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Tyndale University

Assisting CEAM/AMIDE Seminary Students  
in Identifying Their Vocational Calling  
for Cross-Cultural Missions in Brasília, Brazil and Beyond

A Research Portfolio  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Ministry  
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by

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## ABSTRACT

This research portfolio is about my leadership and vocational development. Because I had difficulty understanding my vocation and God's will for my ministry career, I was looking for ways to help others with similar challenges. Tyndale's Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program enabled my personal development and offered the means to conduct research to investigate vocational challenges and seek solutions. My research project was designed to help Center for Advanced Studies in Missions (CEAM) students become more confident in their calling. The methodological approach of this study was based on the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is designed to promote organizational changes that benefit the research participants. The participants contributed to the study's design, helped formulate the research questions, participated in the collective construction of knowledge, and served as the main actors in the analysis and application of what we discovered. The findings showed that participants became more vocationally confident during the study and developed a more remarkable ability to discern God's voice internally and through feedback received by the group. My participation in this project allowed me to complete a cycle of inner change, moving from a more individualistic vision to a collectivist vision of ministry and leadership. These changes allowed me to understand the value of living and serving as part of the body of Christ.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR ACRONYMS

- AMIDE: Missionary Association for Diffusion of the Gospel.
- CEAM: Advanced Studies Center in Missions. It is a Seminary, part of AMIDE's organization, and its director is AMIDE's vice president for educational matters.
- DMin: Doctor of Ministry.
- FQ: Final questionnaire. IQ: Initial questionnaire.
- NKJV: New King James Version. Note: All scripture references in this portfolio are taken from the NKJV.
- PAR: Participatory Action Research
- REB: Research Ethics Board
- UPG: A group of people defined by anthropological criteria such as language, ethnicity, and culture, less than 2% of which are Evangelical Christians (Datema 2016, 45).

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This research portfolio describes my journey to understand God's will while pursuing my calling to cross-cultural missions. As God prepared me to lead missionary teams in Southeast Asia, I noticed that many potential missionaries were seeking help understanding their role in fulfilling the Great Commission. In light of this, I decided to explore the theme of vocational calling as my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) research project.

Jesus, in little more than three years of public ministry, trained twelve men who, after his death, led his church and continued his mission. According to Matthew 28:19, one of his last instructions to them, was: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." Knowing that there are still people living in places where there are no churches or efforts to reach them with the gospel of Jesus Christ, today's Christian leaders should somehow, among their many roles, participate actively in this task. Since I identify as a Christian leader, I wondered how I could participate in this challenge of preaching the gospel in these unknown and unexplored regions.

Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8 also motivated me to answer this question. Although Jesus' order refers to concomitant action by the church in the areas described in the text, I believe it also applies to church leaders today. Jesus states that his followers should begin their work in Jerusalem, then go to the

neighbouring city, then to the next regions, until they expand the mission to the last people of the world. While the disciples pray and await guidance, God takes the first step by pouring out the Holy Spirit on them during the feast of Pentecost, leading them to proclaim the gospel to people of different ethnicities and cultures who are there. The fact that representatives from different nations received the message of salvation did not change Jesus' determination to continue the mission to the ends of the earth. Stott, commenting on Acts 1:8, says:

So, this was the content of the Lord's teaching (as we know also from the Gospels) during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension: when the Spirit came in power, the long-promised reign of God, which Jesus had himself inaugurated and proclaimed, would begin to spread. It would be spiritual in its character (transforming the lives and values of its citizens), international in its membership (including Gentiles as well as Jews) and gradual in its expansion (beginning at once in Jerusalem, and then growing until it reaches the end of both time and earthly space) (Stott 2020a, 42).

Thus, the church began in Jerusalem and steadily spread to other nations.

However, the task remains unfinished because there are still many Unreached People Groups (UPGs) worldwide. In *From the Margins to the Centre*, Krause explains that, in recent years, the previous missionary-sending nations have become more attentive to their Jerusalem—that is, their places of origin. They sense a need to serve new generations and immigrants who have arrived in ever more significant numbers due to the recent intensification of migratory movement. He says, “Our understanding of missions has now moved from the centre: from Christian nations sending missionaries to the so-called heathen nations (from the West to the rest), to having the margins become the new centre of operations (the church from all nations bringing Christ to all nations)” (Krause 2018, 13). Acts 1:8 shows that this should always have been the missionary focus

of the church. Jesus' guidance was to make disciples everywhere at once. If the early church remained in Jerusalem until everyone became Christians, the gospel would still be restricted to that location. That said, while advancement into new areas is paramount, the local church must not stop making disciples in the neighbourhoods where it operates or functions. Krause's words demonstrate that the church's mission is to make disciples everywhere, near and far. From this perspective, each person should ask what their role is in fulfilling this divine mandate. Leaders should ask how they can help their followers understand their role in the Great Commission.

I find what Paul writes in the fourth chapter of the letter to the Ephesians helpful in answering this question. Paul says that Christians should heed Jesus' call and participate in building up the church, adding that Jesus "himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). This calling is complementary to the one everyone receives when they become part of the body of Christ. The general calling is to serve and glorify God, being a blessing wherever you go. The specific calling is to participate in the building and expanding of the body of Christ using one's gifts. In *The Message cf Ephesians*, Stott explains that the specific calling also applies to all of God's people. He comments that the Greek word *diakonia*, translated as "ministry," was chosen:

Not to describe the work of pastors but rather the work of so-called laity, that is, of all God's people without exception. Here is undeniable evidence that the New Testament sees ministry not as the privilege of a clerical elite but as the calling of all the people of God. Thank God that in our generation, this biblical vision of an 'every-member ministry' is taking a firm hold in the church (Stott 2020b, 126).

Stott considers these service gifts to be individual callings and thinks that Jesus gives them to the entire church. Within the body of Christ, some are specifically called to leadership roles. Pastors and teachers provide consistent guidance, while missionaries exemplify leadership through their work in the field. The calling of a missionary resonates with Paul's description of an "apostle" in Ephesians 4:11, highlighting the act of being sent. These missionaries, venturing into new cultural contexts to share the Gospel, are called to follow Jesus' example of leadership. In effect, Jesus' model centered on discipleship, equipping his chosen followers to both continue the mission he began and lead the emerging church.

### **What Is My Role in the Unfinished Task?**

Returning to the question of how each person should participate in the still unfinished task given by Jesus, Paul and Timothy emphasize the need to know God's will in their epistle to the church in Colossae. They say: "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9). They prayed incessantly that each church member of the church in Colossae would discern their vocation. Although Paul was not the founder of that church, he played a leadership role there. He guided all of the members to seek vocational maturity. The guidance given to the Colossians should be applied to our churches today. Paul teaches them about the importance of discerning God's will because he wants them to "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10). While the specific vocation is an

individual call to serve God, it must be understood and exercised communally for the church's development. Therefore, today's leaders should always be attentive to God's voice and seek to identify what God wants for them and their group.

### **What I Have Learned**

Although I have felt warm-hearted listening to the stories of missionaries ever since I was a child, I was only able to leave my job as an assistant pastor in my town in Brazil and devote myself exclusively to missions when I was in my forties. For a long time, I felt sad that my training was taking longer than I had anticipated, and felt I was wasting valuable time that I could have devoted to my missionary career. Only in recent years did I comprehend the process by which God led me here, which allowed me to become fully dedicated to cross-cultural missionary service. I now understand how the countless challenges and failures I faced during the training period contributed to my preparation. God used everything in my story to forge and empower me. I now realize that a lack of guidance and knowledge might have stunted my path and made the journey more torturous than necessary.

The three-year process to get my DMin in Ministry Leadership has been a time of intense learning and personal growth. For instance, the first course, "Formation of the Leader," taught by Professor Dr. Janyne Emsick, made me reflect on my story and the path God has led me down, preparing me for the ministry I carry out today. It was as though she had put a focal lens in my eyes that allowed me to see my past from a new perspective. I revisited some traumatic experiences that I only thought of as adversities that I faced, as well as the lost

focus and time that accompanied them. I came to understand these events as acts of grace, as part of God's comprehensive plan for me, my family, and the organization I work for. This experience was healing for me. I compare what I experienced to the story of Joseph in chapters 44 and 45 of Genesis. After years of separation, Joseph is finally reunited with his brothers who sold him into slavery. One would think that Joseph would take revenge on his brothers, especially now that he holds an important position in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. Instead, Joseph takes a rather amiable approach towards them. Rather than playing the victim, he helps and blesses them. Joseph explains that his misfortunes, pain, and suffering were part of God's providence for him and his family:

And Joseph said to his brothers, please come near to me. So, they came near. Then he said: I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt (Genesis 45:8).

Thanks to this and the other passages I have mentioned, I came to understand the importance of discerning my vocation, knowing God's will in each phase of my life, and conducting my ministry according to this will. I also realized that vocation is a process of developing self-knowledge that has repercussions on our community. Just as God used my brothers in Christ at Tyndale to teach and guide me on my vocational journey, I realized that I could also help others who face similar challenges.

## **One Goes Down, and the Other Holds the Rope**

After a few years of service at the Missionary Association for Spread of the Gospel (AMIDE), I became one of the Vice Presidents leading projects in Southeast Asia. I was also a professor at CEAM, the seminary in charge of future AMIDE missionaries' training. I also began working as a field missionary in Thailand. These experiences allowed me to see missionary work from different perspectives.

I find the missionary exploits of William Carey and Andrew Fuller particularly inspiring. These individuals established a missionary society in England that was responsible for sending many Christian missionaries to other countries starting in the late 18th century. As I studied how these missionaries worked, I realized that people oriented toward cross-cultural missions could serve two different roles: those who “go down” and those “who hold the rope.” I get this analogy from a conversation recorded by John Ryland that involved himself, Carey, Fuller, and other missionaries. It shows that both Carey and Fuller felt fulfilled in their calling despite playing different missionary roles:

Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored, [and] we had no one to guide us; and while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope... took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect—that while we lived, we should never let go of the rope (Morden 2003, 136).

Thinking about this well-known story, it occurs to me that the challenge faced by many people who want to dedicate themselves to cross-cultural missions is not knowing whether God is calling them to go to other nations or to be someone who holds the ropes. Living with AMIDE directors, field missionaries, and students

helped me see that many people did not know which role they should play.

Although everyone felt called to engage in cross-cultural missions, many of them were unsure of God's specific will for them.

Recognizing this, and because I had faced similar vocational challenges, I began thinking about how to help people answer this question. I wish that everyone could become a field missionary, given the need for more workers. However, I understand that God is the one who calls and directs each one of us to play our role. Thus, my job as a leader is not to turn all my colleagues into cross-cultural missionaries but to help them discern their specific calling and thus serve God according to his will. Furthermore, scripture does not teach that an individual's calling is unchanging. The book of Acts shows the apostles performing different roles and serving God in various places. Our life seasons change constantly. God may have something new for his disciples at each stage. Therefore, leaders must always be attentive to God's voice, not content to discern his specific calling just once, nor limit themselves for the non-exhaustive list of gifts in Ephesians 4. They must be available for God to use and help others discern their vocation. God may call his disciples to pastor, evangelize, or play another role in their city or other nations. He may call them to hold the rope or go down into the mine. Jesus said, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). As the phases and seasons of life change, God may change calls and directions. Therefore, those who lead must always pay attention to what God is saying so they and their team can accomplish God's will.

## **Understanding Leadership**

I used to associate the term leadership with famous people and those who manage organizations. Leadership seemed unattainable for someone like me. While constructing my Philosophy of Christian Leadership (described in Chapter 3), I learned more about the meaning of leadership and realized that it was not simply a role or position held by someone. Also, it cannot be defined solely as charisma or an innate ability to lead. Its meaning is more complex and comprehensive than management. Leadership is a skill that can be learned and developed; it is more of a journey than a place to reach. I came to understand that leading involves influencing and motivating people, demonstrating empathy towards them, and guiding them by serving their needs. Leadership involves investing in people to reach collective goals. I did not always understand leadership in this way. I have two older and one younger sibling, all of whom were more capable than me growing up. I did not consider myself to have the necessary characteristics to be a leader. When I heard my mother praying that God would raise up a pastor or missionary from my family who could bring about revival, I wondered which of my brothers would be chosen by God. However, as I will describe in my Philosophy of Christian Leadership, I came to realize that God has his own agenda and freedom to choose whom he will.

My prospects were limited by the fact that I liked to spend my time in solitude and prayer, with few social interactions. I did not understand what God values in his chosen leaders. I needed to learn what Samuel did when he went to Jesse's house to choose Saul's successor. God said to Samuel: "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord

does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). God was looking for characteristics in me that I was not able to appreciate at the time.

As I learned more about Servant Leadership, I realized I could be a leader like Jesus. I know Jesus came to be our lord and saviour, not to teach an ideal leadership model. However, how he chose, prepared, led, and sent out his team can teach us a lot about how to lead in a way that pleases God. Furthermore, leaders chosen by God, such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Daniel, show that God is not looking for perfect people to carry out his work. They were full of flaws but still heard the call, obeyed, and influenced others to carry out God’s will. For example, when Daniel “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank” (Daniel 1:8), Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah joined him in that commitment. Daniel’s leadership motivated those young people to go on a journey that resulted in an entire kingdom believing in the God of Israel. This story reminds me of an adolescent phase when I decided to consecrate myself to God. After a few months, other teenagers joined me in that commitment. Shortly afterward, I was leading a group of twenty young people who sought to live intensely for God. This group met to pray, evangelize, and serve the poor of our city for four or five years. Many of them became pastors and missionaries who are still serving in ministry today.

I see how God prepared and empowered me to be a servant leader, even though I did not understand what he was doing. I learned to care for people, value their needs, identify long-term goals, and focus on the journey, not the

destination. I started using a shared leadership model with AMIDE and its Asian missionary teams. Although this model made the decision-making process and the achievement of goals more time consuming, I saw how the teams started to work more closely together and how the groups accepted decisions more easily. I also noticed a growing sense of accomplishment in the teams because they had been heard and participated in the decision-making.

I do not consider Servant Leadership or shared leadership the best or only models. Many other models and styles can be adopted to suit leaders' situations and personalities. However, the example set by Jesus should be valued and emulated by current Christian leaders, regardless of their preferred leadership style.

### **Investigating Vocational Confidence**

Based on what I learned during Tyndale's DMin program, I chose to investigate the effects of a lack of confidence in one's vocational calling and ways to help people grow in their confidence. Among the different qualitative research methodologies, I identified Participatory Action Research approach as the best choice due to its collaborative nature and goal of promoting social changes. The leaders of AMIDE and CEAM supported me throughout the process.

Participants—selected CEAM students—were actively involved in all parts of the research. Data was collected through two questionnaires and an interview, which were carried out at different times. Analysis of the results through data triangulation revealed significant changes in the participants' confidence level during the research.

In this study, I define vocational confidence as the degree of certainty students possess regarding God's calling on their lives and the specific type of ministry they plan to pursue after graduation. I assessed these confidence levels through qualitative analysis of interview and questionnaire data, using a coding system to identify key themes. The results surprised me, and they taught me about the role that groups play in influencing, identifying, and confirming individuals' callings. The findings revealed that the entire group grew in vocational discernment. Furthermore, the group's analysis of the findings pointed to opportunities to help other people and organizations.

### **How This Portfolio Was Designed**

In this portfolio, I do not intend to write a thesis on the topic of vocation or present exhaustive definitions of its meaning, importance, and applications. The focus is, instead, on my journey of vocational discernment. My hope is that readers will delve into that journey and be inspired to identify their own calling so they can do ministry according to God's will. They can become part of the movement to take the gospel to all people groups by going or supporting those who go. This introductory chapter provides an overview of my portfolio, outlines its main themes and content, and details what will come in the ensuing chapters. The second chapter describes my training and ministry, explaining the path I followed to get where I am, where I understand God's will for my current life phase. In it, I share how my family and church culture influenced me, how my relationships and context contributed to my development, and how God guided my life to achieve his purposes. All of this culminated in the DMin program at

Tyndale, where I could stop and consider my life broadly and better understand the path I took to become fully dedicated to cross-cultural missions.

In the third chapter, I describe my Philosophy of Leadership and how the models of Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership opened my eyes to a style of leadership that I believe in and would like to exercise. These models revealed a leadership style I aspire to embody, one centered on investing in team members. Through my ministry experience and my studies in Tyndale's DMin program, I recognized the crucial role of helping those I lead discern their vocational calling, enabling them to develop their ministry in alignment with God's will. I also realized that vocational maturation is essential for developing future leaders. This research project, therefore, grew directly out of these convictions.

Then, in the fourth chapter, I share my research project and explain how I determined the participants, methods, methodology, scope, project phases, and application of my findings. The concluding chapter provides a reflection on the three years I spent studying at Tyndale. I consider how what I learned during this period impacted my life and ministry, how I understood my past and then better discerned my calling, how Servant Leadership showed me that I could be a leader and influence others to be leaders, and how my research changed my understanding of vocation, moving me from an individualistic understanding of God's calling to one that embraces the role that communities play in identifying and confirming someone's vocation.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

- **Calling:** A specific commission or vocation received from God for a ministry or career. This concept is evident throughout Scripture, where God calls individuals to fulfill specific purposes. Powell (2011, 324) notes some examples when he affirms that “individuals are called to special vocations: God called Moses (Exod. 3:4), the judges (Judg. 3:9), and the prophets (Jer. 1:5); and Jesus called disciples (Matt. 4:18–22; 9:9). Paul says that he was called by God to proclaim Christ among the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15–16; cf. Rom. 1:1)”.
- **Christian Leadership:** The process by which an individual, based on the principles taught by Jesus, cares for, prepares, influences, and leads a group of individuals to fulfill God's purpose, training and extracting the best from them so that they can become productive and capable of leading, ensuring the sustainability and continuity of organizational objectives and missions in diverse contexts.
- **General Vocation:** The calling for all Christians to manifest the glory of God with their lives.
- **Specific Vocation:** Based on Ephesians 4, the specific vocation is the call God issues to his disciples to fill certain leadership roles “for the edifying of the body of Christ” (verses 11 and 12).

## **CHAPTER 2: FORMATION AND MINISTRY CONTEXT**

The following is a reflection on my life journey. In it I share how I discovered my vocation and was formed as a leader, as well as some key details about my ministry context. Before I could serve God, I had to experience his love. I had a strong desire to dedicate myself to Christian service, but I needed to discern God’s will for my life. While I believed God had a purpose for me, I struggled to understand my past and my calling. I worked in ministry for years but was unsure if my work aligned with my vocation. I believe that ministry is not just about holding a position in an organization but also about fulfilling a God-given role. Eventually, I found my identity in God, and his loving words guided me to a better understanding of my purpose. When I found myself in a dark place, ready to give up on my dreams, God found me, restored me, and set me on a new path. Barton emphasizes the importance of finding ourselves in God through solitude and silence in her book, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*. She says, “In the place of our seeking, we listen for the still, small voice of God telling us who we really are and what is real from a spiritual point of view” (Barton 2008, 29).

In this chapter, I describe how my family, ministry background, life experiences, and God’s providence led me to discover my true self and calling. The chapter is divided into two parts—My Personal Journey and My Place—to

help the reader understand how each stage of my development was necessary and how those stages led me to reprioritize, return to spiritual practices, and understand my vocational calling.

### **My Personal Journey**

We do not always understand everything that happens in our lives. However, trusting in God's goodness and wisdom strengthens us to overcome adversity and not give up on our vocation. Paul said, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8.28).

According to Faugere (2023), CEO of Global Business Culture, the Brazilian leadership style often combines authoritarian and paternalistic elements. This reflects a medium-to-high power distance, where leaders give clear instructions and are not often questioned. Subordinates tend to be more loyal to their managers than the company. However, this traditional preference for extroverted, authoritarian, and charismatic leadership clashed with my own introverted, cooperative, and reflective leadership style, leading to discomfort when envisioning myself in a leadership position.

### **Family Foundations**

My family was predominantly Christian when I was born, with some members being Catholics and others Evangelicals. From them, I learned the Christian values that have shaped my life. My parents gave their lives to Jesus when I was a child. Since then, they have attended a Presbyterian Church in Brasilia. My mother stopped working to focus on raising her children. My father

was a regular churchgoer but not actively involved in other church activities. On the other hand, my mother was fully committed to our family and church. She participated in everything, ran small group meetings, and helped with evangelistic endeavours. When she learned about cross-cultural missions, she became passionate about the subject. She influenced church leaders to invest in missionary work and, a few years later, founded AMIDE, the missionary agency that I am part of today.

When I was eight years old, I attended an evangelistic event held at my parents' house and gave my life to Jesus. I still have vivid memories of that day. Our family and social life were closely linked to the church, and we regularly attended its services and activities.

As a child, I became quite shy and found dealing with new people, environments, and situations challenging. As an adult, I was diagnosed as a Highly Sensitive Person, a genetically-derived personality type that explains my fear of social interactions and other challenges I faced. I spent most of my days alone. However, I felt comfortable at church and with my family because they were familiar. I had difficulty making new friends. I spent my time reading and praying. I became heavily involved in church activities as a child, teenager, and young adult. I enjoyed attending small group meetings, which were split by age or gender. They had fewer people and I felt more at ease. Although I was initially shy, I frequently volunteered to help. Eventually, I was elected President of the youth group two or three times. This was a challenging task for me, but I took it seriously.

