presnell 2008, 87).

Narrative research in ministry provided a template for any narrative research project by asking the right questions.

Another book was *Learning and Teaching Narrative Inquiry* (Trahar 2011).

Chapter 3, "Becoming a Narrative Inquirer," teaches us how to learn to be attentive within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. It shifts the focus from learning to thinking narratively with stories. Trahar states,

When we begin to engage in narrative inquiry, we need to be attentive to thinking with stories in multiple ways: toward our stories, toward others' stories, toward all the social, institutional, cultural, familial and linguistic narratives in which we are embedded as well as toward what begins to emerge in the sharing of our lived and told stories (Trahar 2011, 33-35).

The article from D. Jean Clandinin, from the University of Alberta, called "Navigating Sites from Narrative Inquiry" was very enlightening. It describes a narrative inquiry and gives a useful definition, stating, "Some see narrative

inquiry as ‘just telling stories.’” For us, and for many others, narrative inquiry is much more than the telling of stories (Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr 2007). Another article is called “Narrative Research Evolving: Evolving Through Narrative Research.” From the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, it suggests “to expect narrative research methodology is evolving, and the emergent design is vital in narrative inquiry. For the authors, narrative inquiry means “the study of experience as story and a way of thinking—through storying is to continue flourishing in generating new knowledge” (Bruce et al. 2016, 2).

Confirming the Narrative Approach

The question was what approach was necessary in the HoF setting to determine how to discover the need for ministry? How was it possible to gain awareness of the work God was doing in a community? What was the right approach for the Streams of Living Water research project? We felt God had already prepared it for us by providing the positive stories and testimonies that came out of the first HoF Day in October 2018. It confirmed that the lives of those in faith communities are revealed in their stories and so we concluded that narrative research was the right

approach. It gave us a better understanding of what God was doing in people's lives and community life (Savage and Presnell 2008, 23).

The Power of Sensing Stories

Narratives gave us a more holistic approach to research, which is a window into reality. In the book *Narrative Research in Ministry*, we learn that multi-sensory input is given through a story.

We expect to “hear” content and process. We expect to “smell” odours and fragrances that the story suggests or images. We expect to “taste” the food and hospitality of the ministerial context, to “feel” tension, stagnation, peace, textures—rough, stiff, rugged, smooth—exhibited in the contours of the narratives of the context. We expect to “see” the symbolic structures, gestures, rituals and relationship patterns” (Savage and Presnell 2008, 48).

Sensing Through Narratives

One effective approach for the faith community is narrative research. The first step is sensing and discovering what God has prepared for us. Stories are complex and useful tools that help us to understand our times. They are powerful tools that help ministries discern what God has prepared for them. Having the conviction that when God wants to do something he reveals it through stories, should encourage us to listen to stories and to discern how to do ministry from them.

Project, Methodology, and Methods

This was a ministry project that developed in time and place with the help of the HoF leadership and the participants of the narrative story sharing. Narrative

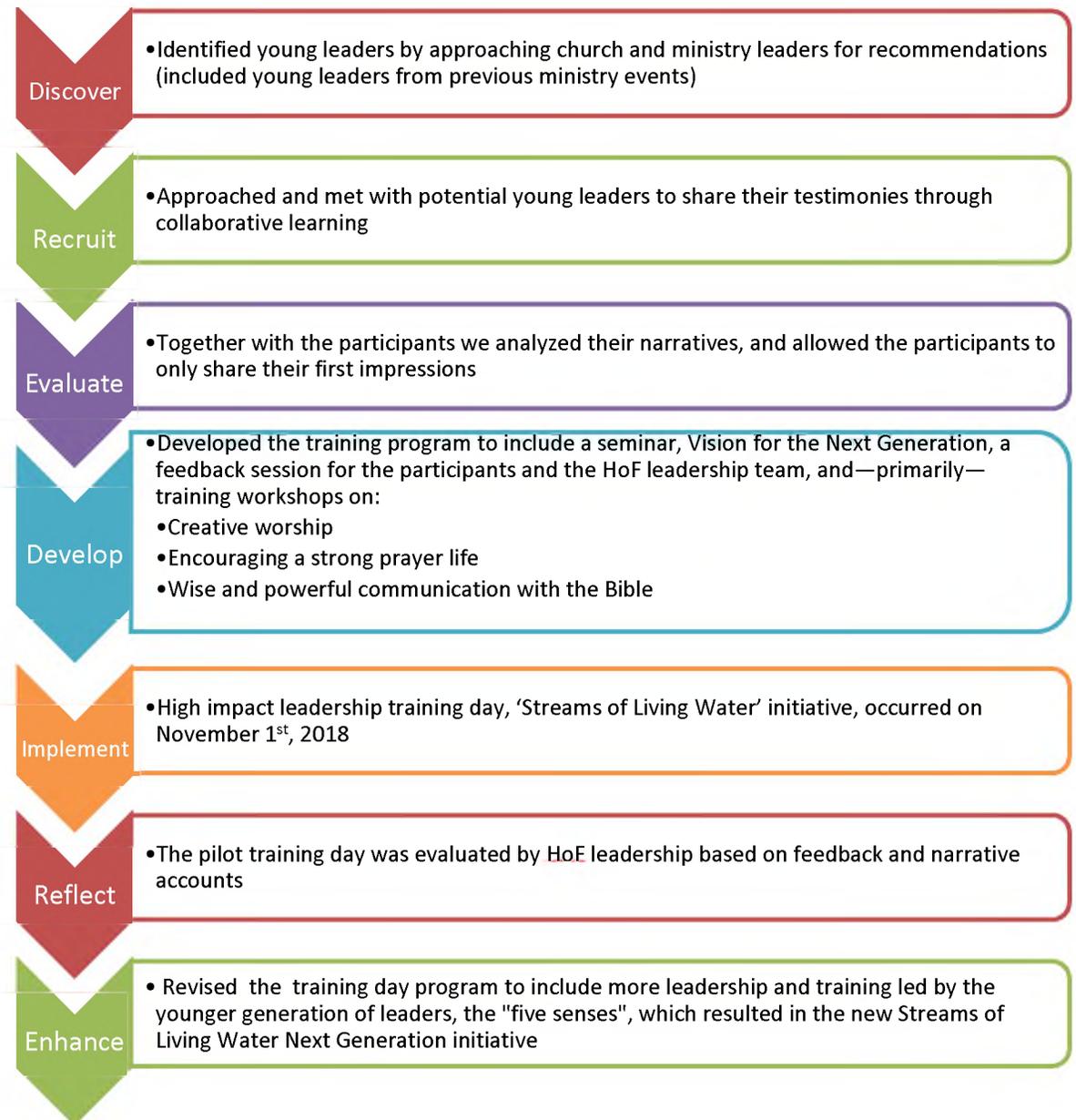
research helped give the project clarity and led to valuable conclusions which were supported by other research.

Ignatian Spirituality

The Ignatian spirituality (Coghlan 2004) gave us guidelines for applying a spiritual Seven Steps of Streams of Living Water Project Overview (April 2018–March 2019) aspect to narrative research. There is an integral link between prayer and activity. In Ignatian spirituality, three different audiences are used to process and sense who the people are, what their stories are, and what God has embedded in their stories. In the first-person inquiry-practice, each one of the participants reflected on his experience in order to find the pattern of God's action. I call this personal sensing. This kind of insight can direct the individual to future personal action. When a person seeks to find God in their own lives, they are practicing personal sensing or first-person research. In the second-person inquiry-practice, we inquired about the mutual concern for others through face-to-face dialogue and conversation. I call this team sensing. In this part, we discerned what God wanted from us together as a group. In the third-person inquiry-practice, we went beyond the participants and out to the community. I call this community sensing. This involved bringing the concerns of the community to the HoF leadership team and discerning together what we needed to do in order to build up the next generation of leaders. Personal and team sensing led to sensing in the community.

Table 1. Streams of Living Water project overview

Seven Steps of Streams of Living Water Project Overview (April 2018–March 2019)



The overview of the Streams of Living Water project outlines the major steps in creating this training program. The project began with the discovery of next-generation leaders. After that came the recruiting process when we found six next-

generation leaders willing to be involved in the project. In the project's evaluation step, the participants shared their stories and evaluated the stories together, based on their first impressions. In the developing step, we developed a training program based on the feedback from the participants. Next was the implementation step, where the leadership of HoF invited the next-generation leaders to be part of the HoF pilot project day. This day was set aside to train, and mentor next-generation leaders and set them on fire. In the reflection step, the whole project was evaluated by reviewing and reflection. The last step was to enhance the project. Here we revised and enhanced the training program using the “five senses.”

These seven steps can be used as a template in the future to develop ministries in other areas of the Christian community. They also reflect the Jesus model found in the gospel (Matt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:13-19; Lk. 6:12-16) as explained by Arrow Leadership: “led more by Jesus, lead more like Jesus, and lead more to Jesus” (Brown 2015, 209).

The sevenfold template was:

1. Discover new leaders through prayer
2. Recruit new leaders by extending the call
3. Evaluate their narratives collectively and listen to their ministry experience
4. Development through a training program including two-by-two learning from Jesus
5. Implement a High Impact Learning (HIL) and training day (Savage and

Presnell 2008, 15)

6. Reflect on the pilot training day
7. Enhance the training day program

These research steps were designed to use action research as an opportunity to develop the HoF ministry further and aim for a practical outcome.