When I was a child, my mother's involvement with missionaries led to many of them staying at our house when they visited Brasília. These interactions sparked my interest in missionary life. I still remember some of the names and stories they shared. As I grew up, I had my first experiences with God. I sensed his presence in moments of prayer and praise. Although some people encouraged me to focus on studying the Bible and leave spiritual experiences aside, I became increasingly drawn to a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

At sixteen, I publicly professed my faith and was baptized. One year later I accepted an invitation to serve in cross-cultural missions. Soon after, I participated in an evangelistic campaign in Argentina with Evangelist Carlos Anacondia. Thousands of people were converted and healed. In 1995, I participated in the Global Consultation on World Evangelization in Seoul, South Korea. I was there alongside more than four thousand leaders. This event taught me about the need to take the gospel to Unreached People Groups (UPGs).

I left the Presbyterian church that I grew up in and joined a group of young people who were eager for a more accessible style of worship that incorporated spiritual practices. This decision marked a significant change in my life and proved costly. My parents and siblings continued in the old church, as did most of my friends. Being separated from my closest relationships made me emotionally unstable and unsure about important life decisions. I left my fourth-year Business Administration program to go to seminary. Additionally, I married a fellow seminary student who did not share my missionary calling. My family opposed both decisions, but I did not heed their advice. My wife and I had two children who brought us great joy.

Our history, our identity, and the expectations we have for ourselves demonstrate how much we think God cares for each one of us. In *Deep Mentoring*, Reese emphasizes that we all have a unique story. All of our experiences contribute to our identity. He states, “Who we are today, or tomorrow is inextricably linked with what has come before: our culture, family, circumstances, choices, location and so forth” (Reese 2012, 52). We each have a distinct and authentic calling. Our ultimate goal must be to “gain Christ and be found in Him,” as the Apostle Paul proclaims (Philippians 3:8-9).

### Facing the Dark Night of the Soul

The years following my seminary graduation were incredibly challenging. I started working as an assistant pastor at the Alliance Evangelical Church in Brasília. Since they could not afford to pay me a salary, I had to open a fast-food restaurant and ask my parents for financial help. I found it difficult to balance my work and personal life. I would work at the restaurant during the week and at the church on the weekends, leaving me with no time for my family or myself. As a result, my marriage began to deteriorate. After twelve years of being together, my wife filed for divorce. I was devastated. I always believed that my life and ministry were intertwined. I thought that divorce was not an option for leaders. I felt like a failure in all aspects of my life—as a husband, father, businessman, pastor, and son of God. I felt powerless and hopeless, but with the support of my family, friends, and psychologist, I was able to get through this tough time. Emsick explains that “many Christian leaders get stuck, refusing to learn what God wants them to learn through this trying and disruptive season in their

journey” (Emsick 2020, 5). I see now that it was essential for me to go through this season of change so God could guide me toward a new path. Those years of intense spiritual and emotional struggles shaped my life and ministry. It was a time of inner deconstruction where only the essence of my soul remained. In her writing, Barton describes Moses’ struggles during the years in which God prepared him for ministry. She explains how, after years of humiliation and brokenness, “He [Moses] was finally able to say, ‘this is who I am.’ The experience of living as an alien in a foreign land is what has shaped me” (Barton 2008, 46).

I battled depression for two years and tried to reorganize my life. During this time, I experienced a lightning kidnapping. My captors held me at gunpoint for four hours while they tried to withdraw my money from ATMs. They repeatedly threatened to take my life. I began to believe my end was near. Then, I asked myself if I would rather die or be rescued and start over. Like David, I cried out to the Lord in my distress, and he heard me (Psalm 120:1). God saved me and gave me a chance to start anew.

At gunpoint, I prayed and made a covenant with God. I promised to leave behind the activities that had entangled me and follow my missionary calling. I remembered Paul’s guidance to Timothy, saying, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4). I realized I had become too involved in affairs that were not linked to my calling. The lightning kidnapping was a turning point for me. I

needed to go through that experience to change and move toward my vocation. This crucible experience marked a change in my life and ministry phases.

### Leadership Preparation

After being rescued from the kidnapping, I was unsure how to restart my life. So, I prayed and waited for God's direction. Barton describes how Moses acted when he needed to make decisions: "he did not seem to have any great strategies for leadership except to seek God in solitude and then carry out what God revealed to him there" (Barton 2008, 31). First, I returned to university, completed my degree in Business Administration, and earned a master's degree in Missiology. I left pastoral work, sold my fast-food restaurants, and joined AMIDE. In the ensuing years, I remarried. My wife and I had a daughter. Then I became AMIDE's Vice President. I was responsible for managing projects in Southeast Asia. I travelled many times to visit our missionaries in India, Thailand, Laos, and Malaysia.

Then, I moved to Thailand. I led a team of ten Brazilian missionaries in Khon Kaen. I also continued to serve as the Vice President of AMIDE and a professor at CEAM. Working in three different areas gave me a new perspective on the organization and allowed me to see where we could improve. It became clear to me that people across the organization needed vocational guidance. Despite the fact that AMIDE is known in Brazil as a mission of faith and prayer, with mature and capable missionaries facing cross-cultural challenges, there was a shortage of staff working behind the scenes. We had very few people working in our base, including directors, and we had no plans to hire new ones. Additionally,

we lacked a process for forming leaders. Problems were mounting daily. These were challenging times that influenced my growth as a leader.

In *In the Name of Jesus*, Nouwen suggests that “The task of future Christian leaders is not to make a little contribution to the solution of the pains and tribulations of their time, but to identify and announce the ways in which Jesus is leading God’s people out of slavery, through the desert to a new land of freedom” (Nouwen 1989, 70). The personal struggles and challenges I faced serving in different missionary roles allowed me to assist people in my organization. In those years, I turned to God and found hope and direction again. I developed ways to help others identify and follow their calling—that is, to hear Jesus’s sweet voice and trust him.

#### Seasons of Life

In *Let Your Life Speak*, Palmer explains that every individual has a true self, which is the seed of their authentic calling. He says that the path God has guided us since birth gives us clues about our individual vocation. He adds that “The seasonal metaphor also gives our inquiry new scope. It takes the quest for selfhood and vocation out beyond its origins in the depths of the inner life, out beyond the human community and its call to leadership, into the world of nature, that most vast of all the visible worlds in which our lives are embedded” (Palmer 1999, 114). Reflecting on this made me realize how much my life experiences shaped who I am and prepared me to fulfill my vocation. Palmer’s writings were instrumental as I navigated the most challenging periods of my life. By comparing the four seasons to different phases of life, he encouraged me to reflect on how

God works in different ways at different times. This taught me to be resilient and wait for the natural opportunities and regular cycles that life presents. Palmer showed me that the beauty and melancholy of autumn is like the periods of change I went through. These were times when I learned new patterns, grew through suffering, and prepared myself for what was to come. For instance, for years, I wrestled with the tension between worldly responsibilities ("the affairs of this life," as 2 Timothy 2:4 puts it) and pursuing this new path. The shift from earning a living as a pastor and businessman to serving as a volunteer, coupled with leaving behind my family, city, and culture for an unfamiliar people, demanded deep internal change. During this period, I learned to recognize the changes within myself, trust in God's sovereign plan, and patiently anticipate the new seasons that would emerge as the seeds I had planted began to sprout, signaling the dawn of a fresh chapter.

According to Palmer, winter is not a season of death but one of quiet renewal—a period of waiting, stillness, and profound learning. Even in the face of cold and loneliness, the beauty of a clear blue sky offers a spark of hope, a sense of expectancy on even the most challenging days. I have found that God's presence is most keenly felt during these transitional times, a calming reassurance amidst the apparent silence and isolation. This understanding has been a constant: God is with me, even on the coldest days, strengthening and preparing me for the cycles of life to come. Palmer suggests that spring's arrival is often inauspicious, marked by mud and mess. My own new beginnings have often felt the same. My initial missionary work in Thailand, for instance, was filled with struggles, but it also proved to be an immense learning experience. As I cultivated new skills in

communication and cross-cultural understanding, my confidence grew, and I became certain that positive outcomes would emerge in time. Starting anew in ministry after the age of forty was a humbling experience, yet it opened my eyes to the wonder of new life unfolding all around me, like the budding of leaves and the blossoming of flowers. Palmer describes summer as a season of harvest and communal joy. The fruits of my recent years serving communities in Thailand as a missionary offer a glimpse into that summer experience. It is indeed an opportunity to witness God's wonders and to prepare for autumn, which signals the start of yet another cycle of challenges and learning. Palmer's reflections have fundamentally reshaped my expectations in ministry. Throughout my life, God has used both open and closed doors to shape my character. The dark, challenging moments I have faced have been instrumental in preparing me to lead effectively later on. For example, after earning my master's degree, I felt called to write a book about the missionary vocation and the needs of unreached people groups (UPGs). Prior to moving to Thailand, I shared my insights on vocation through preaching engagements at various churches, denominations, and conferences. This work brought me a profound sense of fulfillment. It marked the beginning of a new cycle in my ministry, one shaped by a renewed perspective.

#### Tyndale's DMin Program and the Start Over

After the people of Judah were taken captive to Babylon, they did not have the strength to start over. The Lord sent a word of encouragement to them through the prophet Jeremiah. God told them to continue their life: "build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and

daughters” (Jeremiah 29:5,6). Their story would not end there. He said, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). Tyndale’s DMin program played a special role in my life during a season of new beginnings. Over three years, I was able to learn and grow despite balancing work and study. It was a time for me to reflect on my ministry, understand the paths God was leading me down, and learn how to manage my limitations and different aspects of missionary work. The professors helped me break out of stagnation and sustainably manage my ministry and personal life. With their guidance, I was able to find a clear path forward. I realized that moving forward in all areas of my life would be possible, but it would also be a significant challenge. I had to manage many responsibilities in my ministry and personal life, while taking care of my physical and mental health. I had to find time to play sports regularly and invest in family, friends, and ministry supporters. It was an intense restart. Changes were occurring in all areas of my life, and I could not find a new balance. To make it work long-term, I needed to find a way to manage my energy effectively. In *The Power of Full Engagement*, Loehr and Schwartz explain that managing our energy is fundamental because “without the right quantity, quality, focus and force of energy, we are compromised in any activity we undertake” (Loehr and Schwartz 2005, 4). Among so many ministry challenges, it was valuable to have some beacons to help me make decisions about my leadership.

## Sustainable Ministry

As I became more involved in AMIDE, the demands of the work made it difficult to maintain a balanced life. I sought advice from Dr. Steve Brown, who recommended seeking sustainability instead of trying to balance everything perfectly. In his article “Goodbye Balance,” he warns against minimizing “the importance of self-care, family and peer relationships, healthy boundaries, limiting commitments, stewarding physical health, time management, fun or Sabbath” (Brown 2015) because they are indeed important. I wondered how a fully committed leader could take care of all these areas at the same time. The problem for most leaders is that they cannot find the right balance. They invest their time wherever there is the greatest need. Brown argues that rather than trying to find balance, leaders should seek a sustainable pace of life. He explains that Christ’s life provides a profound example of each of these priorities lived out in a regular rhythm. His activity is always followed by a period of withdrawal so he can restore himself. Instead of focusing on balance, Jesus practiced sustainable rhythms that enabled a different kind of life. It is this life for which we are created. This kind of life is far superior to a perfectly balanced life (Brown 2015).

People in our society would not consider Jesus and his disciples to have a balanced lifestyle. Although Jesus’ disciplined life was sustainable, it would not be considered balanced by current standards. The book *Celebration of Discipline* by Foster (1988), taught me the importance of incorporating spiritual disciplines into daily life. Foster categorizes these disciplines into two groups: interior and exterior. He also categorizes them as theoretical and practical. He attempts to cover all aspects of the Christian life. According to Foster, practising these

disciplines can help us mature spiritually and gain self-knowledge. He explains that “the classical Disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm” (Foster 1988, 15). Due to recent changes in my life, I have been unable to maintain my daily devotional schedule. I have failed to practice the disciplines recommended by Foster. After reading Sherbino’s book, *Renew!*, I realized that I needed to take a break and reflect on my spiritual life. Sherbino suggests that a retreat can help us establish or renew our relationship with God. Following the guidelines in the book, I planned a retreat day. I chose the location, structure, and schedule. I practised different types of prayer, worshipped, journaled, went on prayer walks, and took short breaks to be quiet with God. The book’s instructions greatly enriched my retreat, and I am grateful for the experience.

A particular practice called “The Prayer Exam” stands out to me. It was developed by St. Ignatius. This type of prayer helps individuals experience God’s presence in their daily lives more fully. As explained by Sherbino, “The prayer of examen has become a form of prayer that helps people enter into the presence of God in a more experiential manner and discover the different ways God reveals himself in daily life” (Sherbino 2015, 93). Ignatius believed that this prayer should be said daily, as it allows one to reflect on the events of the past twenty-four hours and helps them to love and serve God more fully. After attending a retreat, I realized the importance of having a daily devotional time and reorganized my schedule to make time for it. While I understand that spiritual life involves many other factors beyond the practice of disciplines, I have found that daily spiritual practices help me stay close to God and hear his voice.

## Personal Characteristics

God creates each one of us with unique attributes and personality preferences, which are shaped according to his will. Through the process of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual maturation, we become useful in the hands of our master. Tools that assess our personality and leadership development can help us understand who we are. This self-knowledge can help us support others. Knowing our true selves enables us to grow our ministry skills, recognize our limitations, and take on new challenges.

Based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Stage II (MBTI), my personality type is ISTJ: Introversion, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging. The MBTI report describes ISTJ individuals as:

Typically dependable, realistic, and practical. They remember and use facts and want things clearly and logically stated. They are thorough, systematic, hardworking, and careful with details and procedures. When they see something that needs to be done, ISTJs accept the responsibility. They do not enter into activities impulsively, but once committed, they are hard to distract or discourage. They lend stability to projects and persevere in the face of adversity (MTBI 2021, 3).

I have seen these traits reflected in my leadership experiences, from early roles in the church to my work at AMIDE. I have always gravitated toward a leadership style that embraces challenges, emphasizes careful planning and organization, and tackles complex, long-term issues head-on. A prime example of this was when AMIDE faced a shortage of emerging leaders. While the board seemed disheartened, I felt energized by the challenge. I channeled my energy into finding solutions, ultimately proposing innovative leadership development models that AMIDE continues to use today.

During my DMin, I received feedback from several personality assessments, including MBTI, CliftonStrengths, and 360. These provided me with a clear description of my leadership characteristics and personality traits. The MBTI revealed that my preferred cognitive processes are sensing and thinking, allowing me to use facts and experiences to reach logical conclusions. According to CliftonStrengths, my main strengths are Responsibility and Organizer. These enable me to lead by facilitating cooperation and ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently.

The 360 Report confirmed most of these leadership characteristics and provided me with valuable advice. The feedback showed me my weaknesses and vulnerabilities as a leader. The 360 Report showed that my colleagues gave me lower ratings than my leaders and direct reports. After analysing my CliftonStrengths report, I realized that my focus on responsibility and organization leads me to take on new tasks constantly. I am also very demanding with my team. This tendency can cause imbalances between the group and me. People with similar characteristics tend to take on new tasks without giving up previous ones. This feedback helped me better understand my strengths and limitations. I can now use this knowledge to plan my ministry effectively.

#### Guidelines for a New Phase

Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). Hoffman and Groeschel were instrumental in helping me navigate my new life phase and establish priorities. Hoffman’s book, *Emotionally Healthy Leadership*, taught me how to

prioritize my relationship with God. In it, he writes about emotionally healthy leaders: “Their activity for God flows out of their relationship with God. (Hoffman 2020, 5). Hoffman followed Jesus’ guidance when he explained that the Christian leader’s ministry should be a consequence of his connection with God. Just like Jesus, leaders must spend time in prayer to hear God’s voice and know his will. This way, leaders can calm their emotions, rest in God, and organize their schedules according to Bible principles.

Groeschel’s book *Six Steps to Your Best Year of Leadership* challenged me to set goals based on who I want to be not just what I want to do. He suggests three steps to grow as a ministry leader. The first step is to focus on personal development by starting a new discipline. I knew that my first challenge would be to recover my daily devotional time, spend more time in solitude, and read the Bible. I combined this challenge with the lessons I learned from Sherbino and Hoffman. My first aim was to organize my inner life, and only then make decisions about external challenges. Groeschel’s second step is having the courage to stop. Sometimes, leaders need to do less so they can focus on what matters most. My MTBI report (2021) shows me that I am always willing to accept new challenges but struggle to give up old ones. This can lead me into dangerous territory. I work for an organization with few leaders and many needs. My willingness to help could lead to burnout and engaging in activities outside my vocation. Based on Groeschel’s advice, I stopped some activities to focus on essential aspects of my work.

The third step Groeschel recommends is to select an individual to train. This touches on a recurring flaw in AMIDE and every organization I have worked

in. We were not training people to become future leaders. Considering this made me realize how much we needed new leaders in my organization. I decided to prepare and train individuals for this purpose. It was a big investment and challenging task, but I worked together with the president of AMIDE to create a shared management group. This allowed directors to participate more actively in the decision-making process. Then I proposed that CEAM create a class focused on leadership development and vocational discernment. I trained some of the missionaries on my team in Thailand. I prepared two of them to become leaders. Thus, Groeschel's three steps helped my organization realize the importance of training new leaders and showed me how rewarding it was to invest in people.

### Cultivating Rhythms

Peter Scazzero warns that some leaders cannot change their routines to invest time in their relationship with God. He said that “pastors are in a hurry, they cannot slow down and be with Jesus” (Scazzero 2019, 3). While answering the questionnaire presented by the author, I stopped to reflect on how relevant that sentence was for my life.

When I started at AMIDE there was a lot to do, so my days became full of activities. I could not deal with the accumulation of demands. I was still rebuilding myself internally and relearning how to manage my time and priorities. Walking slower and spending more time alone with Jesus has become one of my priorities. As Moses said, “If Your Presence is not with us, do not bring us up here” (Exodus 33:15). Barton argues that “God spoke because Moses stopped, paused, realized, turned aside!” (Barton 2009, 61). I learned to start my days in

God's presence. Through Bible reading, prayer, and time alone with God, I could calm my heart, present him with the day's demands, and ask him for help and advice to deal with my challenges. I could not always do this, but it was the rhythm of life that I cultivated from then on.

Furthermore, I learned from Nouwen that Christian values can be cultivated by putting Christ first and choosing to serve those most in need. Nouwen left the shine of academic life to live on the margins of society. He reminds us that we are often tempted to choose power and control over love and being led. Overcoming this temptation can be difficult because, from an early age, we are taught that we should strive to be the best and the first at everything.

When I started leading AMIDE's missionary projects in Asia, I focused more on tasks than on people due to my business administration training and entrepreneurial experience. I was focused on results and believed that some missionaries produced very little because of a lack of planning and focus. So, I set high goals and demanded better results. However, my initial assessment was distorted by my lack of knowledge of the cultural challenges faced by the missionaries. Many were in crisis and remained in their homes, not out of laziness or lack of focus, but because they needed to take refuge in a hostile environment. What they needed most at that moment was pastoring and counselling, as they felt unable to deal with the challenges. They needed to be reminded that God loved them for who they were, not for their work.

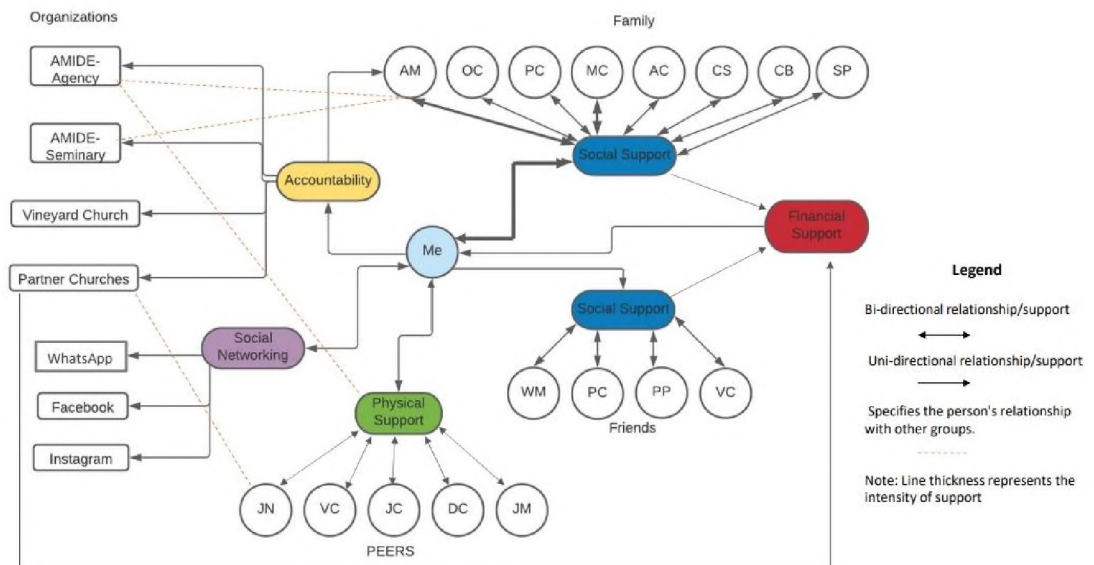
Nouwen helped me understand and think more lovingly about my mission partners and myself. I had to give up the position of power and choose to love and serve instead. He suggests that "Powerlessness and humility in the spiritual life do

not refer to people who have no spine and who let everyone else make decisions for them. They refer to people who are so deeply in love with Jesus that they are ready to follow him wherever he guides them, always trusting that, with him, they will find life and find it abundantly” (Nouwen 1989, 28).

Barton explains that true peace is experienced when we exchange the desire to control and the search for results for a lifestyle of pleasing God and serving others. She shows that Moses was at peace even though he knew that he would not lead the people into the promised land. She said, “And this is what I have come to see most clearly in the life of Moses: for Moses, the presence of God was the Promised Land. Next to that, everything else had already paled in significance” (Barton 2008, 214).

#### Viewing my Connections Through a Sociogram

I used a sociogram to visualize my connections and understand the types of relationships I had, their intensity, and the interactions that shaped those relationships. Analyzing these interactions helped me understand how I was dealing with the complexity and interdependence of my relationships. Hogan and his fellow authors explain that “visual depictions of relations among individuals have been an attraction of social network analysis for many years” (Hogan et al. 2007, 116). Using the sociogram, I was able to see the support I received (emotional, affective, financial, and spiritual) while serving at AMIDE.



**Figure 1: Personal Sociogram**

In the diagram above, the circles represent individuals and the squares represent organizations. The arrows indicate the type and strength of my connection with them. At the top, the social support group is composed of my primary emotional and financial supporters, including family and long-time friends. The arrows show mutual relationships, as I provide care and prayer to people while receiving their support. The arrows indicate a one-way relationship on the financial side, as they are significant supporters of my ministry. The second social support group provides occasional personal and organizational assistance but have not made a regular commitment to do so. My social networks help me stay connected with my partners, particularly the younger ones. I make an effort to be part of their social lives. I respond to their prayers and financial gifts with prayer, counselling, and friendship. These relationships are lighter and less committed than the ones I have with my support groups, but they help me maintain my cultural roots and sense of belonging. Additionally, I occasionally

use social media to promote AMIDE and some of our projects (although projects in countries where religious persecution takes place are not publicized on social media).

The people who I am accountable to are split up between AMIDE, churches, and individuals who supported me financially. The relationships I am responsible for maintaining dictate much of my schedule and work. Prioritizing them allows me to maintain a sustainable pace of life, just as Ruth Barton says. Since ministry demands a lot of time and attention, we must be careful not to neglect our time with family and God. Taking on new tasks forces us to reorganize our schedule if we want to operate sustainably. Barton explains that transitions are an opportunity to spend time with God, observe our lives, and see what God is doing. She writes, “When you introduce even a couple of basic rhythms, the quality of your life and your leadership will begin to change for the better” (Barton 2008, 135). Social networks risk involving us in superficial relationships and consuming energy that should be spent elsewhere. However, we cannot forget that younger generations are used to a high level of connection and need our attention. I have observed that this has particularly affected our field missionaries. The challenge of learning a new language and culture, the lack of face-to-face contact, and an absence of deep, genuine relationships led some of them to isolate themselves in their homes and spend a lot of time in the virtual world. This has been frustrating and discouraging to see, and it impedes them from being productive and growing their ministry. Using a sociogram could help them visualize this relational problem and show them that they need help.

## **My Leadership Context**

In this section, I will discuss my previous leadership experiences and then provide details about AMIDE, including its history, geography, and primary operational areas.

I was trained to be a leader in three different contexts. Firstly, I was exposed to the cooperative leadership model while working as an assistant pastor in a church. This experience was the most instructive and long-lasting of the three. During my time there, I mainly interacted with volunteers and learned the importance of motivating and caring for them. I discovered that volunteers are essential to Christian organizations and bring vibrancy to their day-to-day functions when properly motivated. However, if they are not well cared for or trained, they quickly become discouraged and abandon their tasks. The senior pastor implemented a collective decision-making method, where everything was decided by consensus without voting. It sometimes led to lengthy discussions and disagreements, but for the most part, it resulted in mature decisions accepted by the group. However, there were instances where those who disagreed were strongly pressured to give in, resulting in forced harmony. This approach eventually led to the entire group abandoning the leadership council and the church. I initially believed that this system of shared power was perfect for Christian organizations, but I later realized its flaws caused significant long-term problems. Although he was faithful to God and a tireless worker, the senior pastor failed to create a long-term vision for the organization and did not invest much in training his team. This individualistic vision did not work well. My experience on the board of directors taught me a lot, including the importance of preparing new

leaders and investing in people. I think that the cooperative leadership model needed adjustments; despite this, I learned to appreciate this leadership style.

The second context that taught me a lot about leadership was the two restaurants and cafe that I owned for a period of time. Drawing from my previous collaborative leadership experience, I formed a group to help me make decisions and understand the needs of the employees. However, the final decisions rested with me, and my helpers were paid regular salaries. It was much easier to solve problems with this kind of team. Decisions were made quickly, employees had to follow them, and I rarely lost team members due to relationship issues. That being said, although some of my employees were highly motivated, the dynamic environment of the church could not be replicated. Additionally, I aimed to be a model servant leader, consistently investing in and caring for my team. Over time, I realized I needed to focus more on results. It was also a mistake that I did not plan on expanding my business when I opened my first restaurant. This led to a lack of prepared leaders for the new ventures. Ultimately, this taught me the need to find a balance between leading and motivating employees and managing tasks.

My third formative environment was AMIDE, where I was the Vice President. Once again, I worked in an organization where decisions were made by consensus. Unlike the pastor I mentioned previously, the president of AMIDE was a charismatic individual, and the directors consistently supported her decisions without being pressured to do so. AMIDE had a mix of paid and volunteer workers, but all of the board members were volunteers. Therefore, fostering relationships and seeking unity of purpose was essential. The president and founder of the organization was a model of Servant Leadership. The

organization experienced significant growth during its first twenty-five years. Unfortunately, various issues have arisen in recent years. AMIDE has struggled with a lack of new leaders. Most of its directors have been with the agency for over twenty years, and some are planning to retire. The organization faces similar issues with its cross-cultural projects where missionaries have worked for many years without grooming new leaders. Urgent action is needed to identify and train new leaders. If we do not do this, the problem will likely worsen. In *The Multiplication Effect*, Lake emphasizes the importance of creating a culture of leadership development to ensure a steady stream of new leaders. He points out that many organizations lack leadership because they have not built up this culture. He argues that “There are no leaders because developing leaders has not been ingrained in their culture” (Lake 2020, 45).

The Book of Acts illustrates how the apostles addressed a gap in leadership. When Judas left the group, they promptly chose a replacement for him (Acts 1). Then, as the church grew, its first management crisis arose. A failure in resource distribution led to a division between those of Jewish and Hellenistic origin (Acts 6). It became clear that appointing deacons in the Jerusalem church was a strategic move. The apostles opted to establish a leadership role instead of seeking other administrative solutions or taking on additional responsibilities. This decision aligned with Jesus’ teaching that greatness in the Kingdom of God comes from serving others (Matthew 20:26). The apostles’ understanding of this lesson was evident in their creation of the role of Diakonia in the Jerusalem church.

The new leaders were selected based on the values the apostles had learned from Jesus. The new leaders were given authority and the opportunity to put their learning into practice. As a result, the twelve apostles were not overwhelmed and could focus on their primary roles. Other churches replicated this model. Mac concludes that “the apostles understood that their role in leadership and development leaders was so they could give ‘attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’ Growth requires that leaders refine what they are called to, gifted for, and focused on. As this happens, the leadership base grows to support the upward growth God is sending” (Lake 2020, 38).

What I learned in Tyndale’s DMin program was the foundation for an important initiative I developed at AMIDE. Following the model presented in the Book of Acts, I selected six new leaders to form the agency’s executive board. We held weekly meetings to discuss challenges, make organizational decisions, and work on long-term plans. This was the first step in shifting from relying solely on prayer towards actively developing a culture of leadership training at AMIDE.

As the second in command, I strived to be a helpful advisor to the president, contributing to the modernization of annual planning and bringing attention to the need for leadership training. I also helped implement a method for making collective decisions via statutory and executive boards, incorporating deadlines and voting processes. While this model was not perfect either, we made yearly adjustments to ensure that it suited AMIDE’s needs.

As I reflect on my leadership experiences, I see two recurring deficiencies in the contexts I have worked in. The first was the absence of a leadership training

process, and the second was the lack of guidance for individuals to discern their calling. In my business, I failed to plan for growth and neglected to recognize the need for new leaders. Both the church and AMIDE also faltered by waiting for ready-made future leaders instead of actively developing them. Healthy organizations grow new leaders. All organizations will inevitably lose leaders over time. If an organization does not find internal solutions or recruit externally, it will burden those who remain, leading to a standstill. Just like Jesus prayed before choosing his disciples and then spent three years training them, we also need to train those sent by God to serve as missionaries to UPGs as well as those who are called to lead the organization. After my first few years at AMIDE, I realized that vocational guidance could be a crucial step in the process of training leaders.

### Ministry Context

A group of women from Presbyterian churches in Brasília collaborated to send a missionary to an indigenous tribe in Brazil's Amazon region. Their passion for evangelizing UPGs led them to found AMIDE, an organization aimed at mobilizing churches to send more missionaries. The agency grew until it had around seventy missionaries serving with twenty projects in different countries. Although AMIDE's work is not exclusively focused on UPGs, the agency prioritizes the evangelization of unreached people and has gained recognition in our country because of this. One of AMIDE's key characteristics is its emphasis on volunteering. Its directors and most staff members do not receive financial

compensation from the agency; instead, they seek financial support from their local church.

AMIDE is an interdenominational, non-profit Brazilian missionary organization that primarily aims to prepare and send missionaries to UPGs. Their work includes discipleship, church planting, and Bible translation. In addition to evangelization, AMIDE projects also aim to assist poor and marginalized people. CEAM was established to train AMIDE missionaries. It offers bachelor's and master's degrees in Missiology. It is a small seminary, with around forty students located at the AMIDE base. It offers in-person and online classes. Most of our current field missionaries received their training there.

Although AMIDE aimed to train and deploy missionaries to Unreached People Groups (UPGs), some students lacked clarity regarding their vocational calling. Initially, scholarships and vocation-focused classes increased the number of students becoming cross-cultural missionaries, but eventually, more students pursued other career paths. While this situation posed a challenge for some donors, the AMIDE board understood the significance of sending only those missionaries genuinely called to cross-cultural work. A secondary objective emerged: to cultivate in all students, regardless of their career path, an awareness of the Great Commission. Therefore, AMIDE's main challenge became helping students discern their calling and choose ministries aligned with God's will, which prompted research into how to assist students in their vocational development.

A description of the geographic location and layout of AMIDE's base illustrates how its mission has expanded. Twenty-five years ago, AMIDE started its activities in an office in the central region of Brasília. Later, it moved into a

building with space to house the seminary. Finally, it relocated its base to a farm close to Brasília. The AMIDE base consists of twenty-three houses and two small buildings forming a condominium, with an administrator appointed by the agency's board. Some of the buildings are old. Their decorations reflect the theme of questing. There are paintings and photos of missionaries in cross-cultural contexts, as well as artifacts such as bows, arrows, pots, plates, and some copies of the Bible translated into other languages. There is also an administrative building with a chapel, another building for the seminary, and dormitories for students and campers. Additionally, the base has leisure and social areas, such as a swimming pool, soccer field, and prayer room. The houses are occupied by seminary students, transitioning missionaries, and some of the employees.

While living at the AMIDE base and teaching at CEAM, I realized that students and missionaries needed vocational help. CEAM students lived at the AMIDE base with missionaries who were preparing or resting. The base's rustic context, architecture, and decorations encourage students to work with UPGs. Despite this, many students were not confident about their vocation.

### Understanding the Need

There was a great deal of work to be done at AMIDE, and I did everything I could to meet the needs. Palmer argues that “vocation does not come from willfulness. It comes from listening. I must listen to my life and try to understand what it is truly about—quite apart from what I would like it to be about—or my life will never represent anything real in the world, no matter how earnest my intentions” (Palmer 2000, 11). Trying to follow my calling, not my will, I

struggled to know what God wanted from me. Although I had served as an assistant pastor for many years, I was not the type of leader with natural charisma that everyone quickly recognized. However, I knew that I could be a servant leader. In *Leading in Disorienting Times*, Nelson and Dickens explain that from Jesus' perspective, leadership is primarily about being a servant, and ultimate power is complete submission to God. I learned from them that organizations and their leaders should dedicate themselves to caring for people and fulfilling the organization's mission with the same intensity they expect of the people they lead. They suggest that the leaders "must acknowledge and embrace their role to ensure that those they serve while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, [and] more likely themselves to become leaders and to acknowledge their effects on the least privileged in society" (Nelson and Dickens 2015, 50). That was the kind of leader I wanted to be. While working at AMIDE, I wanted to lead people who were focused on the organization's goals. However, as I cared for and invested in them, I realized they became more fulfilled and productive at work.

I discovered a need within AMIDE—a gap between the seminary and the agency. Students did not feel confident about entering ministry and required vocational guidance when they reached the end of their courses. I realized I could offer this kind of help to students. I later discovered that other members of the organization were also unsure about their calling. So, as a servant leader, I began looking for ways to help them. Although many of them were confused about what they should do in ministry when they joined AMIDE, they were excited about cross-cultural missions at some point in their lives. I began to pray for them and

guided them to spend time with God and learn to hear his voice. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes that he did not stop praying for the people there and encourages them “to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9).

Since I could not help everyone, I initially focused on students. My experience had taught me that the period between completing seminary and deciding on a missionary career was difficult. I spent years trying to understand my calling before I was able to choose what to do. AMIDE only wanted those who felt directed by God to serve as missionaries to UPGs. They taught that those who did not have a clear sense of calling should pursue other opportunities—whatever God’s will was for their lives. However, AMIDE did not offer enough help for those who did not feel sure. Alongside this, because of the intense focus required to finish, most students reduced the time they spent in prayer and solitude towards the end of their degrees. Combined with the natural anxiety about deciding on their future career, this could further distance them from vocational discernment. I did not know how to fill this gap, but I remembered Barton’s invitation to pay attention to what God was doing. She writes about Moses’ calling and explains that we, like him, must notice the burning bushes around us. Maybe God is showing us something new and extraordinary, but we are not paying attention. Then she states, “God spoke because Moses stopped, paused, noticed, turned aside!” (Barton 2008, 61). The students’ cry for help was like that burning bush in the desert. Finally, we started paying attention. However, identifying the problem was just the first step. It was time to take off our sandals and listen to the voice of God.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I described the paths God guided me along to form me into a leader. It highlighted my family values and personal characteristics. I narrated how these experiences led me to value servant leadership and the cooperative leadership model. I also described my ministry context at AMIDE, detailing its culture and values. In doing so, I considered how our context can influence our sense of vocation. Furthermore, I demonstrated how I identified the need to provide CEAM seminary students with vocational guidance. This became the basis for my research project, which I recount in Chapter Four.

### **CHAPTER 3:**

#### **PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP**

This chapter describes my Philosophy of Christian Leadership. It outlines the combined model I adhere to, the reasons for this approach, its relationship to my characteristics and ministry context, and its biblical and theological foundations. In my DMin studies, we studied various leadership styles. I found that I most strongly resonated with the concept of Servant Leadership. Greenleaf (2008, 13) conceptualized servant leadership as prioritizing service to others, leading through care and attention to the team's needs, and placing the well-being of others before personal ambitions. According to Greenleaf, servant leaders believe that developing their team is the most effective path to achieving lasting objectives. This leadership style is not dependent on charisma or a strong presence and can be adopted by both extroverted and introverted individuals. Servant leaders focus on aiding, developing, and supporting their team members. This leadership style reflects Jesus' teachings on humility, including his admonition not to seek personal gain or engage in self-promotion. It also focuses on team building and horizontal leadership. However, as I delved deeper into this model, I realized that while its principles serve as a guideline for all Christian leaders, it is insufficient to address the needs of my ministry and organization. To reach a definition of leadership that aligned with who I am what my context needs, I combined the concepts of Servant Leadership with the Transformational

Leadership style. Combining these two frameworks results in a model of leadership that concentrates on training people and leading cooperatively in order to extract the best from them. This allows leaders to lead their teams sustainably and achieve organizational objectives more effectively.

Jesus emphasized self-denial as fundamental to discipleship, declaring that a disciple must "renounce all that he has" (Luke 14:33). This willingness to relinquish personal comforts and perceived rights is especially challenging for missionaries, who are called to set aside familiar cultural habits to embrace new ones. This process of recognizing cultural nuances and cultivating respect for diverse traditions not only deepens a missionary's Christian faith but also enriches their humanity. Through training and practical experience, missionaries learn intercultural communication skills. Driven by love, they become more adaptable and readily embrace cultural differences. This adaptation is crucial for effective ministry and building relationships with the local community. Moreover, these missionaries often return home with an enhanced ability to connect with people from all cultural backgrounds.

Reflecting on what it means to lead each generation is essential for all Christian leaders and organizations. In *In the Name of Jesus*, Nouwen (1989) expresses anxiety at being asked to write about Christian leadership for the new century. He observes that the church and its leaders are becoming less relevant due to the process of secularization. In response, leaders have prioritized technical solutions over spirituality. This has made them feel even less essential and more marginalized. Therefore, replicating this approach and introducing more technical solutions to Christian organizations may not be the best solution. Instead, Nouwen

shares how he listened to his heart and believed that God was guiding him in a new direction as part of a larger movement within the church. He concludes this reflection by stating:

It is here that the need for a new Christian leadership becomes clear. The leaders of the future will be those who dare to claim their irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows them to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success, and to bring the light of Jesus there (Nouwen 1989, 21).

In saying this, Nouwen gives new meaning to the concept of relevance. Likewise, Christian leaders should learn from John the Baptist, who realized that Jesus' ministry was more significant than his own. John knew that he was just a friend invited to the wedding and that Jesus was the real focus. He understood the importance of being part of the mission without being the most important player and was happy to fulfill his role. He became relevant by following his calling as a precursor of Jesus, preparing the way for Jesus' ministry to grow. This is captured in his statement, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:26-30). Instead of seeking to elevate their own names, Christian leaders should focus on fulfilling their calling, serving their communities, and glorifying God.

My Philosophy of Leadership is influenced by Nouwen's reflections and what I have observed in my various ministry contexts. I hope that it may be beneficial to contemporary Christian leaders. I present it in four sections below.

First, I share a step-by-step model that I created. It explores Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. In addition to focusing on meeting people's needs and preparing them to achieve results, this model integrates the concepts of continuity and adaptability to make it relevant to the current generation. Then, I explain how my upbringing and context led me to this model

and how they shape my understanding of leadership and calling. After that, I analyze some biblical texts, starting with Grammatical-Historical Hermeneutics then considering what Practical Theology and the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic can teach us. My aim for this third section is to ground my philosophy in scripture. Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I share how the work of Christian leaders can demonstrate the relevance of the gospel to the current generation. This includes influencing those who already attend churches, those in our neighbourhoods, those who are excluded, and those who still need to receive the good news and experience the love of Jesus anywhere in the world.

### **How I Built my Christian Leadership Philosophy**

Before delving into concepts and definitions, I would like to emphasize the importance of understanding the current generation and finding ways for leaders to adapt to their worldview. I have been contemplating how to be a relevant Christian leader amid a generation facing depression and constant change. According to Root (2021), late modernity has led to today's society constantly seeking innovation, embracing technology, and valuing freedom of expression. People are shedding old patterns like never before, yet they are feeling increasingly fatigued and lonely. As a result, authenticity has become a central cultural value of this generation. While seeking authenticity should not pose a problem, it becomes one when it leads to the erosion of cultural values and traditions. Social media and technology promote public exposure in the pursuit of authenticity. However, sharing personal thoughts on social media to affirm personal values that conflict with those of one's friends and family can lead to

relational stress. This, in turn, can cause rejection and distance within close relationships, ultimately resulting in social isolation.

Furthermore, the constant search for novelty can lead to people feeling drained and unable to keep up with the pace. Few people can fulfill all the roles that society expects. In an environment where everything changes rapidly and demands constant adaptation, people grow weary of being themselves. Root says that

When this fatigue becomes too much, when we cannot find the energy to keep going into the water, creating, and curating ourselves, we feel stuck. We feel sucked back by the current, passed over (a potent nightmare in our late-modern secular age). Everything else is moving so fast, changing, and adapting every minute, and we just do not have it in us (Root 2021, 9).