Adjustments of the Project

At the beginning of this research project, we ran into a few important challenges that needed some adjustments. The purpose of the research project called Streams of Living Water was to develop a Christian next-generation leader training program to mobilize the next generation of leaders. Now the definition became more precise and more inclusive. This research project needed to be expanded into seven steps to bring out more distinctions. Despite a few delays, the project has still been able to follow the planned steps.

The first delay happened in the recruitment process. I had initially asked the HoF leadership team to identify and recommend next-generation leaders with the potential to own and implement the Streams of Living Water project. HoF leadership made some suggestions but could not recruit the potential participants directly, either through the church or the ministry leaders. The reason for this was a lack of understanding about the research project. I found this out later during a discussion of the project. An awareness of the process was missing. This was a learning curve that positively impacted the rest of the project. After some initial setbacks, we found a better way to proceed. At the On Fire 2018 Outreach

Congress from August 3-9, 2018, God had brought together the next generation's leaders from southern Germany. Some lay leaders came together to volunteer at the On Fire 2018 Outreach Congress, and to train youth for an eastern Germany outreach. More than 150 youth and youth leaders were there to inspire a reformation of hearts in Germany. The atmosphere was lively and creative, and filled with a lot of powerful input and teaching tools to equip young people to bring the gospel to the streets of eastern Germany. The intent was to invite the young people in this former communist-ruled part of Germany to a life with Jesus Christ (On Fire Outreach in Eastern Germany). This event gave us the perfect opportunity to recruit participants for the research project.

The second delay happened when we became aware that an initiative like this needed much more than just a good idea. Everyone agreed that the research project required people who understood the project. The skill to communicate the purpose of the project and to convince people that this project would help change the community was essential. Teaching people how to recruit next-generation leaders was the step I had missed, and this slowed our progress considerably. Training the HoF leadership for this purpose would have made a big difference. In retrospect, there was something else I needed to learn. Ministry always needs the *καιρός* / *kairos* of God. God's timing is not necessarily our timing. Paul uses *καιρός* in Galatians 4:4 to speak of a time of opportunity, a moment charged with significance and possibility. The *καιρός* time is a point in time that demands action. After much prayer, the time was right. It was possible to bring six next-generation leaders together. It happened during the On Fire 2018 Congress.

The third delay arose from a deeper need to understand the current German youth culture so that leaders could be trained effectively. It became clear after the participants' first narratives were collected and analyzed that we required a reality check. It was necessary to compare my narrative research with other studies of the youth culture in Germany. I had to go back to my ministry context assessment to find more facts in order to complete this reality check. I realized that more research was necessary in order to give my research project enough depth. As mentioned before, the research tool on German youth culture was the *Shell Youth Study*. The study analyses how young people in Germany rise to challenges, and it also looks at the behavioural patterns, attitudes, and mentalities they develop in this process. This study revealed that there is great potential for the next generation. To summarize the outcome: “The youth of 2015 can, therefore, be described as a “generation raring to go” (Albert, Hurrelmann, and Quenzel 2015). A final delay came out of a need for further training. I discovered that communicating the details of a project does not automatically mean that others without proper training will implement it correctly. A high-impact training day with workshops, seminars, worship, and prayer would be the catalyst to bring change through the region, because it created a mentoring opportunity, which gave the older generation a platform on which to teach and train leaders of the younger generation. This would trigger a chain reaction: the trained leaders could use their strengths to reach and teach the next generation of leaders.

Data, Timetables, and Steps of the Project

Here is an overview of the collected project data, the different stages, following the sevenfold template, including the timeline. Table 2 shows the information that was collected in all the steps of the project. The chart gives an overview of how the research was recorded and documented.

Table 2: Documentation and Recording of the Research (April 2018 – March 2019)

Steps	Oral	Info's	Notes	Recording	Transcriptions	Storage on PC
Discover	Prayer for candidates	Project info's Appendix 1-3	HoF wish lists of candidates			HoF Minutes April 2018
Recruit	Interview	Project info's Appendix 1-3+6-7	form signature			Scanned
Evaluate	Narrative sharing and evaluating	Project info's Appendix 4-5	Consent forms and field notes were collected	Narrative sharing	Audio transcribed	Mp3 and Document
Develop	Sharing the research	Ignatian spirituality three steps	HoF minutes			HoF Minutes October 2018
Implement	Planning conversation	Flyer Appendix 9	HoF minutes			HoF Minutes November 2018
Reflect	Feedback and reviews of the training day	Program review	HoF minutes			HoF Minutes November 2018
Enhance	Learning for the future	Appendix 8	HoF minutes			HoF Minutes March 2019

In the Discover step, after prayer time, a wish list of participants was produced and was communicated in appendices 1 through 3, and was given to potential participants. This was repeated with the final recruits, after the delay mentioned earlier. In the Recruit step, the interview was done person to person and project appendices 1 through 3 and 6 were given. Also, the confidentiality agreement was

signed and stored on my personal computer. In the Evaluate step, appendices 4, 5, and 7 were shared, and the consent form was used and signed. The participants shared and evaluated their narratives, which were taped and transcribed. Field notes and conversation notes were collected and stored on my personal computer. In the Develop step, an HoF training day was envisioned using the three different Ignatian spirituality audiences described above. The results were recorded in the HoF minutes and stored on my personal computer. In the Implement step, a high-impact learning and training day took place. This actual training day occurred on November 1, 2018, at the school in Röckingen, Bavaria. The flyer was produced (appendix 9), and a program for the day was written and stored on my personal computer. In the Reflect step, feedback and reviews of the training day by the HoF leaders were analyzed to enhance the project and to be used again in the future. This took place in an HoF meeting at the end of November, 2018 and was recorded in the HoF minutes and stored on my personal computer. In the Enhance step, the learning for the future training days was discussed and became an ongoing strategy in preparation for the next HoF training day. This was recorded in the HoF minutes and stored on my personal computer.

Participants in the Narrative Research

Table 3 provides an overview of the narrative research session with the six participants by listing the core contents of their stories and the evaluation that was done in collaboration.

Table 3. Overview of participants, their ministry involvement, narrative, and sensing

Participants	Ministry Involvement	Narrative	Sensing
Researcher	Researcher and Coach	Passion for the next generation	God's presence in life is important
Person 1	Teacher and youth outreach	Challenge to care	Activating of people's ambition
Person 2	Leader of the youth prayer house	Need of spiritual development	Overcoming indifference
Person 3	Missionary in prayer house	Complexity of life and simplicity	Focusing on God's abundance
Person 4	Outreach coach for Gospel Forum	Experiencing the Holy Spirit	Enjoying experiences with God
Person 5	Youth worker from Mexico	Hunger for role models and change	Awareness of the world around them
Person 6	Prayer coach	Being shaped by community	Place of growth to take root

Following is the timeline of the project. The first step, Discover, began with a meeting of the HoF leadership team in April 2018 in Bavaria, Germany. The board of directors of HoF prayed for next-generation leaders, discussed the recruitment process, and outlined the goals, dates, and details of the project. The second step, Recruit, began after a delay on August 7, 2018. Six participants were interviewed. The participants were all next-generation lay leaders between the ages of 22 and 38, and met our objective (appendix 1). The third step, which overlapped with the Recruit and the Evaluate steps, was done on August 7, 2018 after confidentiality was confirmed. After the collective narratives were shared we used a template (appendix 4) to facilitate storytelling and listening. It was important to pay attention to the variety of language forms,

relationship patterns, meanings, and symbols that shaped the stories. The main tool I used to unlock the participants' stories was asking "W" questions: What is your story? What experience has influenced you the most? What are your dreams and hopes for your life? What do you think God is doing in your life right now? The purpose of these questions was to try to find God in their stories. All of this was recorded and transcribed.

The fourth step, an HoF training day, was envisioned using the principles of Ignatian spirituality, which were described earlier. This led us to prepare a next-generation leader's training day. Our goal was to challenge the participants to show care for people, and thereby cause people's ambition to activate by showing them a passionate lifestyle. To do this we used Scriptures such as the Luke 24 account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

The fifth step was implementing a high-impact learning and training day. The actual training day took place on November 1, 2018. WoW Time and inspiring stories were used to stimulate spiritual growth and development, to encourage overcoming indifference, and to help young people with complex lives move toward a life of simplicity by focusing on God's abundance. The focus of this training day was to allow the next-generation leaders to experience time with God. The seminar about the power of the gospel stimulated the hunger for role models and brought change to others through the power of the Good News. Going out to the city streets with an instructor provided exposure and an awareness of the world around them. The training program included a seminar, Vision for the Next Generation.

The sixth step, Reflect, began right after the training day on November 1, 2018. Feedback and reviews from the training day were analyzed to enhance the project and to be used again in the future. In order to do this, we used the “five senses” coding, asking five specific modified questions:

What touched people?

What did people envision through this day?

What did people hear as the message of the day?

What did people smell or sense through the day?

What did people take away or taste through the day?

Analyzing the day using the “five senses” led to an awareness of what was essential for the future.