The modern world requires Christian leaders who can effectively navigate diverse social contexts with relational, adaptive, cross-cultural skills. These leaders need to be capable of serving not only in modern Western cities with their well-structured churches and organizations, but also in remote areas where Christian organizations are just beginning to establish themselves. Christian organizations are adjusting to this evolving landscape, yet their leaders increasingly feel exhausted and isolated. Root suggests that this exhaustion can only be broken when the congregation develops resonant relationships based on mutual care and the recognition that we need each other. He asserts that “Resonance, then, is the faithful way forward for congregations living in a secular age” (Root 2021, 208). Having said that, the church needs to adapt to its surroundings without losing its core values and sense of purpose. The main challenge is to act out of love, adjusting to changes, caring for people, and staying connected to our context. The issue lies not in the speed of change, but in the loss of values, isolation, and

exhaustion those changes cause. Furthermore, Root states that when the congregation changes its mode from acceleration—a search for new things—to “receptive affection and responsive efficacy [...] the world is made alive, and God is speaking in it, calling out for us to participate in ministry. The congregation, once too fatigued to be the church, is transformed and given new life as it follows the call into resonating encounters of otherness” (Root 2021, 206).

Following his personal reflection, Nouwen argues that the Christian leader must understand God’s unconditional love and care for their flock. Without building deep and lasting relationships, no leader will be able to help their congregation. Resonance within the community and mutual ministry experiences are essential. Nouwen concludes by stating that “from this it is clear that a whole new type of leadership is asked for in the church of tomorrow, a leadership that is not modelled on the power games of the world, but on the servant-leader Jesus, who came to give his life for the salvation of many” (Nouwen 1989, 32).

### My Leadership Role and Self-Awareness

I did not spend much time thinking about leadership styles before the Servant Leader model caught my attention. So, when reflecting on my personal traits and context, I asked myself what I could contribute as a leader. Leading others was not my goal until a few years ago. However, the lack of leadership in the ministries I have served in resulted in me leading teams and projects. I had a distorted view of the essential characteristics of a leader. I did not identify with the model of the charismatic leader with a dominant personality. Having lived

with leaders like that, I did not believe that God wanted me to be that kind of leader. Initially, I believed leadership was an innate quality. However, studying leadership styles and characteristics revealed that effective leadership is a skill cultivated through time and preparation. I learned that aspiring leaders must first understand their own strengths and then identify a leadership model that aligns with those gifts. My early experience on a church leadership team, undertaken simply to address an immediate need, now seems a distant starting point. Since then, I've grown to understand that leadership can be expressed through service, collaboration, and a deep respect for my individual traits.

In addition to their training and natural characteristics, leaders are shaped by the challenges they face in their careers. Leaders develop as a result of social dynamics. When they overcome challenges in their context, it allows them to learn. In *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Northouse states that “the process viewpoint suggests that leadership is a phenomenon that resides in the context of the interactions between leaders and followers and makes leadership available to everyone. As a process, leadership can be observed in leader behaviors and can be learned” (Northouse 2022, 61). Therefore, the Servant Leadership model and the perspective that leaders are built through continuous training allowed me to see other ways that a Christian might lead. Even in environments dominated by charismatic and power-driven leaders, incorporating principles from Jesus' leadership style can foster a more positive and effective workplace. This approach cultivates employees who are better equipped, more productive, and more intrinsically motivated to contribute to the organization's success. Recognizing the

transformative potential of servant leadership, I realized that individuals with diverse leadership styles can also develop into impactful future leaders.

I have scrutinized the principles of Servant Leadership using scripture. The Bible presents many stories in which God chooses people to lead his people and prepares them to fulfil his purposes. These stories, full of positive and negative examples, show how we can go about training Christian leaders. Furthermore, Jesus's leadership principles, seen in the four gospels, serve as the basis for Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. I will analyze some of these texts in the last section of the chapter. While the model of Servant Leadership is applicable to leaders across generations, I agree with Rodin about the need for caution. When commenting on the focus of Jesus' ministry, he explains that "Jesus came to be the Lord of our life, not our example of good leadership" (Rodin 2010, 88). This statement by Rodin helped me understand that the principles of the Servant Leadership need to be combined with those of the Transformational style to put it into practice in my context.

### Building My Leadership Definition

In the process of defining leadership, I encountered a challenge. In the DMin program, we delved into various leadership styles that are effective in different organizational settings. By examining different leadership theories, each student was able to identify the ones that resonated most with their individual traits and ministry goals. The readings and class interactions not only expanded our knowledge, they also guided us in creating unique and relevant leadership frameworks.

What I saw was that the students, myself included, were primarily focused on pragmatism and achieving results. While I found the models based on biblical teachings to be the most appealing, none of them addressed the need to develop Christian character and understand God's will. It was challenging for me to connect leadership theory with vocation because the leadership models I selected emphasized problem-solving and results. From a Christian perspective, vocation involves fulfilling a ministry in accordance with God's will. I struggled to reconcile the disparity between the two concepts. However, during a discussion with Dr. Paul Pascoal, my portfolio advisor, I came to understand that models centred solely on outcomes and team problem-solving are inadequate from a Christian perspective. Therefore, my understanding is that before delving into training and development tools, Christian leaders must commit to discerning God's will and imparting the principles of God's kingdom to their team. This principle is exemplified in the life of Jesus as depicted in the gospels. He consistently devoted time to prayer and seeking the Father's will. Lance Ford warns that prioritizing results in Christian leadership may compromise the core values we strive for. He says that "we have lost the servanthip way—Jesus, The Way. We have exchanged the Truth, Jesus himself, for falsehoods. And in trying to secure a successful life for our churches and ourselves we have missed the Life, Jesus Himself" (Ford 2012, 22). This is a risk that can not be underestimated by Christian leaders.

I took on the challenge of integrating the concepts of vocation and leadership development. I believe that these two ideas must be intertwined in order to effectively lead a Christian ministry. While their first task must be

discerning God's will and fostering Christian character, Christian leaders also need to concentrate on problem-solving, training, and empowering individuals to drive results and organizational advancement. Although I have developed my leadership philosophy based on a leadership style that serves, cares for, and trains people to achieve better results, I would like to emphasize that Christian leaders must find ways to unite these two mandates. Following Jesus' example, they must first devote time to pray and discern God's will. Only after this foundational stage should Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership be implemented to shape leaders within Christian institutions. With this in mind, I will now outline the process through which I formulated a practical approach to Christian leadership that was rooted in biblical principles and was tailored to my personal attributes.

Greenleaf, Northouse, and Nouwen's thoughts guide my definition of leadership. My philosophy of Christian leadership oscillates between two styles: Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. My primary concern is that Christians should define leadership based on biblical principles, as outlined in the teachings of Jesus: "For even the Son of did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Also, I wanted my leadership style to be entrenched to some extent in the social sciences; that is, it should be flexible, seeking to adapt to different contexts, especially the current secularized, fast-paced, fluid generation.

Peter Northouse provides a broad and helpful definition of leadership. He describes it as "a process by which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse 2022, 43). However, Christians must

define leadership in a manner that is aligned with the model taught and lived by Jesus. Our goal must be to obey and glorify God. I also incorporated the idea of continuity into my definition to encapsulate the need to train new leaders constantly. For an organization's long-term goals to be reached and the leader's legacy to be perpetuated, they must invest in training their future substitutes. As the saying goes, a job well done can be wasted in a short time if there is no one to continue it. This matters to me because my organization faced a severe leadership crisis while I was in the DMin program. The leaders who founded and grew the organization were tired and wanted to retire. However, there were no successors as they did not train new leaders with similar visions and values to continue their work. Finally, my definition derives from my experience in three different contexts. It touches on my experiences in Brazil, Canada, and Thailand. Because of these experiences, I wanted an adaptable leadership philosophy that could be applied to the governance of a large Presbyterian church in Brasília, an interdenominational academic environment in Canada, and a missionary team serving poor people in a village in the interior of Thailand.

### Servant Leadership as an Essential Foundation

Robert Greenleaf coined the term Servant Leadership. He was inspired by Herman Hesses's journey to the East. Greenleaf showed that it was possible to lead by serving by considering how Leo kept a group of explorers steadfast in their purpose and how his absence culminated in the frustrating end of the journey. In response to the question "Who is a servant leader," he said, "the servant-leader is servant first as Leo was portrayed. It begins with the natural

feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (Greenleaf 2008, 13). In other words, he described the servant leader as someone who puts others’ interests before their own. Thus, a servant leader focuses on people and relationships. According to Greenleaf, a servant leader must meet the following conditions regarding those they lead: “do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?” (Greenleaf 2002, 34).

The different roles played by Leo gave Greenleaf insights about his leadership style. According to Hesse, Leo was just the servant who carried out household chores for a group on their journey to the East. In addition to being a lively man who inspired everyone with his music and joy, he also played another role: contributing to the team’s cohesion. When Leo suddenly went missing, relationship problems arose, and the trip was abandoned. It was later discovered that Leo was also the head of the Order that sponsored the trip: “its guiding spirit, a great and noble leader” (Greenleaf 2008, 7). This was a revolutionary idea for Greenleaf. He predicted that the servant leader, who leads by caring for and focusing on the good of those being served, would not be easily accepted or tolerated by a task-oriented culture.

In my experience, most leaders focus on delivering results. They know how to set ambitious goals and mobilize their team to achieve them. Such leaders are suitable for organizations because they contribute to growth. However, many of them have little patience for daily conflicts and would rather lose difficult team

members than invest time in their group's growth and unity. Greenleaf asserts that the group lost its ability to achieve its long-term goals when Leo left. Even though task-oriented leaders are exceptionally skilled at motivating their teams to achieve their goals, if they cannot manage people and create an environment of trust and safety, their organization will collapse along the way, just like in Hesse's story.

That said, I have encountered people-oriented leaders who focus more on improving the organizational environment than achieving bold goals. I actually believe that no leader should be completely task- or people-oriented. Those who go to extremes will likely fail in their role. Burns, commenting on Greenleaf's ideas, explains that Christians have examples of "humanistic altruism to inspire them to be servant leaders" in Jesus and numerous Christian leaders (Burns 2014, 116). Over the course of three years, Jesus never stopped his ministry duties as he trained, cared for, and taught his team the importance of unity and mutual support. While preaching in towns and villages, he worried about the fate of impoverished and excluded people. Additionally, after his resurrection, Jesus commissioned his disciples to make new disciples in all nations, while loving their neighbours and caring for those who are suffering.

Ultimately, a person-oriented servant leader cares about their team, creates connections with them, and prepares them to face challenges. Northouse emphasizes that "servant leaders put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities. Furthermore, servant leaders are ethical and lead in ways that serve the greater good of the organization, community, and society at large" (Northouse 2022, 337).

## Transformational Leadership as the Second Foundation

In this section, I will briefly describe why I chose Transformational Leadership as the second foundation underlying my Philosophy of Leadership. James MacGregor Burns is credited as the first to describe the characteristics of transformational leaders. According to Burns, they are leaders who are oriented to the needs of their followers. They provide an environment where their followers can interact deeply with each other, striving to achieve better results and high moral values together (Burns 1978, 14). Expanding on this concept, Northouse explains that “transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential” (Northouse 2022, 266). Again, Burns points out that the leader must communicate effectively with their followers and facilitate necessary changes (Burns 1978, 15). According to Northouse, a notable characteristic of this leadership style is to develop and motivate followers by being flexible and adaptable to what works at any given point in time. They must influence individuals on a one-on-one basis or more broadly in order “to influence whole organizations and even entire cultures” (Northouse 2022, 265). This is what Northouse describes as the contemporaneity of Transformational Leadership. He points out that:

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It concerns emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. It includes assessing workers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves

an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than usually expected (Northouse 2022, 263).

Likewise, Burns says that “Transforming leadership occurs when leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns 1978, 14). He states, “Ultimately, the moral legitimacy of transformational leadership is grounded in the conscious choice among real alternatives” (Burns 1978, 37). The starting point of this style of leadership is “that whatever the separate interests persons might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of ‘higher’ goals” (Burns 1978, 425).

In addition to influencing and motivating their team, transformational leaders must remain attentive to the needs of their team members and be ready to offer any help required for them to develop. However, since I am considering Christian leadership, I think it is essential to clarify that the help that the leader offers must be based on the power of inner transformation found in the gospel of Jesus. Although human sciences add to our understanding, only God can truly transform human nature and make people acceptable and pleasing to himself.

#### Gathering the Best of the Two Styles

From the outset, I anchored my leadership philosophy in these two styles: Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. As a result, I had to understand their similarities and differences and look for ways to reconcile the strengths of these leadership styles and apply them in my leadership context. Burns notes that “The uniting of the cornerstone Christian concept of servant leadership with the emerging transforming leadership school describes in no uncertain terms what the heart and soul of Christian leadership has always been

about, but service is only one component of Christian leadership” (Burns 2014, 116). Furthermore, Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership provide a framework for contemporary leaders. The crucial difference between these leadership styles is that transformational leaders tend to focus more on organizational aims. Yukl and Gardner point out that:

With transformational leadership, the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do. The leader transforms and motivates followers by making them more aware of the importance of task outcomes, inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization or team, and activating their higher-order needs (Yukl and Gardner, 2020, 235).

In contrast, servant leaders focus more on meeting the needs of their followers:

“this tendency of the servant leader to focus on followers appears to be the primary factor that distinguishes servant leadership from transformational leadership” (Stone, Russel, and Patterson 2004, 350). Fox explains that while Transformational Leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating the group, Servant Leadership focuses on listening and meeting their needs; while Transformational Leadership focuses on organizational outcomes, Servant Leadership focuses on cultivating harmonious relationships among the people in the group. Although these leadership styles differ in their approach, they complement each other due to their aim of empowering individuals and building relationally connected teams in order to achieve collective goals. Concerning which makes for a better philosophy of leadership, Fox states that

In exploring the differences between transformational leadership and servant leadership, we do not mean to suggest that one is better than the other. Moreover, this is not a one-or-the-other proposition—organizations and their managers can incorporate both into their overarching leadership philosophy (Fox 2019, 03).

The central point of convergence between the two styles is the fact that Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership both emphasize the importance of caring for and investing in people. Both kinds of leader seek to know their followers' needs and preparing them for challenges they will face. "The theories are probably most similar in their emphasis upon individualized consideration and appreciation of followers" (Stone, Russel, and Patterson 2004, 354).

My leadership philosophy draws on both styles. My focus is on serving and training people. Both styles of leadership are concerned with caring for people and preparing them for career challenges. When it comes to Servant Leadership, the focus on achieving organizational goals is secondary. In comparison, Transformational Leadership runs the risk of looking at its followers only as a means to achieve its objectives. Nonetheless, both of these styles have positive aspects and can be helpful. Any leader who seeks to meet the current generation's challenges must adapt their leadership style to meet the needs and well-being of their team while sincerely valuing them as people. At the same time, leaders should not lose sight of the need to achieve goals and grow their organization.

In my opinion, this combined Servant and Transformational Leadership model is the way that Jesus and the early church operated, as shown in the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and other New Testament books. For example, Jesus prepared people to achieve goals when he gave his followers the Great Commission (Acts 1:8). In this Bible passage, Jesus commands his disciples to make disciples of all nations and to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. Further guidelines for investing in the growth of people and meeting their needs

are found in the record of how the early church functioned on a day-to-day basis. Early Christians pursued emotional and physical health through community care and the preparation of new disciples (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25; 1 Timothy 1:2, 2:1).

### Equipping and Multiplying

The need to prepare new leaders for Christian organizations makes it necessary to include the concept of continuity in my leadership philosophy. Mentoring, which can be used as part of Servant and Transformational Leadership, is one of the best strategies for training and guiding people towards achieving set goals. Lake highlights this when he writes:

Mentorship is the best way to ensure that any potential leader has the character and competency required to lead in their new role. Imagine the challenge of training leaders for a new role using a lecture approach alone. In this environment, it would be impossible to tell who was ready and equipped to step into a new position. Sure, someone might indicate that they desire to serve, but mentoring relationships are the only means of ensuring that they are ready to do so (Lake 2020, 105).

Intimacy between the mentor and mentee provides the means to develop the necessary character and competence within the mentee. I have attended some theoretical leadership training that only involved classes and information sharing. Leadership training should also involve practical experience. Preparing new leaders through strategic mentorship can make all the difference. In the Gospel of Luke Chapters 9 and 10, Jesus sends groups of twelve and then seventy disciples on two missions to practice what he had taught them in via lectures. Jesus allowed them to practice what they had learned repeatedly throughout their years of preparation (Matthew 14:16; 17:16; John 4:2).

The training process works best when it is relational. Mentoring is the best way to ensure that any potential leader has the character and competence to succeed at their new role. Classroom teaching can be part of the process, but only through a close relationship can you get to know the leader in training deeply and help them overcome personal barriers and challenges. A purely theoretical approach does not allow you to assess individual growth.

Another thing I learned was the need to “develop for the Vision, not for the need” (Lake 2020, 81). My organization was struggling to develop new leaders, even in the face of urgent need. For many years, the same leaders took care of everything and did not bother to groom new leaders to succeed them. They just prayed and waited for God to send people. That did not work well. We tried to hire and train leaders from outside the organization to replace retirees. The shortage of leaders made it difficult to effectively carry out cross-cultural projects.

AMIDE was so caught up in day-to-day activities that it had little room to prepare for the future. The entire system would collapse if a long-term solution was not found. Therefore, AMIDE needed to develop a leadership training program to close gaps and prepare for future growth. It was a very challenging concept for the organization. It reminded me of Jesus’ teaching about new wineskins being necessary to hold new wine (Matthew 9:17).

To recap this subsection, I presented a step-by-step description of my leadership philosophy. I explained why I believe that a combination of Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership reflects my leadership style, despite my concern that these two models need to begin by equipping leaders to identify their calling and understand God’s will. These models satisfied my desire for a

pragmatic, people-oriented approach to leadership that is rooted in Christian values and suits my characteristics and context. This combined model aims to meet the needs of one's followers and prepare them to achieve lofty, long-term goals. This type of people-oriented leadership meets the needs of today's fluid and fast-paced generation. Finally, I integrated the need to create continuity by training new leaders, as any leadership philosophy must look to the future and ensure the sustainability of one's organizations.

### **Family Context, Upbringing, and Leadership**

Returning to the idea that Nouwen raises—the need for Christian leadership in the new century—I found reflecting on my educational and family background helpful for understanding what I could contribute to today's leaders. Considering my past and current context helped me realize how God brought me to the point where I was and shaped me to live out my calling.

Parker Palmer explains that our vocation does not come from our will but from our ability to hear and understand what our lives tell us. Our lives show who we are. He states, “That insight is hidden in the word vocation itself, which is rooted in the Latin word for voice. Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear” (Palmer 2000, 20).

I was born and raised in a middle-class Evangelical family in Brazil. At that time, Catholicism was the predominant religion in Brazil. My brothers and I studied at a large Franciscan school in Brasília. We had few friends who identified as Evangelicals. My parents taught us to pursue holiness by loving and serving God. As part of this, they discouraged us from taking part in certain

festivals that have libertarian customs. We were constantly asked to explain our Evangelical beliefs and values, since most of our colleagues did not share our convictions. This strengthened our faith and brought us closer to God.

My family attended the Presbyterian Church of Brazil in Brasília. This church is conservative. It prioritizes Bible study and cross-cultural missions, and it steers clear of liberal doctrine. Despite its missionary focus, people view it as a prestigious church that does not do much social work.

During my upbringing, my parents were the behind-the-scenes type of leaders. They liked working with small groups and in jobs that kept them out of the spotlight. Over time, my father became a businessman and had little time to devote to church work. He was a visionary who created various businesses and was quite successful. We moved to a large house in an upscale city neighborhood. This provided us with financial stability. However, my father continually urged us to dedicate ourselves to the church.

In contrast, my mother gave up her career as a lawyer and devoted herself to caring for her children at home and serving God. Gradually, she took on leadership roles beyond the norms of conservative Presbyterianism, since the Presbyterian Church of Brazil opposed certain kinds of female leadership.

My parents modelled Servant Leadership. They did not compete for church positions but did their jobs away from the spotlight. My father taught me to have integrity, look beyond appearances, and seek out new opportunities. My mother taught me to love people without expecting anything in return, and she made many disciples in churches and other organizations. Both of my parents taught me to persevere in the face of challenges, to pray continually, and never to

give up on people or tasks. They failed to teach me the importance of preparing new leaders to ensure organizational continuity, probably because they did not know it themselves.

### A Personal Experience

A particular personal experience greatly influenced my understanding of the church, especially the need to plant churches. This event occurred during a time of financial stability for my family. My parents acquired a charming home in a suburb of Brasília. While our address was in a desirable neighbourhood, it was near a favela, or slum. Initially, my parents were concerned about our safety due to the favela's proximity. However, after much debate, my parents decided to establish a church within our home to engage with the favela residents.

Although our pastor provided some assistance, the primary responsibility for operating this church was ours. The most challenging aspect of this endeavour was visiting the inhabitants of makeshift wooden dwellings and sharing the gospel with them. Our plan included providing assistance in the form of food, medicine, and transportation during critical situations. As time passed, we and the favela residents developed a bond. I vividly remember a woman who led an Afro-Brazilian spiritual group. Upon embracing Christianity, she was ostracised by her community in the slum. However, my parents offered her shelter and support, despite her past involvement in prostitution. Eventually, she was able to establish a new path for herself and moved to join her relatives in Rio de Janeiro. According to the latest update we received from her, she continues to uphold her Christian faith.