The seventh step, Enhance, was the modified training day program. This enhanced version became an ongoing strategy in preparation for the next HoF training day held on October 3, 2019, after the project was completed in March 2019.

Methodology

The outcome of the research project was a seven-step methodology that can be used as a template for further ministry. This seven-step methodology which was based on action research was an unexpected outcome. Because I focused so much on the research through narratives, I did not see that the seven-step methodology was the key to implementing change for the next generation of leaders. The seven-step methodology describes how we at HoF took the next generation on a journey toward a passionate Christian lifestyle. We did this by giving them a

platform on which they could be involved in prayer ministry, worship, and sharing the gospel through outreach. The research method of gathering narratives was an important tool used to engage the next generation in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives.

Seven-step Methodology

We focused first on narrative research to determine how we could develop a training program for the next generation. However, in order to get there, we had to create a plan to implement change for them. The result was a seven-step methodology that describes how we could bridge the gap between the generations in ministry. The outcome of this research program was a big surprise. Later we realized that the research method of gathering narratives became a tool which helped develop and advance the HoF ministry. Narratives became a tool to engage the next generation in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives. How did we arrive at this seven-step methodology? It grew out of the action research cycle defined by Paul Brenner and Mark Chapman:

We define Action Research as an iterative project cycle with action, research, and reflection guided by a leader with the participation of others in the situation and consonant with the ideals of the group to effect positive individual and social change and to develop transferable and theoretical knowledge. (Bramer and Chapman 2017, 29)

As we began to plan the research project, it was necessary to develop the steps needed to accomplish it. To fine-tune the action research cycle for the Streams of Living Water project, we began by laying out four stages of the project, including the seven-step methodology which was used as a template for HoF to bring about change. In stage one, we recruited and discovered what shapes youth leaders by

listening to their stories. In stage two, we evaluated the youth leaders' stories through collaborative understanding. In stage three, we implemented and developed a pilot project next-generation leadership day as an action response. Finally, in stage four, we reviewed and enhanced the project as a model for a future next-generation leadership day. This day became the platform for next-generation leaders to grow and be shaped, and to pass on their experience with God. The research project taught them how to expose others to prayer, worship, testimonies and sharing, even as they allowed mentors to play a significant role in their own leadership development. The seven-step methodology template was later used to develop other ministries as well.

Narrative as a Research Tool

In this research project, we also used narratives as a research tool. Tim Sensing's fundamental answer for the purpose of narrative research is:

The purpose of narrative research is to examine how participants impose order on their lived experiences and making sense of it (Sensing 2015, 181).

We listened to next-generation leaders and heard how they brought order and meaning to their stories. When information receiving and interpretation happen simultaneously, it allows for a better understanding of beliefs and practice. This was also done with potential participants. The first meeting of participants occurred on August 7, 2018. At this meeting, the six participants shared and analyzed their testimonies and narratives for the purpose of narrative research. (See appendix 4 for list of questions discussed at this meeting.)

Following is a description of the process and methods that were used for the project. The collective storytelling setting was important: we were sitting in a circle, looking at each other's faces when we shared our stories. Everyone was able to hear the stories and everyone was able to see facial expressions and gestures as the stories were being told. In this way, everyone was able to capture the surrounding setting and atmosphere as the data was collected. I told them my own story first, to give them an example. As a result, they each had a template for what we were looking for, as explained in appendix 4. My story however, was not evaluated in order to avoid influencing their storytelling. It was only used as an illustration.

Collecting narratives and storytelling was a tool that involved collaborative listening, thinking, and analyzing. The goal was to discern and to understand the whole story. Actively listening, and knowing what to look for were essential when interpreting the narratives. We encouraged this type of active listening in order to unfold a deeper, more authentic story, and we paid attention to the variety of language forms, relationship patterns, meanings, and symbols that had shaped the story. We concentrated on relationships, not problems by tracing the interconnections of person to person and events to events. The participants were mostly lay leaders involved in youth ministry and outreach. Three were female, and the other three were male. The first person was a school teacher involved in youth outreach; the second, the leader of the youth prayer house; the third, a missionary in the prayer house; the fourth, an outreach coach for youth church;

the fifth, a youth worker from Mexico; and the sixth, a prayer coach. They represented a large spectrum from different life settings (table 3).

I used some questions to unlock the stories of the participants. Based on the handout I had given everyone (see appendix 4), these questions guided them to release more in-depth information about their stories.

We started with self-evaluation. Each participant evaluated his or her own story before others participated in unpacking the story's meaning and significance. By letting them evaluate their own story, we honoured their ownership of it and received a summary of the essence of the story first. Everyone in the group was able to contribute by asking key questions like Who, What, When, Where and Why. After that, in order to create more clarity, we looked for connections and similarities in their story with other stories. We also encouraged the interweaving of biblical narratives into each story. This helped the stories to emerge with larger Christian/religious perspectives that brought insight and meaning to the context from a biblical viewpoint. As the story emerged, we all connected the dots with the bigger aspects of the story to find common links to the project. The collective story sharing was audiotaped and transcribed for later data analysis. In this specific situation, we followed the recommendations for collecting data in a professional way (Stringer 2013, 178).

Three Layers of a Narrative

Let me go into more depth to identify the three layers of the narrative. The outer layer was neutral; each story stood by itself as it was just one person's story. The second layer was the plot of the story, in which one thing led to the other, and

everything was connected. The third layer of each story was the connection to God and it was the most challenging part to discover. However, the question of where God was in the life story helped to us find and understand the third layer. Understanding God's presence gives us a testimony, and we can find the message for others.

Grace stories are God's success stories. As an illustration, we used the story of the prophet Nathan and how he confronted David about his sin in order to lead David back to God (2 Sam. 12). Leighton Ford, in *The Power of Story*, talks about the story of grace, "The story of grace continues with David, who—after yielding himself to the sins of lying, adultery, and murder—is given a second chance by the forgiving grace of God" (Ford and Denney 1994, 85).

Leading people to self-awareness leads to an understanding of the need for teaching and learning. From these findings, the HoF leadership was able to move on to sense how we needed to train next-generation leaders. We needed to be sensitive to what God had prepared for us so that we could envision an HoF training day that could be used to inspire the Streams of Living Water project. To get a more spiritual perspective, we used Ignatian spirituality (Coghlan 2004).

Through narratives, we are encouraged to listen, to sense, and to act in ministry to serve others.

Digging deeper to filter the stories we heard through the "five senses", decode the data, and sort it step-by-step into the five categories of the senses was shown in Table 4, as Savage and Presnell recommended.

As we open windows to reality we expect to experience multi-sensory input from outside our location within the larger story. We expect to

“hear” content and process. We expect to “smell” odors and fragrances that the story suggests or images. We expect to “taste” the food and hospitality of the ministerial context, to “feel” tension, stagnation, peace, textures—rough, stiff, rugged, smooth—exhibited in the contours of the narratives of the context. We expect to “see” the symbolic structures, gestures, rituals and relationship patterns (Savage and Presnell 2008, 48).

The coding was based on the five basic human senses: hear, smell, taste, feel and see. Our senses send information to the brain to help us understand and perceive the world around us. These are the questions we went through:

What did I hear through the story?

What did I smell or sense through the story?

What did I taste through the story?

What did I feel in the story?

What did I see, envision through the story?

We repeatedly went over the participants' transcriptions. Analyzing them using the five senses helped answer these questions.

Table 4. Findings of the narrative research

Theme of People's Stories	Touch	Vision	Hearing	Smell	Taste
Challenge to care	People's ambition	Challenge to care	Freedom with God	Just do it	Learn to last
The need for spiritual development	God develops people	Spiritual development	Deepen your life	Challenge to grow up	Overcoming indifference
Complexity and simplicity of life	Good News fascinates	Inspired Leadership	Together is better	Attracted to belong	Taste God's abundancy
Experience the Holy Spirit	Life touched by the Holy Spirit	Reaching out as a lifestyle	Be on a mission with God	Enjoying God and reflect him	Learn to inspire others
Hunger for role models and change	Cross-cultural experience	Develop the heart of people	Join God's movement	Awareness of the world around	Hunger for role models and change
Being shaped by community	Place of growth to take root	Allow space to grow and inspire	Let God use all your potential	Experience new things	Enlarge your horizon

Table 4 shows the outcome of the narrative research. After coding, we listed the results of how the stories touched us and gave the vision to hear, smell, and taste what Christianity has to offer to the next generation.

Findings, Interpretations, and Outcomes

The research project's outcome was a seven-step methodology that was used as a template for HoF to bring about change and develop further ministry. The seven-step methodology describes the whole process of how the HoF next-generation project was developed, and how we took the next generation on a journey toward

a passionate Christian lifestyle by giving them a way to be involved in prayer ministry, worship, and sharing the gospel through outreach. The research method of gathering narratives was only a part of the process in steps 2 and 3, a tool to engage the next generation.

The seven-step methodology was very effective and helped develop the whole project, thereby implementing change for next-generation leaders. Following is an evaluation of the seven-step methodology:

The first step, discover new leaders through prayer, was the correct approach because prayer is the core DNA of HoF. Prayer led us to the point where we found the right setting and the right participants. Prayer, in combination with the action step, helped trigger the process. It was like Jesus said, “seek and you will find”(Mt 7:7).

The second step, recruit new leaders by extending the call, was very useful. An important lesson that we learned was to consider asking people directly. It was like Peters story in Lk. 5:1-11. “He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore.” Asking people is a very powerful tool that can lead to good results.

The third step, evaluate their narratives collectively and listen to their ministry experience by sensing what was embedded in their story, was a critical exercise. What did we hear, smell, taste, feel and see together in the narrative that matters for the next generation? When we compiled all of our data from the narrative, we found three major things.

The first thing we found was that they all participants had had an experience with God in their youth. For example, participant #3 said he grew up in a Christian environment. Every year he went to a summer camp where the camp leader only had to say a few words before the participant knew he would have to make a decision for Jesus at that moment, or never. The youth evenings were simple, but he felt that God was there and was talking to him. When he first listened to the Word, he accepted it as truth, and through the testimonies of others, he experienced God's presence, which changed his life forever.

The second finding was that all were exposed, in one way or another, to prayer, worship, testimonies, sharing, and preaching empowered by the Holy Spirit. For instance, participant #4 was raised in a church, but he still had to decide what to believe for himself. He had religion, but no real relationship with Jesus. When he was 16 years old, the Holy Spirit touched his life during a time of worship. It was at this moment that he realized how vital it was to walk with the Holy Spirit. He found it incredibly important that we were fully open to the Holy Spirit. He also found himself on fire for Jesus, and had the great commission from Matthew 28: 19 in his heart. Through the Holy Spirit, he understood that church was not a pleasure boat but a rescue ship.

Lastly, mentors had played a significant role in the participants' lives by mentoring them in their crises and by modelling passionate serving. In particular, participant #5 came to faith when she was 19 or 20 years old. She had grown up in Mexico, where she met a group of students from Cameroon. They knew exactly why they were there. They prayed all night once a month and every Friday they

went out to share the Gospel. By watching them, she developed a heart for young people and saw that they were hungry for role models—not for role models who told them what to do, but for role models who were offering real-life discipleship. In the fourth step, develop a training program including two-by-two learning led to praxis-oriented learning. During this step, two significant discoveries were made. The two most effective ways to impact young people and get them to open up and listen to the gospel were: people need people, and people need stories. First, people are the most substantial influence on people. People are mentors and influencers of other people. Second, narratives and stories inspire people, allowing them to touch, give vision, and to hear, smell, and taste. They are the fuel which sets people on fire for Jesus. The renewal of the heart and faith is initiated through people and stories.

The fifth step, implement a High Impact Learning (HIL) and training day, was inspired by a paragraph in the book *Narrative Research in Ministry*:

High Impact Learning (HIL) experiences, such as the already hot 2-3 day conferencing phenomena, or what I prefer to call learning advances, will continue to catch fire even though their shape will become more relationship based and less sage-on-a-stage driven. Leaders naturally seek tribal gatherings of like-minded souls to make new connections, learn new things, and immerse themselves in Socratic processes for a few intense days (Savage and Presnell 2008, 15).

The sixth step, reflect on the pilot training day, was a tremendous help in moving the project forward. The feedback and review of the training day were analyzed to enhance the project's capacity to implement change. The goal was to allow the next generation of leaders to use the HoF Day as a platform to grow and be shaped and pass on their experience with God.

The seventh step, enhance the training day program, was an ongoing learning process. In the enhance step, the learning for the future training days was discussed and became a strategy in preparation for the next HoF training day. The enhance tool was important because it helped to change our behaviour as HoF. After three years in ministry with HoF, we desired more than a training day as a platform for the next generation. We looked for a shift in HoF to help us reach and train the next generation. The enhance step taught us to go further than just improving the HoF training day. Looking back on the development of HoF, we see that we began as a priestly ministry like in the times of Joshua. The priest had to go ahead so that the people could cross over in the promised land. In Joshua 3:8 (NIV) we read that Joshua told the priests who carried the ark of the covenant: “When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.” The priests had to get their feet wet. This how we could describe our ministry from the beginning. We learned that change is a process through the seven-step methodology, and the problem is how to avoid getting stuck. We at HoF are dedicated to continuing to follow the cycle of change. This is why the seven-step methodology is a great power tool. It helped us develop a leadership day and helps us understand our role in bringing forth the next generation of leaders. In this way, the seven-step methodology has helped to change our thinking and our behaviour as leaders. The cycle teaches us that our hearts have to be on fire because we can only pass on what we have received. The seven-step methodology guided us in reaching the next generation by developing a heart on fire training. Our priestly duty is to go before them and to model how to be set

free. We need to permit them to plan their conference as we cheer from the sidelines and serve them.

Other Outcomes

During the Hearts on Fire training day on November 1, 2018, we presented the research project's outcome in a Vision for the Next Generation seminar. Here, I will only share the key points that connect to the research project. The *Frankfurter Rundschau* had published an article about Germany's most extensive youth study sponsored since 1953 by Royal Dutch Shell. The article's title was "A Generation in the Awakening" ("Eine Generation im Aufbruch"). As I explained earlier, the 2015 study played a crucial role in this research. As this research project revealed, a paradigm shift was happening in the next generation. This shift was a new attitude to be willing to take a risk for what they believed in.

One of the benefits of this part of the narrative research project was self-awareness and insight into what God wanted to do in each participant's life. With this there came an awareness of what He wanted to do through each participant personally. Having the participants reflect on their stories, mainly focusing on the stories of grace, helped everyone gain more self-awareness. When Participant #3 shared his story, he realized that the way he became a Christian was his preparation for future ministry. When he received his calling as a prayer missionary in a prayer house, he was already serving in the exact areas to which he was called. He had grown up in a Christian setting, and now he served people in a Christian environment. He had attended summer camps and is now leading

summer camps and retreats. The Word touched him, and now he is touching people with a simple gospel message. Because he decided to follow Christ, he has a passion for leading people to Christ. Because he was touched by testimonies and fellowship and has experienced God's presence through these, he shares his own testimony and lives in a fellowship that profoundly impacts lives. Participant #3's story is a good example of self-awareness and how it led him toward a deeper insight into what God wanted to do in his life. It has also confirmed the new paradigm shift of the next generation to act on what they believe. In addition, this story includes the layers of experience we receive from God through prayer, worship, and mentoring, and how it impacts the ministry of the next generation. This all became an important tool to discern how to reach and train the next generation in the region of Franconia, Germany, and how to be on fire for Jesus. The narrative research helped us see the hearts of the next generation and have the confidence that our model could work.

Significant adjustments to our method of reaching and training tomorrow's leaders happened during the reflect and enhance steps as the HoF leadership team evaluated and discussed the training day program. The advice was to allow the next generation to lead, share, and be involved in the HoF training day. As already mentioned, the next-generation leaders training day was created to become a platform for these young leaders to learn how to train others, lead worship, and share their stories and experiences with God. In addition, it was to teach them to be involved in creative outreach. Together with all the stakeholders of HoF, the

leadership and the partners, on February 18, 2019 we redesigned the HoF Streams of Living Water next-generation project.

Conclusions of the Research Project

From the beginning, the seven-step methodology was clearly the tool that moved the whole project forward. The seven-step methodology protected the next-generation project. It was the driving force behind implementing the plan. All seven steps describe the process necessary to bring change and development to the ministry. It was a great learning experience and a great blessing to use narrative research, learning to see God's stories embedded in our stories. The seven-step methodology was the key tool used to take the next generation on a journey toward a passionate Christian lifestyle. The Streams of Living Water challenge became an opportunity for the next generation leaders to lead. It went beyond just being a pilot project. It was the beginning of a movement where the next generation moves the next generation, giving them a platform which allows them to be involved in prayer ministry and worship, sharing the gospel through outreach at HoF ministry.

CHAPTER 5: FINAL CONCLUSION

Looking back on my journey through this portfolio, I realize this was not merely a collection of three papers but a testimony that God is still in the business of igniting people's hearts to serve in order to restore his glory.

Being on Reversed Mission with HoF

Since I joined Hearts on Fire, it became my reversed mission. HoF has become a network encouraging others “to go, to be blessed, and to be a blessing.” HoF has moved from a ministry idea that was as tiny as a mustard seed to a tree that has taken root through prayer and worship, branching out into other ministries. After three years, Hearts on Fire has become a ministry in the region of Franconia—and a testimony that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).

Franconia was a unique context for ministry given that I grew up in that area, speak the same dialect and understand the tight-knit culture that rejects outsiders; especially since I was on a reversed mission with a Canadian mindset initiating ministry with HoF in Germany. It is a great privilege to have understood the context of ministry and to have served in a way and a place that God had already prepared throughout my life and ministry. Even so, entering into the HoF ministry context of Franconia was quite a cross-cultural experience for me. After leaving the area about 40 years earlier, it felt like my life's ministry circle was

returning to its roots. It felt like an opportunity to give back to the community and neighbourhood where I grew up.

The context assessment was good preparation to re-enter Germany's culture and to serve on a reversed mission project. It has helped me understanding Germany as a mission field through recent shifts within Germany's society.