When the government provided housing for the favela residents, our congregation transitioned to a new district within the city. This relocation marked the establishment of the Candangolândia Presbyterian Church in Brasília. My parents encountered numerous challenges when establishing the church. They had four children ranging from six to thirteen years old. They could have identified and avoided risks, ignored the suffering in their surroundings, sought solace within the confines of their home, and limited their practice of Christianity to their local congregation. However, despite their circumstances, they remained undeterred. Their actions showed me what it looks like to embody the gospel. As a result, I developed a vision for bringing the church to the streets, spreading the gospel message while simultaneously addressing the needs of impoverished and underserved people.

During my time in the Presbyterian Church, I learned about the Grammatical-Historical interpretation of scripture. However, it was the Practical Theology I encountered in the field, particularly in the favela, that prompted me to reflect on how Jesus would have responded in such situations. I firmly believe that Jesus would have continued doing the things he does in scripture if he had remained on Earth. I cannot envision him solely preaching from comfortable pulpits in extravagant temples. I believe he would have walked the streets, proclaiming the gospel of God's kingdom and assisting those in need. This conviction is rooted in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Through this parable, Jesus instructed his disciples to demonstrate love and care for their neighbours (Luke 10: 25-37). Furthermore, when Jesus multiplied loaves and fish (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39), he not only performed a miracle, he used it to teach his

disciples about the importance of caring for those who are hungry. Despite his weariness, Jesus continued teaching, healing, and liberating the crowds in Matthew 14. He could have easily heeded the disciples' suggestion to send the people away and let them fend for themselves. This raises an important question about leaders' priorities. Jesus reminded his disciples that spreading the good news also entails showing compassion and providing for the hungry. To effectively carry out the mission of the church, it is not sufficient to merely develop sound doctrine, preach the gospel, and make disciples. I think that we dedicate too much time to serving ourselves and neglect the needs of our community. I have contemplated how the disciples fulfilled the instructions given by Jesus to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15) and "make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19). They emulated Jesus by compassionately tending to others while simultaneously sharing the gospel.

#### The Lack of Investment in Leadership Development

When I first joined AMIDE, I was not fully aware of the lack of leaders and the detrimental effect that was having on the organization. Creating continuity is particularly difficult for Christian organizations. Instead of investing time and effort into developing leaders, many organizations, including AMIDE, have relied solely on prayer to address this problem. While I believe that God, in his sovereignty, can answer these prayers and bring forth individuals who are already equipped to lead, I do not believe that this is the approach that God wants us to take when faced with difficulties. Although prayer should always be the first step, it must generally be accompanied by action.

To illustrate this point, I draw a parallel between God's care for His people in the wilderness and the preparation of leaders today. The Israelites became hungry as they journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land. In response, God provided them with manna and quail on two occasions. However, once they enter the Promised Land and begin to eat the produce of the land, the manna ceases (Joshua 5:12). God no longer provides them with their daily sustenance but instead encourages them to cultivate the land and work to provide their needs. Similarly, Jesus multiplied loaves of bread and fish to feed the crowds on two separate occasions, but he did not continue to provide them with daily sustenance. He expected them to take responsibility for their own needs. The apostle Paul also emphasized the importance of work. In one letter, he states that those who refuse to work should not expect to eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Paul's teaching does not contradict Jesus' instruction to pray for daily bread (Matthew 6:11), but rather highlights that God often answers prayers through our efforts. Therefore, individuals should both pray and actively work to provide for their own needs.

Applying this principle to the preparation of leaders in Christian organizations, it is essential to recognize that while God can sometimes miraculously bring forth leaders, it is also necessary for individuals and organizations to invest in leadership development. Prayer should be accompanied by intentional efforts to identify, train, and mentor potential leaders. Christian organizations should combine prayer with action to ensure a sustainable and effective leadership structure that aligns with God's instructions.

I have come across numerous churches that prioritize the development of their members' character through discipleship, yet only a few have established a

clear succession plan for their leaders. Christian organizations should establish processes to continually prepare new leaders. This is essential for the growth and long-term success of the organization.

When I first became a director at AMIDE, I observed the lack of new leaders within the organization. Most board members had served since the organization was established over twenty years prior. During the most recent board elections, some members expressed their intention not to seek another term. However, as the election date drew near, no eligible candidates stepped forward to fill the vacant positions. Consequently, those board members who had initially planned to resign decided to extend their tenure for a few more years. Recognizing this as a problem, we initiated a training program for potential leaders to ensure a smooth transition in the future. One challenge we faced is that AMIDE operates as a Christian non-profit, and its leaders do not receive salaries. They rely on financial support from churches and individuals.

A crucial first step in cultivating future leaders at AMIDE was to identify individuals who felt called to become leaders. Unfortunately, the organization lacked a structured vocational guidance system, which meant that potential leaders were uncertain about whether they were suitable for specific positions.

As we confronted numerous challenges within the organization, I decided to pursue a master's degree in Missiology. This broadened my perspective on spreading the gospel, particularly among UPGs, and also provided me with insights into the nuances of and obstacles faced in cross-cultural missions. Armed with this newfound knowledge, I took on the Project Manager role at AMIDE,

began developing future leaders, and prepared for a cross-cultural missionary role in Thailand.

My experience as a cross-cultural missionary helped me recognize a common trend. AMIDE's missionaries, like its organizational leaders, were not adequately preparing their successors. This realization prompted me to delve deeper into the issue. I was motivated to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale with a focus on leadership. Through this program, I delved into various leadership styles and reflected on the challenges faced by the organization. It became evident that the lack of leaders had contributed to many issues within the organization, including follower dissatisfaction, strained relationships, and burnout due to excessive workloads.

The burden of work on managers led to strained relationships and made it difficult to meet growth targets. Fatigue exacerbated these tensions. In situations like this, leaders are often blamed for the imbalance. In *Getting to Maybe*, Steinke posits that organizations struggle to grow and function effectively when they fail to quickly establish a new equilibrium after a crisis. This is due to anxiety. He notes that in times of crisis, "anxiety blinds us," and as a result, "we have difficulty perceiving what we are emotionally entangled in" (Steinke 2006, 44). Steinke also underscores that a delay in stabilization can heighten anxiety levels and potentially destabilize the entire system. He suggests that high anxiety levels indicate low resilience, and for the system to regain strength and find a new balance requires time, objectivity, clarity, and sometimes creativity.

Organizations inherently adapt in pursuit of a new equilibrium. The crisis at AMIDE had a widespread impact, resulting in the departure of partners and

missionaries, the breakdown of relationships, and paralysis in various departments. Despite these challenges, the board continued to perform their essential functions, leveraging the strength of longstanding relationships cultivated over two decades. Additionally, swift recruitment and first-time training initiatives provided a temporary reprieve for the organization. However, it was imperative to identify sustainable, long-term solutions.

The challenges I faced as a leader at AMIDE mirrored my experiences in the small church and my business. Drawing on Steinke's ideas, I understood the need to act promptly and make the necessary adjustments during this crisis period. Embracing a Transformational and Servant Leadership approach, I invested in my team, listened attentively to their concerns, and offered viable solutions to their concerns about their own wellbeing and the organization's future. Fullam teaches that new leaders should not be chosen for their charismatic allure, but for their deliberate engagement, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving. "What should strike you is not the charismatic brilliance of the new leaders but their careful entry, listening, and engaging in fact-finding and joint problem-solving. In other words, attend to the new relationships that have to be developed" (Fullam 2020, 48). Nurturing new relationships is crucial for sustainable progress. Knowing this, I recognized that fast solutions would be insufficient. We also needed a constant infusion of fresh leadership to invigorate the organization, drive change, and spread out tasks.

In this section, I illustrated the connection between my personal background and my approach to leadership. I highlighted the significance of my family of origin and the work we did in the favela. This shaped my leadership

philosophy by teaching me to value Practical Theology and Servant Leadership alongside my commitment to the church, the Bible, and orthodox theology. I also explained how my academic journey equipped me to understand and live out my vocational purpose. These, combined with my leadership experiences, have underscored the importance of cultivating an organizational culture in which leaders are constantly developed in order to ensure the sustainable growth and success of Christian institutions.

### **Biblical Roots of my Philosophy**

My upbringing and education provided me with valuable insights into AMIDE's leadership crisis. Through discussions with board members and missionaries, it became evident that there were individuals within our organization who possessed leadership potential. However, many of them were uncertain if this was their God-given calling and felt unprepared to take on such a responsibility. This raised two interconnected challenges: firstly, discerning what God is calling someone to do, and secondly, developing leadership skills. I wanted to find practical solutions to these challenges that were rooted in scripture.

I believe that Christian leaders, whom God calls to serve, must be tested and refined through practice. In this manner, they can demonstrate a developing Christlike character and a desire to cultivate the necessary skills that align with their unique traits and spiritual gifts. Hence, it is evident that every individual possesses the capacity to acquire skills and practice leadership in a manner that aligns with their unique characteristics and principles. As I contemplated the challenges in my ministry, I was reminded of the instance when Jesus devoted an

entire night to prayer before choosing his disciples and imparting them his teachings (Luke 6:17). I learned the importance of this practice during my time with AMIDE. There, all important decisions are made after a week of prayer. Consequently, I concluded that it was imperative for me to engage in prayer and introspection regarding the vocational calling of those individuals interested in assuming leadership roles within AMIDE. Before delving into matters concerning vocational calling and leadership development, I reflected on what the Bible had to say about these ideas. This taught me the difference between universal and specific vocation.

Furthermore, a powerful synergy exists between vocational calling and leadership, particularly within Christian ministry. Jesus exemplified this by selecting disciples with diverse personalities and skills, equipping them to lead the early church across various cultures. The apostles successfully mirrored this model, contributing to the church's rapid growth. While all disciples are called to serve, not all are called to lead. Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus regarding the selection of church leaders (1 Timothy 3:2–13; Titus 1:5–9) highlight this distinction. Therefore, those called to specific ministries, such as pastoring or cross-cultural missions, must recognize that their roles inherently involve exercising leadership within the church.

### Universal and Specific Vocation According to the Scriptures

In this section, my goal is to demonstrate that scripture describes two fundamental types of callings. I explain the importance of identifying one's specific vocation as a crucial step in fulfilling God's will and preparing to assume

a leadership role. In my book *Vocação Missionária*, I argued that the terms “calling” and “vocation” used in Bible translations derive from synonymous words in the original languages. I wrote that the “term vocation does not exist in Hebrew, but the words (translated as): go, send, and call are used several times in contexts in which God commissions someone for a specific task” (Costa 2011, 17. My translation). In the New Testament, the Greek terms καλέω and κλήσις convey the concept of calling and vocation (Romans 11:29; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 1 Corinthians 7:20; Ephesians 1:18; Luke 1:6; 1 Peter 5:8).

God extends the universal vocation to all individuals who have become part of Jesus’ spiritual family. In *Chamada e Vida Vocacional*, Arabis posits that this call is universal in nature, applying to all believers without distinction (2005). He further expounds on this notion by stating that “God is the subject of the act of calling; the primary purpose of the calling is salvation that results in a new identity found in the believer’s union with Jesus; there are ethical expectations that result from the calling” (Arabis 2005, 13. My translation). Those who have experienced salvation in Jesus are enjoined to pursue a life of holiness—that is, to serve as agents of moral influence and spiritual illumination, embodying the values of God’s kingdom, promoting peace, and living for God’s glorification. These exemplify some facets of the universal vocation given to all Christians.

In his inaugural sermon following Pentecost, Peter conveys to his audience that salvation is accessible to all individuals whom God has divinely called. He says:

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:37-39).

In his commentary on this text, Kistemaker argues that “God is sovereign in calling his own people to himself. Salvation originates with him and he grants it to all those whom he, in his sovereign grace, effectively will call” (Kistemaker 1990, 118). The universal calling is a summons to belong to God, fulfill his purpose for one’s life, and live according to his values.

Apart from the overarching call to honour God through their existence and to live “*Coram Deo*” (Latin for in the presence of God), believers are also given a particular assignment that will help edify and expand the Church of Jesus. This specific vocation is a divine summon to God’s children to utilize their endowed talents and capabilities in their respective spheres of influence.

The universal calling can be seen in the lives of Barnabas and Saul, who served as exemplary disciples, glorifying God through their actions and witness. However, in Acts 13, God calls them for a specific task. Kistemaker explains that the Holy Spirit selected Barnabas and Saul as missionaries and apostles to the Gentiles. They received a distinct calling, separate from the universal one, and were commissioned for a job chosen by God. Kistemaker states, “Now the Holy Spirit called the believers to appoint these two men to a specific task: to proclaim the Good News to the world” (Kistemaker 1990, 531). Although Paul’s letter is written to the church at Ephesus, I believe that this instruction applies to the entire church of Christ. Like Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and the church at Ephesus, all Christians receive a specific calling to contribute to the development and growth of the church. God did not choose just a few special people to serve in his

kingdom. All of Jesus' disciples must seek to understand God's specific will and do their part to further the mission. Prior to his preaching in Acts 2, Peter underwent a process of being called, disciplined, and trained to become a leader. I am now going to consider the connection between vocation and leadership preparation in Peter's ministry.

### Peter's Calling and his Training to Lead

Peter spent about three years with Jesus. He heard what Jesus taught the crowds and received additional lessons intended only for the disciples. Peter learned from his master to set priorities and direct his ministry according to the will of the Father. He saw Jesus invest time in prayer, solitude, and loving people. He saw how Jesus cared for the poor and the sick. Additionally, he had the opportunity to put what he had learned into practice.

Jesus initially called him to become a fisher of men (Mathew 4:18; Luke 5:8). This was his first specific calling: to be an evangelist. However, when Jesus faced arrest (Mathew 26:50), Peter publicly denied him three times (Matthew 26:75; Luke 22:60). This discouraged Peter profoundly (Luke 22:62). Then, Jesus passed away (Luke 23:46), leaving Peter bereft of the chance to seek forgiveness from his master. He abandoned his ministry and returned to his former occupation (John 21:3). The other disciples followed suit. Nevertheless, Jesus did not abandon Peter. Following the resurrection, Jesus sought, spoke with, and shared meals with him, ultimately restoring Peter's purpose in life (John 21).

Peter's journey in ministry was marked by significant events. After receiving a second specific calling (John 21:15), he returned to ministry and

assumed a leadership role within the church during its early years (Acts 1:15). Throughout his time, Peter witnessed the persecution of the church, was arrested (Acts 4:3), and miraculously found freedom (Acts 12:8). He also endured the dispersion of the church (Acts 8:1), a period of great upheaval and uncertainty. Peter's leadership was characterized by his willingness to break patterns and open the ministry to Gentiles (Acts 10). He served as both a pastor and a missionary (Acts 8:25), demonstrating his dedication to spreading the teachings of Jesus. However, Peter also faced moments of failure, particularly in interaction with his Gentile brothers, which led to a reprimand from Paul (Galatians 2:11).

Despite these challenges, Peter serves as an example of church leadership for all generations. It is intriguing how Jesus prepared him for the unstable times, profound changes, and ministry activity he would experience. The way that Jesus prepared him includes aspects of Servant and Transformational Leadership. Jesus played shaped Peter's character and helped him overcome his weaknesses. He instilled in Peter a sense of humility, compassion, and selflessness, essential qualities of a servant leader. Additionally, Jesus taught Peter to contribute to the church's growth and fulfill his calling. As Transformational Leadership dictates, Jesus empowered Peter to embrace change, adapt to new circumstances, and effectively lead the church amidst turbulent times.

In conclusion, Peter's journey as a church leader exemplifies the importance of Servant and Transformational Leadership. Jesus' guidance prepared Peter to navigate the challenges of his ministry, enabling him to have a lasting impact on the early church and serve as an inspiration for future generations of church leaders.

## Jesus as a Servant and Transformational Leader

Jesus not only carried out his ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of God but also took on the responsibility of discipling and training twelve individuals to continue his mission. Jesus began this process by prayerfully selecting ordinary men and then taught them the values, principles, and priorities essential for their leadership roles. He served as a spiritual and pious role model, never giving up on his disciples even when they failed. Instead, he provided them with opportunities to practice and learn from their mistakes, offering guidance and correction along the way.

Jesus taught Peter by teaching him theory, as seen in the teachings found in Matthew 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and 24-25, as well as practical learning, as evidenced in Luke 9:2 and 10:1. The Gospels contain numerous accounts that show how Peter was being prepared to assume a leadership role. For instance, Peter was one of the three disciples who were closest to Jesus, as shown in Mark 5:33 and Luke 9:28-36. Jesus also focused on specific areas of development with Peter, such as teaching him about ethics within the kingdom of God (Matthew 17:24-27), humility (John 13:6-9), leadership (Matthew 16:18), rewards (Matthew 8:14-15), and trust (Matthew 14:28-31).

Jesus did not hesitate to rebuke Peter when he suggested that Jesus should ignore God's will and avoid being martyred (Matthew 16:23). He prayed for Peter so that he would not lose his faith after denying Jesus (Luke 22:32). Peter was also the only disciple who received a second specific ministry calling, when Jesus told him to shepherd his flock (John 21:15-17). As mentioned above, Jesus also prepared Peter to lead during times of disruption and uncertainty.

Matthew 14:22-33 holds special meaning for me. It portrays Peter's journey towards leadership. This incident profoundly impacted Peter's ministry, shaping him in ways he could not have anticipated. In this account, Peter and the other disciples embark on a boat to cross the sea, following Jesus' instructions. However, they encounter a formidable headwind that makes their progress arduous. In a remarkable turn of events, Jesus chooses to join them by walking on the water. This unexpected sight fills Peter with fear and prevents him from recognizing Jesus. Then, Jesus reveals his identity, prompting Peter to make an extraordinary request: "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). Peter employs the Greek term *πρόσταγμα*. This word denotes a "command." He wants direct instructions from his master (Bauer and William 2021, 784). Jesus affirms that he wants Peter to join him. Peter ventures beyond the confines of his secure environment—namely, the boat—and has an extraordinary experience under the guidance of his leader (Matthew 14:28-29). However, upon perceiving the perils surrounding him, he falters in his resolve and begins to sink (v. 30). Consequently, he beseeches Jesus for assistance. Jesus immediately extends his hand, grasps him, and guides him back to the safety and stability of the boat (v. 31-32). The utilization of the Greek term *εuthéως* for "immediately" exemplifies the leader's promptness in offering aid (Bauer and William 2021, 448). Gundry concurs, noting that "Jesus saved Peter just in the nick of time" (Gundry 2010, 189). Furthermore, he elucidates that the present tense of "says" shows how Jesus handles Peter. Jesus highlights his lack of faith and instructs him to trust in him and not fear future challenges.

## Jesus' Vocational Mentorship of Peter

Before analyzing Peter's callings, I want to stress that all callings are equally important and given by God. I have argued that all of God's children are called to live for God's glory. My explanation of Peter's callings is not meant to suggest that they made him more special or devoted to God. They were the means by which God guided Peter and fulfilled his plan. Our vocation is given to us by God as part of his relationship with us in order to prosper us and enact his will.

The Gospels depict three distinct phases in Peter's vocational journey. Initially, he is engaged in the fishing business as a microentrepreneur, as mentioned in Matthew 4:18 and Luke 5:3. In John 1:39, Jesus extends his first invitation to Peter. This is the universal call given to all Christians, to follow Jesus and attain salvation. After receiving this universal call, Peter persists in his occupation as a fisherman while maintaining his devotion to God. Subsequently, Luke recounts a second encounter between Peter and Jesus. In Luke 5:10-11, Jesus redirects Peter's from fishing for fish to fishing for souls. Hendriksen elucidates that "the periphrastic (continuative) future indicative is used here: you will (constantly) be catching alive" (Hendriksen 1978, 339). He is called, from that moment on, to do something different. This was a specific calling from Jesus to Peter. During a span of approximately three years, characterized by discipleship, training, and ministry practice, Peter undergoes a significant transformation.

After Jesus' death, Peter is deeply saddened by the loss of his master and the fact that he publicly denied him. Then, Jesus encounters Peter, restoring and calling him to a new specific vocation. This event marks the beginning of the

third phase of Peter's journey. The dialogue presented in John 21:15-17 provides valuable insights about the topic of vocation and how God reorients someone's life. Throughout this conversation, Peter develops both as a disciple and human being. Jesus imparts to him an understanding of scripture and its practical application. Initially, Jesus instructs Peter to lead people toward God. Through this, Peter learns the importance of shepherding and caring for individuals on behalf of God. Nouwen explains that Jesus did not intend for pastors to be authoritative figures who lead with dominance. Instead, he illustrates how Peter, humbled by his past mistakes, is called to compassionately care for broken individuals reciprocally, mirroring the example set by Jesus during those three years. Nouwen says that Jesus wanted Peter to "feed his sheep and care for them, not as 'professionals' who know their client's problems and take care of them, but as vulnerable brothers and sisters who know and are known, who care and are cared for, who forgive and are being forgiven, who love and are being loved" (Nouwen 1989, 21).

Through this conversation, Jesus revitalizes Peter's life and ministry, redirecting his vocational path. Hendriksen's words vividly depict the message Jesus conveys to Peter.

Simon, you were weak like a lamb, wandering like a sheep, yet, throughout it all, you, like a dear (little) sheep, were the object of my tender and loving solicitude. Now, having profited by your experiences (because of your sincere sorrow), consider the members of my church to be your lambs, and feed them, your sheep, and shepherd them; yes, your dear sheep, and in feeding them love them! Do not neglect the work among the flock, Simon. That is your real assignment! Go back to it! (Hendriksen 1953, 861).