The massive growth through immigration has been a success story for sharing the gospel with immigrants in the last years. My experience in Canada working with immigrants and refugees has greatly impacted refugee work in the region. As refugees are integrating into Germany's society faster than expected, there are many opportunities to serve newcomers and refugees and to help integrate them into the local churches. Now we have more than 30 Iranians and Afghans in our Al Massira Bible Course which is currently hosted by our team online (Al Massira 2021). To develop this ministry, we used the seven-step-methodology once again.

The State-Church change as established religion has made Germany the land of Reformation: a mission field. It is a very relevant thing to reach out to the next generation in order to train a new generation of leaders to be on fire for Jesus. Leadership has been a crucial tool to bring about change to serve effectively. Servant leadership is not for all, but it is for those people who have a servant's heart. This is what happened to me over a lifetime in the ministry. God set my heart on fire over and over again. He shaped my heart so that I would be able to serve those who serve Christ. The idea of the disciples travelling to Emmaus mentioned in this portfolio still enriches the ministry. This story shows us Jesus'

ministry and how he encouraged and coached his disciples. The disciples tried to assess their context by figuring out what had happened. They were talking to each other and trying to understand the situation. Jesus joined this conversation and asked the What, Why, and What For questions. This narrative confirms that the human perspective on context is not enough; we need a divine perspective. Ministry is always in need of God's perspective. This was when the disciples' hearts started to burn again. In Abraham's story, it all began when God said, "Go". In the Emmaus story, it began when Jesus talked to them, and their hearts were ignited. From my own personal story, the words, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over" (Lk. 24:29 NIV) are now part of my prayer every evening. These words from Scripture were engraved in my heart from when I was a child. I have added, "Jesus ignite my heart as you did with the two disciples as you talked to them on the road and opened the Scriptures for them," to my prayer routine. This narrative is like a blueprint of how to lead with passion. Leadership is a journey, like a journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, restoring burning hearts. This is what HoF is all about: looking for leaders with a restored faith-prayer-worship life who can serve people so that Jesus can ignite their hearts. Based on this narrative that we learned and practiced together with the HoF leadership, the seven leadership principles that helped us to grow and serve together were:

1. Leaders need to work things out together
2. Leaders need to learn Jesus' principles
3. Leaders need to walk with Jesus to deal with obstacles
4. Leaders need to clarify their vision
5. Leaders need to agree to the process
6. Leaders need to allow for a change of heart

7. Leaders need to share God's passion

The most encouraging part for me is that the two disciples were enabled to go again after being blessed to be a blessing. Jesus helped them to assess and understand their situation, and restored their burning hearts. The disciples went back to Jerusalem to minister, to encourage, and to serve those who also served Christ. Only people on fire for Jesus can set others on fire.

After tying together the ministry context assessment, the philosophy of Christian leadership, and the research project, the big surprise was the seven-step methodology. It was the tool that moved the whole project forward. The seven-step methodology protected the next-generation project, Streams of Living Water from getting stuck in stories when I focused the research project on narrative research. The seven-step methodology based on action research was adjusted and used to develop other ministries as well.

Taking steps moved all of us at HoF ahead on the journey, bringing change for next-generation leaders. Narrative research was only a part of the process of gathering narratives in step 2 and 3. But it engaged the next generation in a conversation about what God was doing in their lives. It is a great learning experience to see God's stories embedded in our stories, learning to listen, and sensing what God wants to give us. Through the seven-step methodology, Streams of Living Water became an opportunity for the next generation of leaders to lead. Now I see it as the start of a movement where the next generation moves the next generation. Key was the realization that we needed to give them a

platform to be involved in prayer ministry, worship, and sharing the gospel through outreach at HoF ministry.

This HoF research project became a tool which allowed me to take a picture in time and place. A picture sometimes says more than 1000 words. This reversed mission inspired me to have a vision for the next generation. After all this learning and unlearning and relearning throughout this portfolio, it is good to conclude and enhance this vision for HoF ministry's future.

Realizing the Potential

What emerged from this study is that the next generation has potential. Members of this next generation are different from our generation: they have a desire to take a stand. An excellent example of this is the new movement known as Fridays for Future, which began in August 2018 when Greta Thunberg, then 15 years old, began a school strike for climate change in Sweden. Since then, many young people worldwide have come to consider themselves as climate activists acting on what they believe in, helping save the world from a climate disaster. Finding a similar attitude in the next generation, we learned that young people would like to stand for something meaningful. This is an excellent opportunity for ministry in churches and for the HoF network. By using the seven-step methodology, we could encourage next-generation leaders to be part of Fridays for Jesus. For example, we could meet on Fridays with young people and train them to become faith activists by strengthening them in prayer and worship, and by mentoring them to take a stand.

The research project was a great learning tool. I learned to pay attention to the continually changing context of a ministry. Since my research was completed, a new *Shell Youth Study* has arrived (Albert, Hurrelmann, and Quenzel 2019). The 18th *Shell Youth Study*, subtitled “A Generation Speaks Up,” continues to confirm that young people are still willing to conform to performance standards and, at the same time, wish for stable social relationships in their personal lives. Since the Covid-19 pandemic started, many things have changed again. Understanding our times has become one of our greatest challenges. Training next-generation leaders should include giving them the seven-step methodology and teaching them how they could pass on Streams of Living Water.

Taking Steps

Times have changed, and the Covid-19 pandemic has taken much from ministries. During the 2020 pandemic year, almost all events were cancelled worldwide. We had to refocus a ministry based on events and planning in a very short time. Our ministry model had to change quickly, and became based on small groups and working one-on-one. We at HoF are grateful that our vision is surviving and that the prayer movement has grown stronger in these uncertain times. The hunger for worship has grown like never before, even in the middle of the pandemic. Worship in Germany is still allowed under the pandemic regulations because of Germany's constitution, which protects the freedom of religion. Mentoring has become our ministry tool. It's time to consider all these changes and to revise our mission at HoF. From the mountain top experience

mentioned earlier, we are looking for the next step of our vision: an HoF prayer house. Through this integration project, we discovered that the idea for a prayer house does not begin with a place but with a person. As in Abraham's story, God said, "Go," be blessed and be a blessing. The questions about how to begin this prayer house vision leads us once again to the seven-step methodology. Using it will help us to adjust the steps and use what we have learned as we move forward. One of the outcomes of this research is learning to take steps while allowing God to guide the future of the ministry.

Looking Back and Forward

When I took my bus driver's license, I had to re-learn to use my mirrors properly. The use of the mirrors gave me almost 360-degree vision except for the blind spots. To avoid the blind spots, I had to turn my head around, look back and then forward again. Because the school bus had no rear cameras, I had to use a spotter when backing up to cover my blind spots. This is an excellent analogy for what I did in this portfolio. I had to learn by checking my mirrors and using spotters to avoid blind spot mistakes. My mirror was the seven-step methodology, narratives and sensing. My spotter was the HoF leadership team, and together we achieved almost 360-degree vision.

Let's recheck the mirrors before we envision what is next. In the first year of the HoF network, we agreed to start with the gifts and desires God had given us in order to lay the foundation of the ministry. We focused our ministry on worship, which was the beginning of the WoW Time ministry. In the second year, we

focused on finding more partners in the region who would build the base for the ministry of HoF. In the third year in ministry, we strengthened the prayer movement, which was highlighted by our HoF conference day in the region. Servant leadership for challenging times was compelling because it taught us to adjust to the new situation at hand. Events had to be cancelled, but prayer was always possible. First, prayer meetings took place through phone conferences and also online, and then later in small groups. That encouraged us to start more prayer groups. We currently have started three regional prayer meetings, and HoF envisions the start of at least three more prayer cell groups soon. We realized that challenging times challenged us to expand our vision. To find out what kind of ministry God might have prepared for us, we tested the waters by looking at more ministry opportunities. God had connected us to people that had a passion for praying and blessing Israel. This was a new opportunity to expand the prayer network. Again we modified the seven-step methodology and used it to develop this new ministry idea. We discovered new leaders through prayer and we recruited even more new leaders by extending the call to start a new ministry. At the first meeting, we shared the narratives we had about Israel and evaluated the narratives collectively. We listened to their ministry experience to figure out how to proceed. Next, we developed a ministry plan. We implemented the idea to host an Israel evening with the topic “The Meaning of Israel for Christians.” We reflected on the pilot evening, which received great acceptance. We also enhanced the ministry idea encouraged by the high interest to start Forum Israel. This is

currently another ministry under construction. It includes Israel prayer, Israel teachings and Israel projects.

At our year-end celebration with our partners, we spoke about the vision to start a prayer house in the region. Someone pointed out a small country hotel whose Christian owner had no successor and who was considering passing it on to people for ministry. At the beginning of the year, we met with the owner to share our vision, but we learned that his country hotel was already booked for the next two years. One month later, the coronavirus pandemic hit Germany, and all hotels were closed. What would happen now? Adapting to new situations is very important for the HoF ministry but, at the same time, we always need to consider our core values in order to be faithful to our calling.

The lockdown was an excellent time to review our ministry and to cast a new vision. The president of HoF and I met for a prayer walk on one of the regional mountains to discuss and pray about how God wanted us to do ministry after the pandemic. Looking down the mountain into the valley at the villages and cities, I recognized an unnatural extreme silence. No traffic on the roads, no airplanes in the air, and no machines on the farms. Just silence. Time to listen to God! It was time to be on the balcony to get an overview of the situation and recognize the pattern that had helped to develop HoF ministry. Abraham had a similar experience when God showed him the land he would give him: first, in Genesis 12:7 at the great tree of Moreh at Shechem, and then in Genesis 13:14-18 when God confirmed his promise to Abraham. Getting the big picture was necessary so

that Abraham would never lose faith and instead would pass on his blessing as a legacy.

First, we did some personal sensing. We practiced some spiritual exercises similar to Ignatian spirituality (Coghlan 2004). We reflected on what God had done in the past three years in the ministry, and we started to pray. We were filled with joy, and we were humbled by the grace we had experienced. God had prepared everything beforehand. The HoF prayer movement was growing. The HoF Day had become a training tool for all generations. A new ministry called Forum Israel was expanding. The outreach to refugees had developed in a new direction. The HoF prayer house had received a new vision. Forum Outreach Youth were networking well among the regional youth. In Abraham's case, in Genesis 12:7, the “balcony experience” led him to build an altar. The best way to discern God’s leading is to build an altar like Abraham. We did not literally build an altar, but spiritually, we took time to worship together to mark the moment.

Second, we practiced second-person inquiry-practice, which I call team sensing. We tried to discern what God wanted from us as we worked together in leadership. In addition to getting on the balcony and observing the dynamics of the complex situations HoF faces, we as leaders needed to analyze and diagnose these challenges. We realized that we needed to pray for our HoF partners, encourage, and empower them so we would be able to step out in faith with them to claim the vision of HoF. We inquired about mutual concerns with others through face-to-face dialogue and conversation (Coghlan 2004). We were looking for the next step in the vision of a HoF prayer house. We knew that personal

sensing and team sensing lead to sensing in the community. In the third person inquiry-practice, we went beyond the participants (Coghlan 2004). I call this community sensing: together bringing the concerns of what we need and envision to the HoF community

Consider Abraham's Blessing

In Abraham's life in Genesis 13:14, we see how God encouraged him to focus on the blessing God had promised. He claimed it by travelling the land (Gen. 13:17). For us at HoF, we needed to encourage people to reclaim the vision. If we follow Abraham's example, we should send everyone on a prayer walk/drive to envision what God could do and to pray for it to be done. In Genesis 14, we read how Abraham gave back to the people so that no one could say, "I made Abraham rich" (Gen. 14:22-23). Giving back to the people lets people realize all the honour belongs to God. In Genesis 15 and 16, we learn that Abraham listens to God who renews his promise to him, but he also listens to Sarai. This is a warning to us to discern whether people's advice is conforming to what God says. The call to Abraham was, "Go, be blessed, and be a blessing." This is what we desire to practice through ministry.

Soli Deo Gloria

Setting out on this project was overwhelming and humbling at the same time, but experiencing God's guidance through this project, step by step, was a blessing in the sense of how Abraham experienced it. I am grateful that this narrative touched my heart, and I pray that it moves me to go, to be blessed and to be a blessing.

Soli Deo Gloria.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT INFORMATION LETTER

Information Letter for the Hearts on Fire Next Generation Project:

Dear friends of Hearts on Fire,

We are pleased to announce our Streams of Living Water Hearts on Fire Youth Leadership Day. It is our vision to inspire and equip the next generation to become effective leaders, mentors, and educators using the art of High Impact Leadership Learning and Storytelling as a Christian Approach.

The purpose of this project is to develop a Leadership Kickstart Day, a high impact leadership training day, as a practical tool to take young people on a journey to a passionate Christian lifestyle. The training includes participation in meaningful and creative worship, developing a strong and encouraging prayer life, and wise and powerful communication of the Good News. The phrase that best summarizes this research project is streams of living water (John 7:8).

We invite you to join the HoF Youth Leader Team. We are looking for passion—compassionate people who are mature and open to God’s guidance, and have the ability to listen and share.

This project will be developed in four stages. In step one, we will recruit and discover what shapes youth leaders by listening to their stories. In step two, we will evaluate the youth leader’s stories through collaborative understanding. In step three we will implement and develop a pilot project Leadership Kickstart Day as an action response. Finally, in step four, we will review and enhance the project as a model for future high-impact learning HoF Youth Leadership Kickstart Days.

If you are a youth leader with a burning heart for Jesus and a passion to inspire and mobilize young people, you are invited to join the Hearts on Fire project Streams of Living Water.

Please respond to this invitation by contacting Siggie at

The Project Title is: Streams of Living Water: Developing Christian Youth Leaders Training Program to Kickstart Outreach and Mobilizing through Hearts on Fire Youth Leadership Day

This is a research project conducted by Siegfried Karl Riehl through the Hearts on Fire network in Germany during the period of March 2018 -April 2019. This study involves narrative research focusing on youth leaders and invites them to participate in the study.

The expected duration of the participant's involvement includes three meetings with five to seven participants, 2-3 hours of story sharing, analyzing, and concluding the result.

There are no known risks associated with this narrative research. Participants will always be in control of what they share. It is possible that someone might feel distressed by sharing personal experiences. In that case support will be available.

This study is intended to benefit youth leadership and facilitate training of the next generation.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. Your name will be kept confidential in all of the reporting and/or writing related to this study.

This study and its impact will be presented to the faculty at Tyndale Seminary early in 2020. A paper describing the results of the study will be made available as soon as the research project is finished.

This study's plan has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary. For questions regarding participants' rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Board at REB@tyndale.ca.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact either myself or Mark Chapman at Tyndale Seminary.

Contact information:

Siegfried Karl Riehl

Dr. Mark Chapman

Associate Professor of Research Methods at Tyndale Seminary.

mchapman@tyndale.ca,

416.226.6620 Ext. 2208.

**APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEXT GENERATION
PROJECT**

Information from the website: www.hearts-on-fire.org:

Hearts on Fire Next Generation Project

Our Values

Hearts on Fire eV – for God’s Glory

Hearts on Fire is a network for people with a burning heart for Jesus Christ

Hearts on Fire is a movement that teaches and lives God’s Word in all truth

(according to John 14)

Hearts on Fire believes that through the power of the Holy Spirit, people are set free, restored and transformed today

Hearts on Fire wants to meet the needs and challenges of our time with a burning heart

Hearts on Fire has a big heart for our country and region

Hearts on Fire has a burning heart for Israel and promotes friendship and reconciliation work

Hearts on Fire works worldwide, national and non-denominational

Our Ministry Values

God’s Spirit Ignites Hearts

HONOR GOD

SERVE PEOPLE

Practice humility and love

Biblical teaching

Surrendering to Jesus

Discipleship and mentoring

Glorify God through praise and worship

Set people free

- Proclaim the kingdom of God
- Respecting people
- Use all gifts
- A passion for God
- Bless Israel
- Give God's spirit free space
- Promote ministry/mission
- Creative workshops
- Go, be blessed and be a blessing

APPENDIX 3: INVITATION FLYER YOUTH LEADERSHIP DAY

Life is a Journey

Vision

To inspire and equip the next generation to become effective leaders, mentors and educators using the art of High Impact Leadership, Learning and Storytelling

A Christian Approach

2018

Streams of Living Water

Hearts on Fire Youth Leadership Day

Mission/Journey: Streams of Living Water: Developing a Christian Youth Leaders Training Program to Kickstart Outreach and Mobilizing through Hearts on Fire Youth Leadership Kickstart Day.

Become a part of the movement!

Here are the steps!

1. Join the HoF youth leader team
2. Engage in the process
3. Share your stories as a tool to listen
4. Discern and understand collaboratively
5. Envision and develop a ministry to serve
6. Plan and implement pilot project
7. Share and present your story to others to expand the movement

Become a collaborative leader!

Be encouraged to be part of the HoF Youth Leader Team

- Looking for passion – compassionate people
- Looking for maturity – and sensibility
- Looking for ability to listen and to share

You are invited to come!

Youth Hearts on Fire Day Agenda

Introduction – HoF Missional Lifestyle	Be purposeful
Concept – High Impact Collaborative Learning through others	Learn with and
Process – Narrative Communication	Just tell your story
Building – Beneficial Adaptive Integration	Build a bridge
Grace – Gain Confidence through Personal Experience	Master your story
Share – Networking with other Youth Leaders	Share your passion

APPENDIX 4: TEMPLATE FOR NARRATIVE RESEARCH

Join the Journey of Grace

I once was lost, living a life of selfishness. I was blind to see God in my life. But now, I am found! God, in His goodness, forever changed the course of my life. I can finally see the love, joy, peace, and abundant life that only He can give.

Communication is a Two-Way Process

Collecting narratives or storytelling as a tool to listen. Collaborative thinking and analyzing is a tool to discern and to understand the whole.

Facilitating storytelling: listening is the first tool to encourage the unfolding of a deep, truer story. It is important to pay attention to the variety of language forms, relationship patterns, meanings, and symbols that have shaped the story.

>Focus on relationships, not problems.

>Concentrate on relationship process within the faith community, tracing the interconnections of person to person, events to events.

>Encourage participants by asking questions.

>Explore cultural/contextual dimensions. All participants are invited to tell their stories, focusing on the faith community's narrative of concern or opportunity.

>Give a module and an example to make it easy for everyone.