Peter rises, resumes his duties, and guides the Jerusalem Church during its formative years. He plays a pivotal role in selecting a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:15), delivers the first public sermon post-Pentecost (Acts 2:14), and spearheads the resolution of a conflict that arises when the church neglected widows (Acts 4). Subsequently, God uses him to revolutionize the church's perspective and expand the ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 10). Kistemaker notes that

Peter informs the members of his audience that God instructed him to visit the household of Cornelius. That is, Peter did not decide to go to the Gentiles of his own accord. On the contrary, first in a vision and then by speaking to him through the Holy Spirit, God told Peter to accept the invitation. Peter correctly places the emphasis on God and not on himself (Kistemaker 1990, 488).

Initially, Peter resists; however, he eventually complies with the command and does so diligently. Peter embraced the challenge, focused on Jesus rather than the difficulties he faced, and effectively applied the knowledge he acquired while walking on the sea. Jesus adequately equipped him to navigate uncertain periods and significant transformations within his ministry.

### Some Biblical Principles of Servant Leadership

We can observe elements of Servant Leadership in the Old Testament. For instance, Moses trains leaders and delegates authority (Exodus 18:20-24), supports them when they err (Exodus 32:11), and shows compassion for the vulnerable (Exodus 32:30-32; 34:8-10). Similarly, David leads with a shepherd's heart, caring for and defending his followers (1 Samuel 17:34-37), as well as looking out for the weak (1 Samuel 30:18-20; 2 Samuel 9:1). Additionally, David nurtures his team and transforms unprepared and marginalized individuals into leaders (1 Samuel 22:2). However, my analysis primarily focuses on Jesus, who

epitomized the servant leader archetype. It is crucial to heed Rodin's caution about Jesus' leadership style. He notes that numerous leadership qualities can be gleaned from Jesus' life, but that

Jesus came not to provide us a role model but to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God; to preach good news to the poor, release to the captives, to restore sight to the blind and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (see Luke 4:18-19). He came to be a sacrifice for the sins of all humanity, to rise triumphantly and to send his people out into the world to proclaim the message of hope and salvation. He completed in his life, death and resurrection everything we could not do, and now we are called to participate in that completed work as faithful and obedient followers. My point is that Jesus came to be the Lord of our life, not our example of good leadership (Rodin 2010, 85).

According to Bell, Jesus models Servant Leadership and teaches his followers to do the same. Bell emphasizes that in the Kingdom of God, success is achieved through serving others (Mark 9:35). Furthermore, Jesus not only calls his disciples to serve but also to sacrifice their lives for the cause. He says, "whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:34-35). Jesus exemplifies the role of a good shepherd, caring for and protecting his followers from harm (John 10:11-12). Additionally, Bell explains that Jesus chose to lead through love and sacrifice, rather than using force or imposing his authority. He prefers to establish "a relationship of fellow servant and friend (John 15:15) with those he mentors for service" (Bell 2014, 160). All the rabbis during that era had followers, like Jesus. Despite Jesus frequently condemning their way of leading, he consents to being acknowledged as one of them and is accepted by the authorities. Furthermore, he affirms the disciples' assertion that he was their Lord and Master (John 13:13).

Nevertheless, he rebukes leaders who pursue top positions, seek earthly recognition, and wear special attire to exhibit their authority. Thus, Jesus has no issue with being acknowledged as a leader, but he presents us with a fresh leadership paradigm.

Jesus exemplifies the qualities of a servant leader by addressing people's needs. He provides support in times of weakness, and fosters personal growth. He not only teaches his disciples about the importance of serving others but also demonstrates humility through acts such as washing their feet (John 13:4-12) and ministering to marginalized individuals like the Samaritan woman (John 4:4) and Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2). Furthermore, Jesus emphasizes compassion through teachings like the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and through his actions by healing the sick and feeding the hungry (Matthew 9:18-22; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 14:1-4). While Jesus successfully fulfills his mission, he prioritizes relationships over simply completing tasks, as seen in his response to Martha: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

#### Adding Transformational Leadership Traits

Jesus nurtures his disciples and elevates them to leadership positions within the church (Matthew 16:18). Furthermore, he entrusts them with carrying on his mission of spreading the gospel of the kingdom to all corners of the world. I pondered whether they were adequately prepared for such a monumental challenge. To succeed, they needed to put into practice what Jesus had taught and

modelled to them. Jesus tells them that “It is enough for a disciple to be like his teacher and a servant like his master” (Matthew 10:25). Just like Jesus, the disciples’ mission requires them to engage in discipleship and teaching (Matthew 28:19-20), focusing on both nurturing individuals and spreading the gospel. I showed how the leadership style seen in the Gospels and early church was the basis for the Servant Leadership model, but Transformational Leadership also incorporates elements of Jesus’ teachings by emphasizing the need to achieve goals. The blending of Servant and Transformational Leadership is a biblical leadership style that is practical and relevant to today’s generation. The early church leaders embrace a collaborative decision-making process, prioritize harmony and the collective good over individual performance (Acts 6:2). They foster unity (Acts 6:5), care for the vulnerable, heal the sick (Acts 3:6), and support the needy while staying true to the Great Commission (Acts 4:35).

Moreover, Paul’s ministry is characterized by a focus on nurturing his followers and equipping them to fulfill their purposes. He maintains a delicate balance between prioritizing the wellbeing of his team members and ensuring that tasks are accomplished efficiently. Despite his satisfaction in fulfilling his calling, as evidenced by his statement, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7-8), Paul dedicates a significant portion of his ministry to meeting the needs of those under his guidance. Although Paul is one of the most prominent leaders in the early church, he does not rely on charisma. In fact, some individuals comment on his unimpressive physical presence and unremarkable speaking abilities (2 Corinthians 10:10). Additionally, Paul’s leadership style is not authoritarian; he does not leverage his position to

impose expectations on his followers, as demonstrated by his gentle intervention in the case of Philemon and Onesimus (Philemon 1:12-14). Despite being called to be an apostle, Paul humbly views himself as a servant (Romans 1:1; Titus 1:1; 1 Corinthians 3:5). He advocates for the growth and development of his disciples, such as Luke, Timothy and Titus. He assumes a paternal role in their spiritual journey (1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 1:10) and addresses their individual needs and concerns (1 Timothy 5:23). In light of these observations, Paul's leadership style can be characterized as Servant and Transformational. It is marked by humility, compassion, and a commitment to his followers' growth so that they can accomplish tasks and fulfill their mission.

The combination of Servant and Transformational leadership mirrors the model observed in the early church and Paul's ministry. According to Northouse, "servant leaders put followers first" (Northouse 2022, 337), while Yukl highlights that transformational leaders focus on developing their followers to achieve organizational goals. Yukl notes that "the newer theories of transformational leadership are more concerned with attainment of pragmatic task objectives than with the moral elevation of followers or social reform" (Yukl 2019, 235).

Additionally, Fox argues that both styles aim to guide their teams toward success by leveraging Servant Leadership's motivating capabilities and Transformational Leadership's transformative abilities (Fox 2019, 2). Burns proposes that this integration of the two styles is the core of Christian leadership (Burns 2014, 116). This model is incomplete, since Christian leaders must put God first, not their followers. However, as I explained earlier, I embrace these frameworks because I intend to prepare Christian leaders for organizational development. servant and

transformational leaders focus on caring for their teams, based on biblical principles, to achieve results.

In addition, this approach has the potential to impact people today, since our culture is characterized by a lack of interpersonal connection, individual guidance, and ministry success. In the New Testament, the early church experiences rapid growth within a short span of time. It succeeds due to the commitment of individuals to the church's objectives and the presence of capable leaders ready to carry out their responsibilities. Paul emphasizes the importance of training dedicated leaders across all congregations. Whenever he establishes a new church, his missionary efforts cease only when local leaders are capable of taking charge. By extrapolating these principles to contemporary churches and Christian institutions, it becomes imperative to continuously establish procedures for nurturing leaders who are dedicated to the organization's mission and objectives. By emulating the mentorship Jesus provided to Peter, we can cultivate adaptable leaders who are equipped to assume leadership roles in the future.

### **Theology, Calling and Leadership**

I will now explain how my practical experience illustrates the importance of theology in establishing a leadership style that is both faithful to scripture and relevant to the local community while also being adaptable to diverse cultures and contexts. Employing the Grammatical-Historical Hermeneutical method to interpret the scriptures can assist Christian organizations in determining what doctrines are not biblical and setting boundaries around these. This is crucial due to numerous instances of misconduct and unethical behaviour within the church.

Certain values cherished during the Protestant Reformation, such as salvation by grace and the priesthood of all believers, have been disparaged in ecclesiastical models that prioritize numerical and financial growth. In order to legitimize erroneous doctrines, some leaders ignore the Grammatical-Historical method of interpreting scripture and advocate for a reinterpretation of biblical texts.

Nevertheless, in addition to understanding the historical meaning of scripture, leaders aiming to connect this generation to Jesus must effectively apply their doctrine and communicate the gospel message both to churchgoing Christians and those untouched by the gospel. Practical Theology and the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic are two strategies that can assist leaders in this task. Next, I will expand on my interest in Practical Theology and the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic, after which I will provide an example of how I interpret scripture.

### My Approach to Practical Theology

Branson and Martínez argue that Practical Theology should focus on reflecting on daily life experiences. The primary objective is “to help church leaders see differently, to gain the skills and competencies needed for multicultural contexts, and to create environments that make God’s reconciling initiatives visible and powerful” (Branson and Martínez 2011, 57).

Branson and Martínez explain that Practical Theology encompasses the everyday actions and interactions of a community. It serves as a transition from current praxis to a new experimental praxis by leveraging cultural resources. This form of theology is characterized by active participation, involving the people of

God in activities such as prayer, reflection, and everyday spiritual experiences rather than being solely led by experts. Furthermore, the authors advocate for each church to engage in local theology, where the challenges of their neighbourhood inform the church's theological framework. Drawing on Pat Keifert's insights regarding the importance of reflecting on ordinary experiences, they note that some aspects of our habits are grace-filled while others show us the need for continual conversion. Rather than focusing on devising new methods or strategies to update doctrines and rectify shortcomings, Branson and Martínez stress the application of biblical truth. They believe it is important "to look carefully at various factors, converse with a genuine care about the voices around us, gain new skills at thinking and attend to the Spirit's initiatives" (Branson and Martínez 2011, 42).

Bevans asserts that all theology should be viewed through a contextual lens. While he acknowledges the importance of traditional interpretations of scripture, he emphasizes the need to incorporate diverse perspectives in developing local theologies that address contemporary challenges. Bevans advocates for contextualization as a way to reconcile the authority of scripture with today's pressing issues. He prompts us to consider how we can effectively manifest God's presence in the midst of issues such as feminism, gender, ethnicity, and ecology (Bevans 2014, 35).

On the other hand, recognizing the value of Practical Theology, I believe it is crucial to critically assess its relevance and potential drawbacks. While I appreciate its aim of offering theological insights into present-day dilemmas, I am concerned about the absence of a clear biblical standard to guide individuals,

which could hinder their growth. Therefore, I advocate for an approach that begins with the Grammatical-Historical interpretation of scripture, followed by the integration of Practical Theology to guide the application of biblical principles, making them relevant to the current generation. This approach could assist leaders in overcoming biases and redirecting their focus towards reaching out to those outside the church who need to hear our message of inclusivity and grace, while remaining committed to orthodox beliefs.

#### The Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic

In *Corporal Punishment in the Bible*, Webb (2011) proposes a deepening of the Grammatical-Historical model of interpretation, which he called the Redemptive Movement Hermeneutic. He does not suggest that we need to update the truth of God or the concepts transmitted by the scriptures. On the contrary, he reinforces the value of the Grammatical-Historical method. However, he invites scholars to research the sociocultural context of the bible to better understand what the text is intended to communicate. The recent advancement of technology has facilitated broad access to various historical sources that allow readers to understand the Bible's grammatical and literary context so they can better understand the worldview of the time.

Webb utilizes the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic to examine texts concerning slavery in order to illustrate how scripture continually moves towards safeguarding and upholding the dignity of enslaved people. Although the redemptive process took time, the alterations made to prevailing social norms represented a significant advancement. These modifications laid the groundwork

for subsequent advancements. Many years later, the church embraced abolitionism and opposed segregation, both of which would have been difficult to arrive at solely through a Grammatical-Historical interpretation of the texts. Webb points out that:

Moving large, complex and embedded social structures along an ethical continuum is by no means a simple matter. Incremental movement within Scripture reveals a God who is willing to live with the tension between an absolute ethic in theory and the reality of guiding real people in practice toward such a goal (Webb 2011, 70).

He acknowledges the enormity of the task but emphasizes the necessity of utilizing the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic in order to ensure that such intricate issues are handled carefully today. Webb proposes that Practical Theology can offer new avenues for addressing other complex matters, such as corporal punishment of children and the role of women in leadership positions.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan provides an illustration of my praxis (Luke 10:30-37). I will attempt to elucidate the underlying message that Jesus sought to convey through the narrative and to explore its relevance to contemporary society. My objective is to show that the parable teaches compassionate leadership and the need to extend our assistance to those in distress, irrespective of any perceived differences or animosity.

#### Interpretation and Application of a Biblical Text According to my Practice

Jesus shares the parable found in Luke 10:25-37 with the intention of teaching a lawyer and those present about being a neighbour and showing love and care towards others. The deep-seated animosity between Jews and Samaritans hindered Jews from acknowledging the value of a Samaritan who acted in a

benevolent manner. In the parable, the Jewish religious figures are unable to fulfill their duties and extend care to the injured individual they encountered along the way. When Jesus asks who the man's neighbour is, he intends to challenge cultural barriers, animosity, and prejudice. The Samaritan's selfless act of pausing his own responsibilities and utilizing his resources to provide care for someone who was his adversary serves as a powerful example of how we should demonstrate love towards our neighbours, always with a selfless and altruistic mindset.

We must interpret the text based on the grammatical principles of the original language and its historical context. Specifically, in answering the question about who counts as the man's neighbour, the Grammatical-Historical approach suggests that Jesus cares more about physical distance than kinship, nationality, or affection. A neighbour is someone in close proximity to us, surrounding us, or obstructing our path who is experiencing hardship and requires assistance. Liefeld contends that Jesus intends to convey that "love should not be limited to his object" and that it "must be demonstrated in action" (Carson, Wessel, and Liefeld 1984, 943). Practical Theology aids us in applying Jesus' teachings to the challenges of our era. One of the most contentious cultural dilemmas in recent times is the influx of migrants from war-torn or religiously persecuted nations to America and Europe. The more conservative political factions, typically backed by a majority of Christians in these regions, have opposed welcoming such individuals. They raise concerns about inadequate planning, insufficient infrastructure in urban areas, and the potential formation of cultural and religious enclaves that could disrupt the existing social order.

Nevertheless, when we apply the moral of the parable of the Good Samaritan to our present circumstances, it compels us to love these individuals selflessly, even if it involves risks and sacrifices. When the church acts without compassion towards those in distress, it conveys an erroneous message about the essence of Christianity. External observers perceive the church as a congregation of self-absorbed individuals who believe they are superior to others and consistently censor those who hold differing viewpoints. Furthermore, we are witnessing a decline in the church's relevance among younger generations. This should cause us to reflect on how Christian leaders should guide the church in our era.

In *Seed Falling on Good Soil*, King and Nelson (2016) argue that Christian leaders must transition from a passive stance of merely observing pain and injustice to one of active engagement. They emphasize the importance of cultivating the ability to shift between action and contemplation. According to the authors, these two dimensions of ministry can mutually reinforce each other in the life of a leader. They assert that “spiritual disciplines will enable us to face our personal and vocational issues with the assurance that we are God’s beloved, who have been uniquely called to contribute to the mission of justice, mercy, and faith” (King and Nelson 2016, 64). The underlying principle is that the more we are filled with a sense of God’s presence, the more gratitude we feel for his work, and the more compelled we are to express our thanksgiving through acts of service. Conversely, engaging in situations of suffering without a deep internal motivation rooted in God can lead to emotional exhaustion. It is not enough to simply empathize with the pain of others; we must also step out of our own positions of safety and comfort, take tangible steps, and offer genuine support. By

employing Grammatical-Historical Hermeneutics to interpret the Bible and Practical Theology to apply it, we can guard ourselves against heresies. This approach enables us to effectively bring Jesus's teachings to the church and the wider community.

The application of the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic to the text amplifies our obligation toward those who are experiencing hardship. In his comprehensive analysis, Kenneth Bailey (1976) reconstructs the narrative within its contextual framework. Bailey asserts that the way Jesus portrays the story emphasizes the stark contrast between the injured man and the Samaritan who extends his assistance. The account narrated by Jesus would have undoubtedly challenged the beliefs and sentiments of his audience, given the deep-seated animosity and hostility between these two groups. Jesus' words must have struck a chord and wounded their pride. According to Bailey, the Samaritan's actions carry profound symbolism for both cultures. Initially, the Samaritan notices the wounded man, pauses, and approached him. Unlike the priest and the Levite, he demonstrates genuine concern, deviating from his usual routine to offer aid. Subsequently, he tends to the man's injuries by applying costly substances such as oil and wine. Moreover, he arranges for the man's accommodation and stays with him overnight. This goes beyond mere care; it signifies active participation in the other person's suffering. It entails investing one's valuable resources to assist a neighbour in need. Furthermore, the Samaritan voluntarily uses his finances to pay for the man's costs and guarantee continued assistance.

Bailey reminds us that there is no excuse for avoiding helping those in need. Jesus emphasizes the importance of wholehearted involvement by

concluding with the command, “Go and do likewise.” This indicates that anything less would not be pleasing to God. The fact that Jesus selects a Samaritan challenges his audience’s biases and notions of superiority. Ultimately, it is made clear that Jesus does not expect us to assist every single person in the world, but we are obligated to support those in our immediate vicinity who are marginalized, discriminated against, and victimized due to their race, gender, or religious beliefs.

The utilization of the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic does not absolve us from our responsibilities as current leaders. On the contrary, a deeper comprehension of Jesus’ teachings compels us to be more dedicated to ministry and more engaged with people. By contextualizing the text and applying it to the issue of immigration, I hope to motivate Christian leaders to do more than simply provide care or financial assistance. There is no room for excuses or hesitation. If we are truly committed to fulfilling our vocational calling and following Jesus’ commands, we must actively reach out to immigrants, tend to their needs, stand by them, ensure their safety, and allocate our resources toward their well-being. By undertaking these actions, our preaching will undoubtedly resonate with both immigrants within our community and those beyond the church.

I believe the same interpretive paradigm can and ought to be applied to numerous other biblical passages. While we should be committed to the Grammatical-Historical interpretation of scripture, Practical Theology and the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic can make our message relevant to the current generation and enable us to focus on those outside our community and direct our efforts toward them. Through this approach, we can uncover the

essence of Jesus' teachings and potentially become role models who emulate his example.

In the final section of this chapter, I explained the biblical underpinnings of my leadership philosophy. First, I provided biblical examples of both servant leaders and transformational leaders. Subsequently, I described the mentoring relationship that existed between Jesus and Peter, advocating for it as a model that can be implemented in the development of leaders in contemporary times. Lastly, I outlined my praxis, commencing with the Grammatical-Historical interpretation of scriptures then proceeding to apply the message through Practical Theology and the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic. To illustrate this, I presented an analysis of a text along with its practical application.

### **Conclusion**

After contemplating Henry Nouwen's insights on the characteristics of a Christian leader for the new century, I began writing this chapter. The church today faces challenges such as declining membership and diminishing relevance, particularly among younger generations. Nouwen's reflection on leadership addresses the themes of vocation and the seeming irrelevance of the Christian leader. This made me think that leaders who wish to build their own legacy do not align with the Christian view of leadership. In addition to not seeking their own interests, Nouwen calls Christian leaders to serve and care for people.

In searching for leadership styles that were aligned with biblical principles and that suited my personal characteristics, I found models focused on training people for organizational leadership that could also be used in non-Christian

organizations. These models do not prioritize knowing God's will and walking in accordance with one's vocational calling. Furthermore, they do not address the formation of Christian character in those being led. Although I believe that Servant and Transformational Leadership align with biblical principles, these models do not prioritize a relationship with God. Therefore, I insist that Christian leaders first understand their calling and God's will and then identify a leadership style that enables them to care for their team, develop new leaders, and achieve organizational goals.

In my exploration of various leadership styles, I delved into Servant and Transformational Leadership, drawing from my personal history, attributes, and leadership experiences. I also explained how the Bible handles the topic of vocation and explained the difference between universal and specific callings. I grounded my leadership philosophy in biblical principles, commencing with orthodox beliefs and applying those teachings to our context. I concluded by underscoring the imperative for contemporary Christian leaders to prioritize serving and nurturing their teams, addressing their needs, and aiding them in discerning their vocations. Additionally, leaders must equip their teams to collectively fulfill the mission we have been given by Jesus.