This handout will give everyone a template which will provide a start-up sentence to launch into their stories.

What is your story?

I grew up.....

I was wishing to be.....

I wanted to pursue.....

What experience influenced you most?

The most influential experience I ever had was

What is your dream and wish for your life?

Looking forward to life

I hope.....

I dream

I wish....

What is going on in your life right now?

Right now, I am experiencing a couple of different things.....

What do you think God is doing in your life right now?

APPENDIX 5: EVALUATION INSTRUCTION FOR NARRATIVE RESEARCH

How do we evaluate stories?

Self-evaluation is always the first and most important step. Let each participant evaluate his or her own story before others participate in contributing to the understanding of the story. Let them evaluate the purpose of the whole story:

- >Let them summarize and evaluate their stories first.
- >Look for qualities and values in the stories by asking key questions like Who, What, When, Where, and Why.
- >Look for connections and similarities in the stories with other stories.
- >Facilitate the interweaving of biblical narratives with your story.
- >The understood story emerges as a product of reflecting and interweaving with the larger Christian/religious narratives that throw light on it.
- >As the story emerges, all participants' task is to connect the dots with the bigger aspects of the story and to find the common links to the project.

This project will be developed in four stages and seven steps. In stage one, we will discover and recruit what shapes youth leaders by listening to their stories. In stage two, we evaluate the youth leaders' stories through collaborative understanding. In stage three, we develop and implement a pilot project Leadership Kickstart Day as an action response. Finally, in stage four, we will reflect and enhance the project as a model for future high impact learning HoF Youth Leadership Kickstart Days. This will be done again through narratives!

Purpose

Developing a Leadership Kickstart Day, a high impact leadership training day as a practical tool to take young people on a journey to a passionate Christian lifestyle. The training includes meaningful and creative worship, developing a strong and encouraging prayer life, and wise and powerful communication of the Good News. The phrase that best summarizes this research project is Streams of Living Water (John 7:8).

Development

Transformational reflective ministerial mentorship through use of collaborative analyzing and high impact learning process.

Collaboration: Recommended Spiritual Institutions and HoF Membership

Collection: Personal Grace Story sharing for use as a developmental tool

Implementation: Through HoF Day Youth Meet – A pilot project experiment

Presentation: Project Presentation Handout

Introduction: Catch the Vision (Tell us a story)

Global Trends: What matters to us? What impacts us? How does it change us?

Home: Their current lifestyle as context

Cultural Present: Where are you connected?

APPENDIX 6: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Confidentiality Agreement and Data Management

This confidentiality agreement is being used for volunteers participating in the research project conducted by Siegfried Karl Riehl through the Hearts on Fire network in Germany during the period of March 2018 -April 2019. Nondisclosure of research conducted for this project and data management requires a confidentiality agreement to be signed by volunteers. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in the narrative research following conversations and story sharing, recording or editing image or sound data, transcribing, interpreting, translating, entering data, or 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 Seminary. You may contact either of us at any time if you have questions about this study.

Contact information:

Siegfried Karl Riehl

My professor is Dr. Mark Chapman,

Associate Professor of Research Methods at Tyndale Seminary.

mchapman@tyndale.ca,

416-226-6620 Ext. 2208.

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

I, _____ agrees to keep all the research information shared with me confidential and secure while it is in my possession by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form, and to return all research information in any form to the researcher, *Siegfried Karl Riehl*, when I have completed the research tasks.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature *Siegfried Karl Riehl*

APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Consent Form for Participants

Project title – Developing Christian Youth Leaders Training Program to Kickstart Outreach and Mobilizing through Hearts on Fire Youth Leadership Day.

This is a narrative research project that has the goal to discern what needs to be done to develop a HoF Youth Leadership Day using a narrative approach.

Any concerns about this project can be directed to Siegfried Karl Riehl,

. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Tyndale Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, reb@tyndale.ca.

1. I, _____, voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
2. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time and I can withdraw permission to use narratives data, in which case the material will be deleted.
3. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
4. I understand that participation involves three story-telling meetings including sharing, evaluating and understanding the outcome.
5. I agree to my story being audio-recorded.

6. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

7. I understand that signed consent forms, an original audio recording, and a transcript of my story will be retained, and password protected on the computer of Siegfried Karl Riehl. No one else will have access to the data. After the project is complete the data will be deleted.

8. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

9. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature *Siegfried Karl Riehl*

APPENDIX 8: ETHICS IN MINISTRY-BASED RESEARCH

Let me summarize some ethics that we considered for the ministry-based research. In his book *Qualitative Research*, Tim Sensing points out that researchers have an ethical obligation to their congregants and participants (Sensing 2015, 58). As a researcher, I was accountable to the HoF leadership team while conducting this narrative research. As outlined in the confidentiality agreement, I was also accountable to the participants (see appendix 6). Before the research began, we informed the participants and asked for their consent, which was confirmed. Each participant was always in control of personal information. I was personally accountable to the participants and the process of the research.

Minimal Risk Procedures

All participants decided what to share and what not to share. This way, they were in control over their narratives, like in an everyday conversation. Narrative research would not expose them to unnecessary risks. Including them as participants in this research project did not increase their vulnerability. There was no other risk taken. A consent and confidentiality agreement was used and everyone was verbally reminded of this before the meeting (see appendix 6). In this narrative research, there was no need to disclose any private information, such as names or other personal information, or to include any sensitive details in public documents.

During the recruiting step, the project information was given to potential participants for review before they were asked to give consent. Consent was ongoing by confirming verbally that the participants would keep the information

confidential. Written records were collected electronically and stored on a secure server accessible only to Siegfried Karl Riehl. Paper data, such as consent forms, were scanned after they were received, password protected, and then physically destroyed. Original audio recordings and a transcript were recorded and password protected on the computer of Siegfried Karl Riehl. No one else will have access to the data. After the project is complete and longer needed, the data will be deleted.

Supervision, Permission, and Access was granted by the research and ethics board of Tyndale University for this project on March 23, 2018. We followed the Tri-Council Policy Statement guidelines: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Government of Canada).

APPENDIX 9: THE BLESS MODEL

In the BLESS model, everything always begins with God. He said to Abraham “I will bless you and you will be a blessing” (Gen. 12:1-3).

B Be what God wants you to be! -> Be authentic

Jesus calls us into discipleship to learn how to be what God wants us to be. It is a call to be where God wants us to be, and to be with whom God wants us to be.

Before God will do something through us, he does it first in us (Rom. 15:18). Let God begin his work in you and trust that He holds victory in store for the upright (Prov. 2:7).

L Love what God loves to do. -> Focus on the relationship

To be effective in ministry, you need to focus (Easum and Musselman 2016) on love and compassion. Ministry flows from the heart of God. Ministries are God’s love projects! God loves people more than anything! Ministry is always an expression of love, and it’s holistic: “with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul and all your strength” (Deut. 6:5) Blessing is rooted in God’s compassion for people (*Missio Dei*).

E Expect great things from God. -> Trust in God, believe blessing belongs to him

Endeavour great things for God. Experience great things with God. This was inspired in my life by William Carey, (“William Carey..... | Christian History | Christianity Today” n.d.). If we don’t expect everything from God then our actions are empty, but with God, our actions become ministry. We serve God and people, and we experience God and how he touches lives (John 14:12-13). Ministry always looks beyond our ability and depends on God’s ability (Isa. 54:2-30). Everything is prepared, get involved in the good work (Eph. 2:10).

S **Serve those who serve Christ. -> Live in community**

The action we take is determined by how we serve people, ministries, communities or other circles of life. God’s favourite tools are people who serve people. God’s work is done in the community, and when we serve those who serve Christ, we enable them to act. Being a blessing involves the community (Matt. 5:14) (Friesen 2009).

S **Submit everything to God. -> Walk with God in humility**

God works in us and gives us the will to act according to his good purpose (Phil. 2:13). As we surrender, we acknowledge it is God who gives wisdom (James 1:5) and deserve the glory (1 Peter 4:11). Everything in the kingdom of God is given (John 3:27). Only the humble receive grace. Strong leadership is powerful in surrendering everything to God (2 Cor. 12:9).

The BLESS model equipped me to adopt a philosophy of ministry for my own life, and it has also enabled me to go through the process of this research project

in five steps: to listen, focus, plan, serve together, and reflect. BLESS is a holistic lifestyle toward ministry. It focuses more on a spiritual dynamic in a ministry and allows a networking style of ministry (Friesen 2009, 74). BLESS provides the dynamic to find out how the ministry can develop.