Christian leaders in this new century must cultivate a theology that is faithful to Scripture and pertinent to the community, especially marginalized individuals. We must exhibit compassion and guide the church in extending support to the marginalized, working towards restoring their dignity. Moreover, adaptability and flexibility are essential for navigating our evolving circumstances without compromising the core tenets of the gospel.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **RESEARCH REPORT**

In my Leadership Narrative, I explained how God awakened me to the importance of recognizing one's vocational calling. Then I divulged details about my training and the context in which I ministered. In my Philosophy of Leadership, I explained my leadership philosophy, drawing on biblical principles. In this chapter, I present the Research Project that I undertook to comprehend the vocational challenge faced by CEAM students. The title of this project was "Assisting CEAM/AMIDE Seminary Students in Identifying Their Vocational Calling for Cross-Cultural Missions in Brasília, Brazil and Beyond." In this chapter I share how the research affected participants as well as describing the process itself.

#### **Introduction**

CEAM's undergraduate program is centred around missiology. It encompasses courses in anthropology, linguistics, and contextualization. Right from the start of their studies, students are introduced to AMIDE's primary goal: to equip and send missionaries to UPGs. CEAM's objective is to identify, prepare, and empower students who are motivated to contribute to the evangelization of UPGs. Upon completion of the program, CEAM is supposed to facilitate their integration into AMIDE as long-term cross-cultural missionaries.

However, students who do not feel called to serve in a cross-cultural missionary project upon completing the program may still benefit from the skills they learn. These skills can be applied in local church ministry or even in secular employment, as all vocations are equally significant for the advancement of God's kingdom.

In order to conduct the study, I handpicked ten students from CEAM. Subsequently, I conducted an interview and administered two questionnaires to gather the necessary data from each of the participants. While I coded the data by myself, all other research stages were executed collaboratively as a team. At the end of the project, we convened a focus group to analyze and act on the findings. The initial subsection of my report explains the process I took to identify the problem we needed to address and the research methodology we should employ to do so in a way that benefitted both the students and CEAM.

### **Problem**

In my capacity as a faculty member at CEAM, I have observed a trend. Certain students opt out of pursuing a career in ministry post-graduation due to uncertainties surrounding God's plan for their lives. To validate my findings, I held individual discussions with the president of AMIDE, the director of CEAM, and the Academic Secretary. Following these meetings, it became evident that there was a consensus regarding the decline in students' confidence levels regarding their calling, a trend that had commenced several years prior to the onset of the pandemic. Furthermore, it was noted that the individuals enrolled at

the seminary at that time were encountering significant challenges in grasping their vocation.

A 2016 study by Barna shed light on the happenings at CEAM. By examining the terminology and phrases used to categorize different generations in this research, I came to realize that seven out of the ten participants in my study were Millennials. This group, born between 1984 and 1998, was interviewed by Barna to gain insights into their vocational choices. The researchers found that compared to previous generations, Millennials took longer to decide on and embark upon a career as they sought work that aligned with their expectations. The data indicates that the idea of pursuing a single lifelong career is not crucial for the majority of Millennials. In fact, 69% of the Millennials interviewed believe that their calling could change over time. This makes it challenging for them to envision their career in the long run. Interestingly, less than a third of them feel that their current job is aligned with their calling. Instead of prioritizing higher salaries or specific types of organizations, 42% of respondents believe that a dream job should be a place where their work resonates with their vocation so they could genuinely say, “I feel passionate about this” (Barna, 2016). These research findings suggest that Millennials are an authentic and motivated generation, placing greater importance on working in line with their passions rather than simply pursuing a career. These findings further reinforce my understanding of the challenges faced by CEAM students from this generation. It is difficult for them to determine whether becoming a cross-cultural missionary is God’s will for their lives.

The project participants agreed with my hypothesis. When I asked about their perceptions of their colleagues' assurance about their career path during the interview, all respondents indicated that their peers were lacking sufficient confidence.

### **Response**

The objective of this research was to investigate the ways in which confidence can be fostered among CEAM seminary students regarding their calling to cross-cultural missions. To do this, I wanted to utilize a process focused on reflection and experiential sharing. In 2023, while teaching a course titled “Intercultural Projects” at CEAM, I set out to assess students' confidence levels in their calling. I invited all class members, as well as any other interested students, to participate in a research initiative aimed at supporting those grappling with uncertainty about their career paths. Because of the limited size of CEAM, which accommodates a maximum of twenty in-person undergraduate students, only twelve people expressed a willingness to take part in this research project. After initial discussions and clarifications, two students withdrew. The remaining participants were approved by the Executive Secretary of CEAM. Consequently, a research group consisting of ten students and myself was established. All members remained actively involved for the duration of the project.

Enrolling in a specialized seminary such as CEAM can serve as a crucial step in discerning a ministry career. As the facilitator, my role involved creating an environment where participants could freely interact, ask questions, share experiences, and provide mutual support and guidance. The students helped me

collect data by proposing questions for the final questionnaire and recommending readings to each other. Once I had coded and analyzed the data, they received a report detailing the results and took part in a focus group to interpret the findings and suggest action items. Stringer (2014) asserts that Action Research, when it is employed effectively, “provides the means by which stakeholders, those centrally affected by the issue investigated, explore their experience, gain greater clarity and understanding of events and activities, and use those extended understandings to construct effective solutions to the problem(s) on which the study was focused” (Stringer 2014, 20).

Data was gathered using an initial questionnaire (IQ) to evaluate the participants’ situation, a semi-structured interview, and a final questionnaire (FQ), administered after discussions and meetings to assess their progress throughout the process. Some questions from the final questionnaire were identical to those in the initial questionnaire to monitor their development, although additional questions were added as suggested by the participants. Participants suggested questions during the interview; participants had the opportunity to ask clarification questions and share what they would like to learn from each other. Their suggestions added fresh perspectives on vocational calling and cross-cultural missions. This approach fostered collaboration between me—the researcher—and the participants. It also enabled the participants to comprehend their vocational challenges and explore strategies to overcome them. Throughout the project, participants read texts on the biblical theology of missions, posed questions to one another to address uncertainties and encourage reflection, shared their difficulties, and received feedback. Consequently, they were able to grow

through Bible study and the advice and life experiences of their fellow participants.

In conjunction with the research, we conducted a vocational maturity training program with CEAM through a series of six weekly focus group meetings. Although these meetings were not officially part of the research and no data was collected from them, they positively impacted the vocational maturity of the participants. The training program was developed using the knowledge I gained from Tyndale's DMin program. The program is outlined in Appendix 1. Following a participatory approach, the students assisted in selecting the topics and readings that were discussed during the meetings. The objective was to create an environment of mutual support where participants could interact, share their experiences, and provide advice and guidance to one another. My role was facilitating the meetings, presenting on the topic, and suggesting potential themes and texts for the group to consider. Each meeting began with reading selected texts, followed by group discussions and debates on the topic. Participants were divided into groups of three to delve deeper into the questions raised. Additionally, two individuals shared their personal experiences and struggles in discerning their specific vocations, with each person given ten minutes to speak. Their colleagues then offered advice and shared relevant biblical texts. Finally, we concluded each meeting with a prayer for those who shared. When we discussed the findings of my research project, the students suggested integrating this training program into the formal project and transforming the project into a vocational training tool that could be implemented in other organizations. I will provide a more detailed description of their proposal in the Findings section.

## **Supervision, Permission, and Access**

The President of AMIDE and the Director of CEAM oversaw the program, with access to the results granted only at the conclusion of the research. Participant names were encrypted, data was stored digitally, and access was restricted. I am the sole individual with access to the data. Furthermore, all participants completed a consent form.

A clearance certificate was issued by the Tyndale Research and Ethics Board, allowing for the project to proceed (See Appendix 2 – Clearance Certificate). Each participant provided informed consent for their participation (See Appendix 3 - Informed Consent).

## **Context**

I am currently employed at AMIDE, a non-profit Brazilian interdenominational missionary organization dedicated to sending missionaries to engage in evangelization, church planting, and Bible translation to UPGs in order to assist the less fortunate. Most of its missionary projects are located in Africa and Asia. I am the Vice President for projects in Asia and a teacher of online courses at CEAM—AMIDE’s seminary. Additionally, I have been working as a field missionary in Thailand for a few years now.

CEAM was established nearly two decades ago to train AMIDE missionaries, offering bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Missiology. It is a relatively small seminary, with a maximum capacity of forty students, situated at AMIDE’s headquarters. We provide in-person and online classes. CEAM focuses

on attracting students who are already passionate about cross-cultural missionary work, with most of our current field missionaries having studied there.

During my time at AMIDE's headquarters, I observed that some students required vocational guidance. Apart from being chosen for their interest in cross-cultural ministry, CEAM students reside at AMIDE's headquarters alongside missionaries who are either in training or on breaks. The rustic setting of the headquarters, along with its architecture and tribal-themed decor, also encourages students to pursue work among UPGs. Nevertheless, many students still grapple with uncertainty regarding their calling. This uncertainty has led to a decline in the number of students completing both bachelor's and master's degrees and subsequently joining our organization to be sent to UPGs.

The way that I described our organization may have created the misconception that CEAM and AMIDE expect all students to become cross-cultural missionaries, regardless of their true calling. However, the ultimate goal is to send students with a calling for cross-cultural missions, while those with different callings are encouraged to serve in their local churches and communities. Thus, CEAM and AMIDE strive to support students in fulfilling their unique vocational callings.

Despite my desire for all students to follow in my footsteps as a cross-cultural missionary, my main goal is to guide them in discerning God's will so they can make informed decisions about their ministries post-graduation. I firmly believe that no calling is superior to another, and it is essential for each individual to identify and pursue their unique vocation. It is crucial for students to determine whether they are called to be cross-cultural missionaries or not. I also realize that

followers of Jesus can bear fruit in any environment, but their impact is amplified when they are in the specific place where God has called them. To illustrate this point, I use an agricultural analogy. Different fruits thrive in different climates. While most adapt best to hot, humid climates, grapes planted in cold, dry climates produce the best wines. I felt out of place for many years, like a vine planted in a hot, humid climate. Although the cross-cultural mission field may seem unwelcoming, I discovered that it was my best ministry climate. I found peace and fulfillment in my work after years of uncertainty and searching. Even though I initially focused on local church activities as a pastor, I am convinced that I would have experienced greater success and personal satisfaction had I embraced my calling as a cross-cultural missionary sooner.

Nevertheless, I am aware that God moulds us through the adversity and obstacles we encounter in life. Every one of our ministry experiences equips and nurtures us to be more receptive of and ready for God's care. Although I once wished my leadership journey could have involved encountered fewer hindrances, upon reflection I recognize the valuable lessons I gained. My experiences shaped me and taught me to empathize with those who faced similar challenges.

### **Models and Other Resources**

The literature I encountered throughout the Tyndale DMin program contributed the theological, practical, and theoretical underpinnings for my research. Within this section, I will reference and expound upon the texts that laid the groundwork of this endeavour.

My initial motivation to aid students stemmed from the interactions between Jesus and Peter, chronicled in the Gospels. First, Jesus invites Peter to follow him, signifying a call to salvation (John 1:37), then to join the ranks of the disciples, transitioning into a fisher of men (Matthew 4:19). Lastly, for the third time, when Peter is despondent and adrift, Jesus seeks him out and tasks him with shepherding his flock (John 21:16). The manner in which Jesus reinstates and guides Peter back to his ministry during moments of uncertainty serves as the primary source of inspiration for this study.

The narratives within the Gospels illustrate how Jesus invested in Peter's development. Despite Peter's vacillating nature, Jesus selects him as a disciple and a confidant (Mark 5:33, Luke 9:28-36). Jesus discerns Peter's deficiencies and teaches him how to surpass them (Matthew 14:31, 16:16; John 13:8). As leaders striving to emulate Jesus, rather than opting for individuals who are more agreeable and less problematic to mentor, we should invest in and equip those whom God has placed alongside us so they can realize the full potential bestowed upon them by God. Jesus is the archetype of a leader who rescues and nurtures his flock. I ponder how many CEAM students undergoing a ministry and vocational crisis akin to Peter could be salvaged, restored, and guided by servant leaders and transformative figures akin to Jesus.

#### Other Resources from Previous Work

During my journey to discover my purpose and develop my leadership skills, I had the privilege of encountering professors through Tyndale's DMin

program. They provided me with invaluable guidance. Their teachings and recommended readings assisted me in my quest for self-discovery.

One particular book that greatly impacted me was *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* by Skip Bell. In this book, Bell emphasizes the importance of approaching leadership from a theological perspective, believing that true leadership should align with God's desires for humanity. This means that our view of leadership should be based on theology as well as an examination of culture. The author highlights the distinction between two types of leadership as depicted in the Scriptures: power-driven leadership and servant-focused leadership. The author emphasizes that a "servant leader is someone whose nature is characterized by service to God and others, possessing a servant's heart, and such an individual need not be in a position or office of responsibility to exercise leadership" (Bell 2014, 35). Bell's work, along with other authors he gathered, provided me with practical methods and theological insights that became the foundation of my research on vocational mentoring and the development of future leaders. Inspired by Bell's approach, I examined the relationship between Jesus and Peter as a model for preparing leaders during times of disruption. Jesus guided Peter so he could understand his calling and mature into a capable leader.

Henri Nouwen's 1989 book, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* has also influenced my perception of Christian leadership. Through his exploration of Jesus' temptation in the desert and Peter's pastoral call, Nouwen offers insights and suggestions for leaders to realign their approach. I introduced the project participants to Nouwen's ideas. We delved into his

writings and contemplated the principles and values that Jesus exemplified for Christian leaders.

Ruth Barton's 2008 book, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry*, delves into the importance of listening to God's guidance. The book serves as a powerful reminder for leaders to seek spiritual renewal and direction. By examining Moses' journey and preparation to lead the Israelites, Barton draws insightful lessons that are relevant for contemporary leadership. Barton's exploration of Moses' encounter with the burning bush provides a valuable model for individuals seeking to discern their calling.

Mark Chapman's 2018 article, "Action Research Ethics for DMin Students. *Journal of Christian Ministry*," provides valuable insights into ethical considerations in qualitative research and prompted me to reflect on how to conduct research in a context where I had influence.

David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick's 2010 book, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* offers comprehensive guidance on conducting research within my organization.

Tim Sensing's 2011 book, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* and Ernest Stringer's 2014 book, *Action Research, 4th Edition* serve as a valuable resource for understanding research structures and models. Sensing and Stringer's works were instrumental in guiding me through the research process, from project design to data analysis and interpretation.

Robert Osmer's 2008 book, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* provides a foundation for reflecting on vocational theology in everyday life. Osmer's approach helped me view the scriptures from a more humanistic perspective, shaping my leadership philosophy.

Parker Palmer's 1999 book, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* was also helpful. I integrated Palmer's insights with Barton's and Nouwen's, using them as reflective texts in our meetings. Palmer's teachings on self-awareness and authentic vocation resonated with me, inspiring me to seek a meaningful and integrated life.

These books edified me personally and served as a basis for this research. They equipped me with the necessary technical skills to organize the project, theological knowledge to support its ideas and concepts, and spiritual guidance for the development of participants.

### **Project, Methodology and Methods**

This section outlines the methodology employed to conduct the research. It covers the rationale behind the research design, how I initially engaged with participants, the data collection methods I used, and how I arrived at and applied the research findings.

#### **Field**

This study was carried out among students at CEAM Seminary. Interviews, conversations, and meetings were conducted virtually via Zoom due to the fact that participants lived in various regions of Brazil and Guinea-Bissau and I resided in Thailand.

The majority of CEAM students are Christians who are drawn to missions and want to equip themselves. Some of them are affiliated with AMIDE partner churches and have actively participated in our missionary events and conferences. Others are attracted through advertisements during the school registration periods. The participants were chosen from a class I taught and subsequently approved by the Executive Secretary of CEAM. Once selected, I was given their contact information, which enabled me to share information and proceed with the project.

The table below presents information about the participants' backgrounds. Each participant was asked to select a biblical name and a number as a pseudonym. Interestingly, some participants chose the same names as each other but were differentiated by their assigned numbers. Additionally, a few participants chose a pseudonym that did not correspond with their gender to make it harder to identify them.

**Table 1: Participant Information**

<b>Name (Pseudonym)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Married /Single</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Church denomination</b>	<b>State/Country</b>
1- Ester24	60	Single	Female	Regular Baptist	Rio de Janeiro- Brazil
2- Ruth8	40	Single	Female	Independent Baptist	Pernambuco- Brazil
3- João 3	35	Married	Male	Congregational of Brazil	Rio Grande do Norte- Brazil
4- Timóteo3	37	Single	Female	Presbyterian of Brazil	Brasília- Brazil
5- Ester7	36	Married	Female	Independent Baptist	Rio Grande do Norte- Brazil

6- Ruth1	35	Married	Female	Congregational of Brazil	Rio Grande do Norte- Brazil
7- José3	48	Married	Female	Presbyterian of Brazil	Ceará- Brazil
8- Ester3	37	Single	Female	Independent Baptist	Rio Grande do Sul- Brazil
9- Ester2	23	Single	Female	Assembly of God	Brasília- Brazil
10- Jonas5	34	Married	Female	Evangelical of Guinea Bissau	Gabu- Guinea Bissau

### Scope

The initial aim of this research project was to offer vocational guidance to CEAM students and gather data on their vocational confidence. Along with actively participating in all project stages, participants were urged to engage with peers in a virtual group dedicated to discussions and debates related to the research. During the final phase, they took part in a focus group meeting to analyze the findings. Apart from being a researcher, I also served as a meeting facilitator and engaged with them in virtual discussions. As Stringer suggests, the facilitator's role is to "ensure each person has an equal chance to talk, ensure discussions relate to the focus question(s), keep track of time for each activity, assist the group in summarizing the perspectives emerging from their discussions and identify key features of their experience and perspective" (Stringer 2014, 119).

I aimed to establish a safe environment for participants to freely share their doubts and difficulties while offering help to one another. In order to achieve this,

interactions within the virtual group were not recorded, and no data was collected. I hoped this would encourage participants to express themselves openly. The conversations were open-ended, with minimal rules and a lot of freedom to exchange thoughts, knowledge, and experiences. The final meeting was more structured, focusing on discussing ideas and interpreting the research results. The discussions and debates were ongoing throughout the virtual group, and extended beyond the research period. I recommended three books to the participants to provide additional insights on vocational calling and ways to discern the voice of God: *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* (Barton 2008), *In the Name of Jesus* (Nouwen 1989), and *Let Your Life Speak* (Palmer 1999). Additionally, the group suggested two other books for voluntary reading: *Vocacionados* (Lidório 2019) and *Mentor for Life* (Robinson 2016). These books offer valuable definitions of general and specific callings, as well as real-life experiences of individuals who have encountered similar vocational challenges. In this group, I also took on the role of moderator to ensure that discussions remained within the scope and topics of the research.

### Methodology

The methodology of this project was based on Participatory Action Research principles. The research model proved to be helpful as it allowed positive participation and interaction between all participants. They felt motivated to research something relevant to them and CEAM. Melrose explains that “action researchers may rely on interviewing or focus groups as a way of collecting data about the context” (Melrose 2001, 169). As a result of everyone’s dedication, the

various means of collecting data allowed us to gather valuable information about how confident they were about their vocational calling. The group offered ways to help other students and organizations with similar challenges through data analysis. Coghlan and Brannick describe Action Research as:

A procedure in which the participants of a social system are involved in a data collection process about themselves, and they utilize the data they have generated to review the facts about themselves in order to take some form of remedial or developmental action. In this model, the researcher and the researched are working in collaboration (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 11).

This approach allows for the utilization of various data-gathering methods and qualitative tools, such as interviews and questionnaires. As co-researchers, the participants actively engaged in all phases of the research, contributing to the project design and discussion content. Throughout the project, participants supported one another, working together to formulate the questionnaire and interview questions, as well as participating in data analysis. Collectively, we assessed the impact of their participation in the study, examined their growth in vocational maturity, and proposed strategies for other organizations facing similar vocational challenges.

## Methods

The research utilized three data collection tools: an initial questionnaire, a mid-study interview, and a final questionnaire. The primary objective was to gauge the participants' comprehension of their vocational calling at the commencement of the study. Subsequently, the progression of their understanding was evaluated, followed by an examination of any changes in their vocational maturity. By employing consistent questions across all three phases, the data

triangulation technique was employed. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their perspectives throughout the study. This approach facilitated shifts in the participants' thoughts. Sensing defines triangulation as "a way to cross-check your data that provides breadth and depth to your analysis and increases the trustworthiness of your research" (Sensing 2011, 72). Thorough data comparison enhanced the reliability of the analysis and validated the findings. Discrepancies in responses to similar questions in the questionnaires were noted and rectified by comparing responses across the three data collection phases. While the initial focus was on identifying redundancies in the questionnaires, the qualitative analysis delved into the data's context, participants' emotions, and the intensity of participants' expressions, leading to a more comprehensive evaluation.

The questionnaires played a crucial role in capturing the participants' comprehension at a specific moment during the research; nevertheless, they presented a rather fixed viewpoint. On the other hand, the dynamic and interactive nature of the interviews enabled me to delve deeper into the challenges faced by and beliefs of each individual, thereby enhancing the depth of the analysis and interpretation of the data. Sensing emphasizes that the interviewer's goal is to immerse themselves in and comprehend a particular context from the interviewee's perspective. He stresses that "the main purpose of the interview is to obtain a special kind of information. The researcher wants to find out what is in and on someone else's mind" (Sensing 2011, 125).