APPENDIX 10: INVITATION TO THE HEARTS ON FIRE DAY



**HEARTS
ON FIRE
TAG**

Eintritt frei

Am 1. November 2018, ab 10 Uhr
in der ehemaligen Grundschule
Schulweg 3 · 91740 Röckingen

www.hearts-on-fire.org · Info@hearts-on-fire.org
<http://www.facebook.com/HeartsOnFireEV>

HOF-TAG-Übersicht

10 Uhr Hearts on Fire - **Worship & Message**
anschließend Mittagessen (auf individuelle Bestellung)

14 Uhr Hearts on Fire - **Schnupper-Workshops**
- Kreatives Gestalten
- Vision von Hearts on Fire
- Outreach
- Vision für die nächste Generation
- Kreative Anbetung
dazwischen Kaffee und Snacks

18 Uhr Hearts on Fire - **WOW-Time**
(Hearing Hearts Band)
mit Worship und Blessing

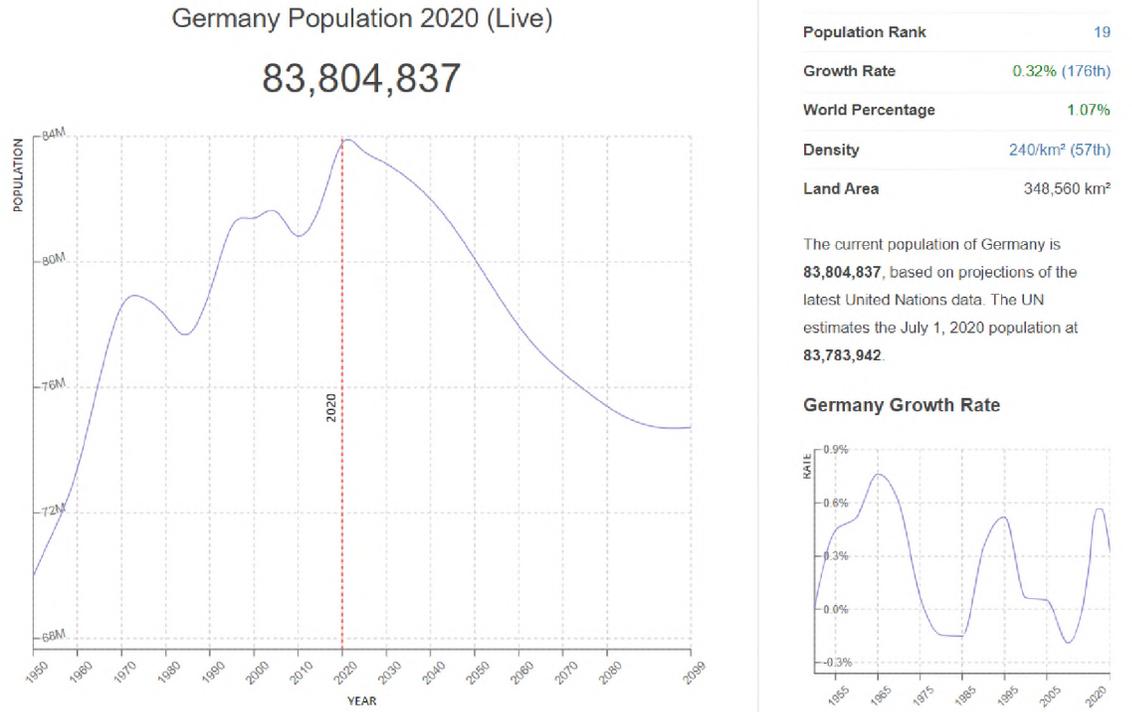
Während der Veranstaltung
Gebet im
Prayer-Power-Room

**HEARTS
ON
FIRE E.V.**
ZU GOTTES EHRE

Entdecke Deine
Gaben, lass Dich
neu anzünden und
freisetzen.
Streck Dich aus
nach mehr von Gott,
er hat immer mehr!

Figure 1. Invitation to Hearts on Fire Day on November 1, 2018

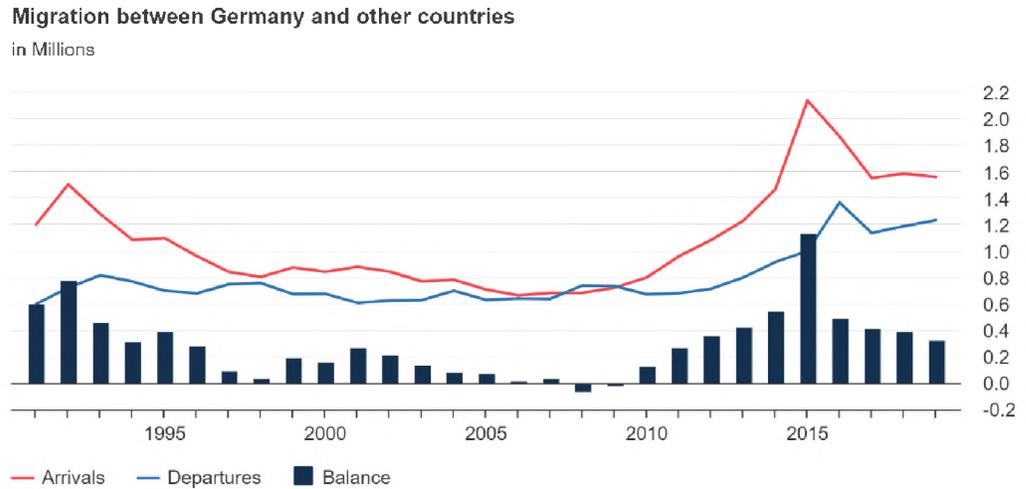
APPENDIX 11: POPULATION OF GERMANY 2020



Source: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/germany-population>

Figure 2. Population estimates for Germany, 1950-2099

MIGRATION BETWEEN GERMANY AND OTHER COUNTRIES, 1990- 2019

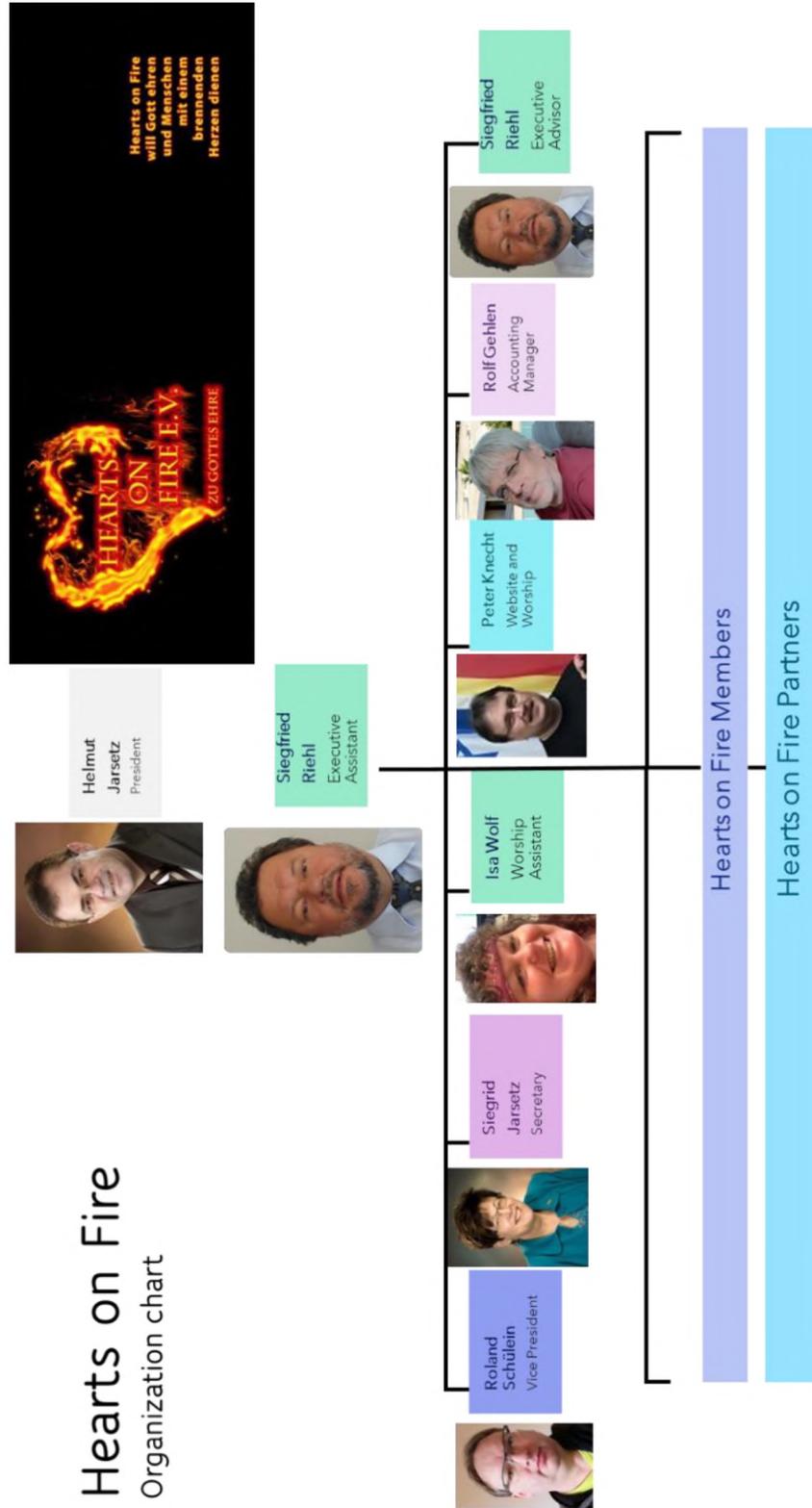


© Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2020

Source: https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Population/_Graphic/_Interactive/migration-germany-other-countries.html

Figure 3. Migration between Germany and other countries, 1990-2019

APPENDIX 12: HEARTS ON FIRE ORGANIZATION CHART



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