After selecting the ten participants, I briefed them each individually on the procedures that would take place at each stage of the process. Then I sent them the consent letter, recommended readings and reflections, and the initial questionnaire. To foster interaction among the participants, I established a virtual conversation group where they could engage with one another. Apart from addressing queries and assisting each other, they also shared reading

recommendations. These interactions within the virtual conversation group continued throughout the research.

In the initial phase, data was gathered through the first questionnaire. By analyzing their responses, I gained insights into their thoughts and level of confidence regarding their calling. This enabled more focused discussions during the semi-structured interviews, where specific issues could be explored. Participants had ample time to express their viewpoints, voice their uncertainties, and pose questions to fellow participants. Towards the end of the process, they completed a final questionnaire to assess any changes that occurred over the course of three months. The interview audio was transcribed, combined with the questionnaire responses, and organized into a single text file for ease of reading while I reviewed the data.

Upon completing data collection, I employed In Vivo and Pattern methods to code the information. In order to minimize any potential bias in the findings, I opted for In Vivo coding during the initial cycle to directly extract information from the participants. With In Vivo coding, I identified and marked words or short phrases in the transcribed text. According to Stringer (2014, 140), this method is “more likely to capture the meanings inherent in people’s experience” (Stringer 2014, 140). After thoroughly reviewing the transcripts multiple times, I specifically highlighted words and phrases pertaining to the theme of vocation and identified a total of 352 codes. For a comprehensive list of these codes and their classifications, please refer to Appendix 7.

I followed Saldana’s guidelines to select the coding model for the second and third cycles (2021). Saldana explains that the purpose of coding in the second

cycle is to organize the codes obtained in the first cycle into categories and themes. The central theme of the study was vocation, which served as the foundation for all the research. However, before analyzing the codes, it was necessary to separate and organize them into subtopics. Among the coding models recommended by Saldana, I determined that Pattern Coding was the most suitable. According to Saldana, Pattern Coding is “explanatory or inferential codes that identify a theme, setting, or explanation.” He clarifies that “First cycle coding is a way to initially summarize segments of data. Pattern Coding, as a second cycle method, is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of condensed categories, themes, or concepts” (Saldana 2021, 292).

By utilizing patterns to separate codes, I was able to distinguish and categorize the following: how I discerned the voice of God and how confident I was in my calling. Stringer emphasizes the importance of recognizing themes and categorizing data, stating that “research participants, therefore, need to identify themes—issues, experiences, or perspectives that people have in common—by comparing categories and subcategories across stakeholding groups” (Stringer 2014, 146).

Then, the two categories were divided into subcategories during the third cycle. It was deemed crucial to elaborate on the process through which they discerned God’s guidance and their level of confidence in their calling. Vocational confidence, in this study, refers to each participant's perceived certainty regarding God's call to their future ministry after graduation. These confidence levels were evaluated through individualized qualitative analysis, taking into account each participant's unique context. Initially, I observed that the

participants understood God's voice in two ways, which led to the classification of codes into Internal Evidence and External Evidence. They perceived God's direction either through direct communication (such as listening to or sensing God's guidance during devotional activities, prayer, or Bible reading) or indirectly (for instance, comprehending God's guidance through other individuals or external means).

In the second phase, the codes were categorized into five ascending levels of vocational confidence: Uncertain, indicating a lack of assurance or confusion; Slightly Confident, denoting a small amount of confidence; Building Confidence, signifying a gradual increase in confidence; Growing Certainty, representing a steady growth in confidence; and Full Confidence, indicating complete assurance. The classification of confidence levels was derived from the statistical concept of confidence interval. As Lisa Sullivan states, "Another way of thinking about a confidence interval is that it is the range of likely values of the parameter (defined as the point estimate + margin of error) with a specified level of confidence" (Sullivan 2017, 2). Due to the small sample size and significant margins of error, I established smaller intervals for higher degrees of confidence. For instance, the range for Uncertain was set between 0% and 30%, Slightly Confident between 30% and 60%, Building Confidence between 60% and 80%, Growing Certainty between 80% and 95%, and Full Confidence for responses exceeding 95% confidence. While this subjective classification of qualitative data may not offer the same statistical reliability as quantitative data-based levels, it was utilized in this case to establish parameters and offer guidance for result evaluation.

Additionally, the aim was not to categorize responses with statistical accuracy, as the data included in each parameter was primarily used for qualitative analysis.

**Table 2: Coding Examples**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>First Cycle (In Vivo codes)</b>	<b>Second Cycle (Category)</b>	<b>Third Cycle (Subcategory)</b>
P3	“God spoke to me while I was praying”	1- How I discerned the voice of God	1.1- Internal Evidence (praying)
P6	“(God) confirmed me through the people in my church”	1- How I discerned the voice of God	1.2- External Evidence (other people)
P3	“Sometimes I found myself wondering if I should give up”	2- How confident I was about the calling	2.1- Uncertain
P5	“He is awakening me (vocation) but not yet completely”	2- How confident I was about the calling	2.3- Building Confidence
P4	“I am sure that was God who called me”	2- How confident I was about the calling	2.5- Full Confidence

The results were subsequently provided to the participants for individual examination. A meeting was held over Zoom to review and assess the discoveries in a group focus session. The team analyzed the outcomes and put forward recommendations for potential applications. One of the suggestions was to

convert this project into a vocational training resource, as outlined in the Outcomes section.

**Table 3: Phases and Timetable**

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Action</b>
Project development	July 01, 2023	Myself	First contact with participants after REB approval
First step in data collection	By October 07, 2023	All participants	The first questionnaire was answered
Second step in data collection	November 01-07, 2023	All participants and myself	Conducted semi-structured interviews
Finalizing data collection	December 07, 2023	All participants and myself	The final questionnaire was answered, and data was organized
<b>Steps</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Action</b>
Analysis	By February 27, 2024	Myself	Coded and analyzed data
Focus group meeting	March 08, 2024	All participants and myself	Evaluated findings and proposed applications
Interpretation	By March 15, 2024	All participants and myself	Findings were discerned
Report	By March 31, 2024	Myself	Write the report and share the findings

## Ethics in Ministry-Based Research

In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB), I solely gathered data from the questionnaires and interviews. The REB insisted on this because of potential risks that would have come from me collecting data from the online meetings, where there were minimal regulations and access was open to all individuals. Additionally, the study was conducted within a small seminary, and the participants were chosen from a limited pool of potential candidates. While the virtual group sessions proved to be beneficial for all involved, some participants shared distressing life experiences. Hence, the committee's decision was justified. Even with the precautions taken and the use of pseudonyms, it might have been possible to identify the individuals involved in this research. Therefore, the principle that research involving human subjects should not inflict harm upon the participants was upheld (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects TCPS 2-2022).

Stringer emphasizes the importance of addressing ethical considerations in Action Research, as it involves active participation from all involved parties. He argues that everyone should be granted equal rights to security and informed consent, just like in any other research study. Additionally, Stringer asserts that:

There is a particular imperative to ensure that all participants know what is going on, that the processes are inherently transparent to all. Because participants in an action research process have much more control than is usually accorded participants in a study, they are in effect engaging in a mutual agreement about the conduct of a study (Stringer 2014, 101).

In my case, although the data collected pertained to the spiritual lives of students and did not pose significant risks to their relationship with AMIDE, I took

responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of the information. To create a safe and trustworthy environment, only coded and tabulated data was shared with AMIDE and CEAM leaders, making it impossible to identify participants or their personal stories. Furthermore, I included a clause in the consent form, pledging to never use the shared information in a way that could harm or prejudice the lives and ministries of the participants.

Given my dual role as a leader in CEAM and AMIDE and as both researcher and participant, I prioritized minimizing potential risks and biases throughout the research process. This commitment extended beyond adhering to ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining transparency. The research design itself aimed to mitigate bias, focusing primarily on benefiting the participants rather than serving organizational objectives. While acknowledging CEAM and AMIDE's potential interest in student vocational confidence levels, I emphasized that only unbiased findings would be truly valuable. To further ensure objectivity, I refrained from influencing participant selection and actively involved them in all phases of the research. The final findings and their potential applications were collaboratively determined during the focal meeting.

I obtained authorization from the President of AMIDE and the Director of CEAM to carry out the study. They helped me determine the dates and duration. Upon initial contact, participants expressed interest in the research as it offered vocational assistance that CEAM is currently unable to provide. In order to minimize potential risks for participants, the following measures were implemented:

- All conversations and meetings took place virtually, with no data being collected. This was clearly communicated to participants from the outset.
- Only data gathered from questionnaires and interviews were included in the research. No stories shared during meetings or virtual conversations were recorded or documented. The final publication of the findings will present combined responses of the group, using percentages and generalizations. Individual data will not be shared.
- To ensure the participants' anonymity, specific details were altered when transmitting data to prevent identification.
- Personal information and research data were encoded, preventing AMIDE/CEAM leadership from accessing participants' data and personal information.
- Participants had the right to refuse to answer any questionnaire questions or decline to respond to interview inquiries. They were also free to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

### **Findings, Interpretations, and Outcomes**

In this section, I describe the outcomes of the research. I elaborate on the methods I used for data analysis and interpretation, how we arrived at our understanding of the results, and how the reflective process enabled us to identify solutions and propose recommendations for the participants' daily routines. Despite my role in organizing the data and creating visual representations, the analytical and interpretative tasks were collaborative efforts, stemming from the combined commitment of all parties involved.

The Interpretation section also took into account the context, motivations, beliefs, intensity, and timing of the collected data. Qualitative data was prioritized over quantitative. As a result, the significance of the data was not solely determined by the frequency of codes.

### Findings

The study results were acquired through a comparison of individual data across various phases and data from the entire group. It is important to note that the interview and questionnaires included two types of questions formulated using two complementary approaches. Direct questions, like the sixth question of the IQ: “Do you understand that God still communicates with his children? If so, what means does he usually use to communicate with you?” (refer to Appendix 4), were designed to elicit specific responses at that particular stage of the research. On the other hand, open-ended questions with secondary themes, such as the fifth question of the FQ: “Have you practised any spiritual discipline to help discern your vocation calling?” (refer to Appendix 5), aimed to encourage participants to reflect and freely discuss their relationship with God. This approach provided qualitative data about their vocational confidence. The combination of questionnaires and interviews successfully facilitated data collection and allowed for information triangulation, although certain questions did not contribute significantly to the research. The questionnaires and interviews yielded valuable data for the qualitative analysis. Several questions were strategically repeated across all three data collection methods to ensure response consistency and identify any shifts in participants' perspectives. Furthermore,

open-ended questions provided an opportunity for participants to share their personal opinions on the topic, including their relationship with God and their vocational confidence. The presentation of the findings was divided into two sections: the first section addressed key points to guide the analysis, while the second section examined two assumptions that sought to address the research question. I will elaborate on this in the next subsection.

Despite the limited number of participants in this project and the statistical insignificance of the results due to the small sample size, I created graphs and tables to present the findings for the benefit of both the participants in the analysis meeting and the readers of this report.

### **First Part**

In the initial phase of the study, an examination was conducted to explore the perspectives of individuals regarding their chosen profession and the motivations behind their decision to pursue studies at CEAM. Recognizing the subjective nature of the research, emphasis was placed on delving into secondary themes that played a pivotal role in assessing their confidence in their chosen vocation in the subsequent phase. The outcomes of the investigation yielded the following findings:

Is the specific vocation biblical and relevant to the present time?

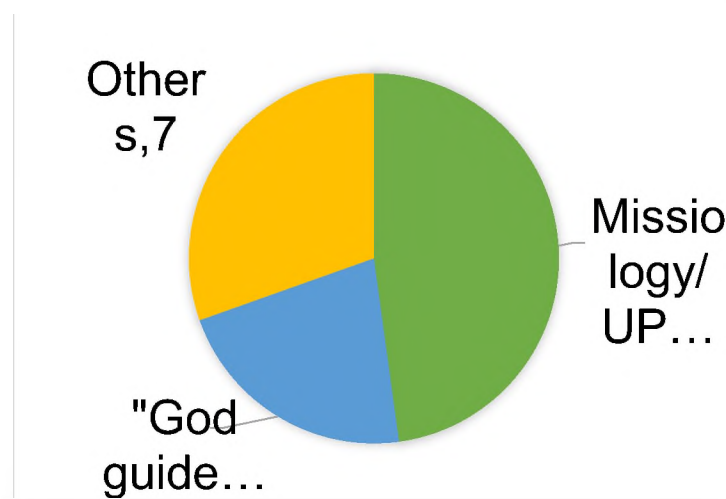
In asking this question, my intention was to inquire about how they understood the concept of a particular vocation, and differentiated between that and our universal calling. I also wanted to know whether they agreed that the topic was relevant to their lives. Drawing from Paul's suggestions in Ephesians

4:11, I began by questioning whether they acknowledged the existence of a specific calling to ministry aimed at “the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12) and whether they thought this phenomenon persists in contemporary times. The initial two questions in the questionnaires aimed to ascertain this: “What do you think of the idea that God still calls people with specific callings for edifying his church?” and “In your understanding, how does God call someone to a specific vocation?” (refer to Appendix 4 and 5). Initially, I was apprehensive about their understanding, as an increasing number of scholars in Brazil subscribe to the belief in a singular, universal vocation for all Christians: a calling to glorify God through their lives. It would not have posed an issue if they had indicated their understanding of vocation in this manner. However, the purpose of this project was to aid students in gaining a better understanding of their specific calling and to assist them in discerning whether they identify with the cross-cultural call to missions.

All respondents gave an affirmative answer to the first question, indicating that they thought the idea of a particular vocation is biblical and relevant. Moreover, the responses to the second question were articulate and precise, with statements such as: “God guides individuals to a specific vocation through internal clarity, divine revelation, and spiritual direction” (Esther2. My translation), and “He communicates with the hearts of His followers, reveals the necessity to their eyes, and instills in their hearts the motivation to transform that reality, becoming God’s solution to that issue” (Ruth1. My translation). This also indicated that the participants believed in the distinction between vocations and the diverse methods through which God conveys His calling.

## Why Did They Choose CEAM?

Understanding the participants' motivations in selecting CEAM could provide insight into whether they resonated with the school's emphasis on cross-cultural missions prior to entering seminary. A single participant opted not to respond to this inquiry, while the majority of others gave multiple reasons for their decision. Later on I analysed the compiled dataset.



**Figure 2: Why did participants choose CEAM?**

When I first compiled the research findings, I pondered the rationale behind students' decision to enrol in a seminary specializing in missiology without a firm conviction regarding their calling to serve among UPGs. The question, "Why did you choose to come to study in a missiological seminary like CEAM/AMIDE?" was posed in both questionnaires (refer to Appendices 4 and 5). Notably, the responses appeared quite similar, possibly indicating that their answers accurately reflect what they thought prior to their enrolment at CEAM. The data showed that nearly half of the participants opted for CEAM due to its strong emphasis on missiology, while 22% cited divine guidance as the reason for

their choice. Conversely, close to one-third provided responses such as “I do not know how to answer,” “because I received a scholarship,” and “I chose it because I saw an opportunity,” without any mention of the focus on missiology. Despite the limited sample size, the data analysis hinted at intriguing avenues for further investigation. It became apparent from the responses that despite the seminary’s efforts to attract students inclined towards cross-cultural missions, only around half chose CEAM for this reason. A significant portion of the responses indicated a lack of a clear rationale for their choice. This suggested that the missionary focus of the seminary did not play a decisive role for many participants. Additionally, a fifth of the responses were based on a generic sense that they were “guided by God,” further highlighting that a considerable number of students struggled with discerning their vocational calling even before joining the seminary.

Through this first stage of data analysis, my perception was that participants understood what a specific vocation was, and some did not have much confidence in their calling prior to their enrolment at CEAM. In the second stage of my analysis, I compared the data collected between the two questionnaires and the interview to investigate whether there was any evolution in their understanding of vocational calling during the research.

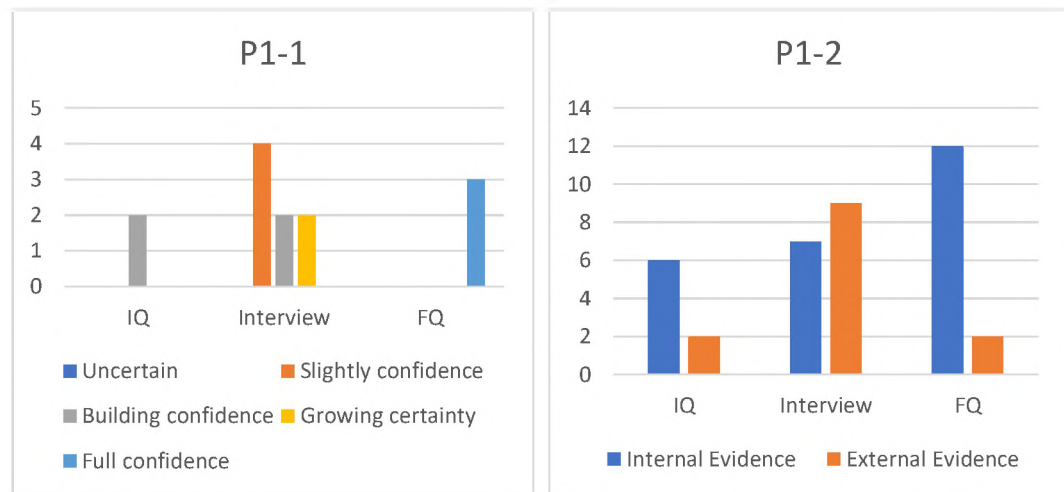
## **Second Part**

The Methods section provides a detailed explanation of the coding methods I used to analyse the data. It is important to reiterate in this section that a thorough examination of the transcripts led me to classify the codes into two

primary themes that were central to my investigation. These themes were closely associated with two underlying assumptions that guided the formulation of questionnaires and interview questions for data collection. The first assumption was that participants would grow in their knowledge and maturity throughout the research period, leading to increased confidence in their vocation. The second assumption was that the development of vocational maturity would lead to individuals confirming their calling based on internal rather than external factors. Early in my studies at Tyndale, Ruth Barton's insights greatly enhanced my understanding of this concept. Barton provides several practical examples of how people receive guidance from God. She argues that "Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfil the original selfhood given to me at birth by God" (Barton 2008, 77). While Barton acknowledges that external voices may play a role in discerning one's calling, she emphasizes the significance of hearing God's voice within the framework of a personal relationship with Him. Building on this view, I expected that the initial assumptions would be confirmed through a comparative analysis of responses gathered during the three phases of data collection.

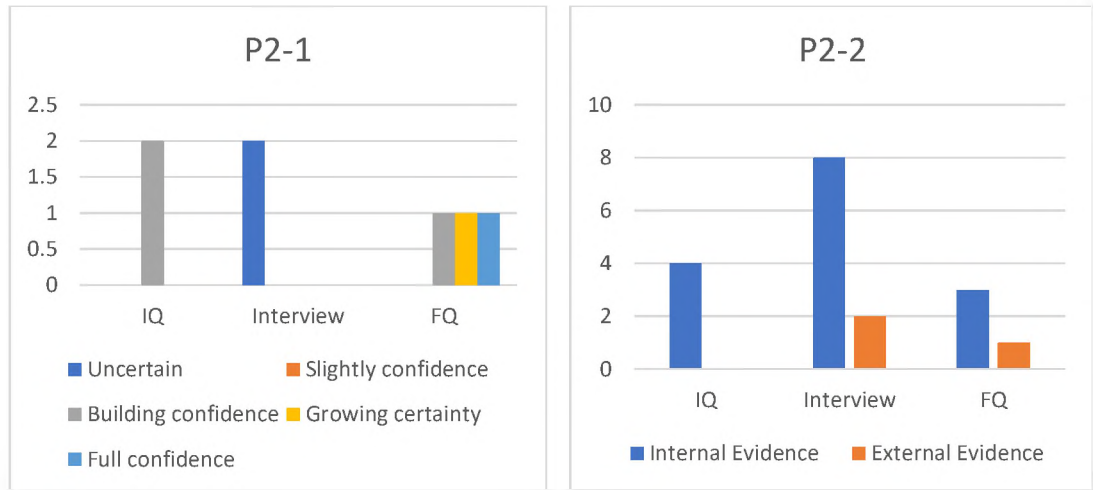
The questionnaires and interviews included direct questions that could be used to compare results and open-ended questions to evaluate the depth and changes in thoughts and emotions throughout the study. Repetition of similar questions enabled a more thorough analysis of people's comprehension. After I categorized the data into subgroups, I created graphs by triangulating the data to ensure consistent results. The initial graphs in this section juxtapose each

participant's data utilizing three distinct data collection tools: the initial questionnaire (IQ), interview, and final questionnaire (FQ). Participants were distinguished by their aliases. These paired graphs were designed to aid in the visualization of each participant's data. The graph on the left illustrates their level of confidence, while the graph on the right whether their inclinations had been validated through external and internal evidence. The multiple bars in the graphs indicate the number of codes generated by the participant for each type of data. After I made these graphs, I wrote a concise explanation of the results. This was provided to assist participants in their analysis during the focus group meeting. It is included below.



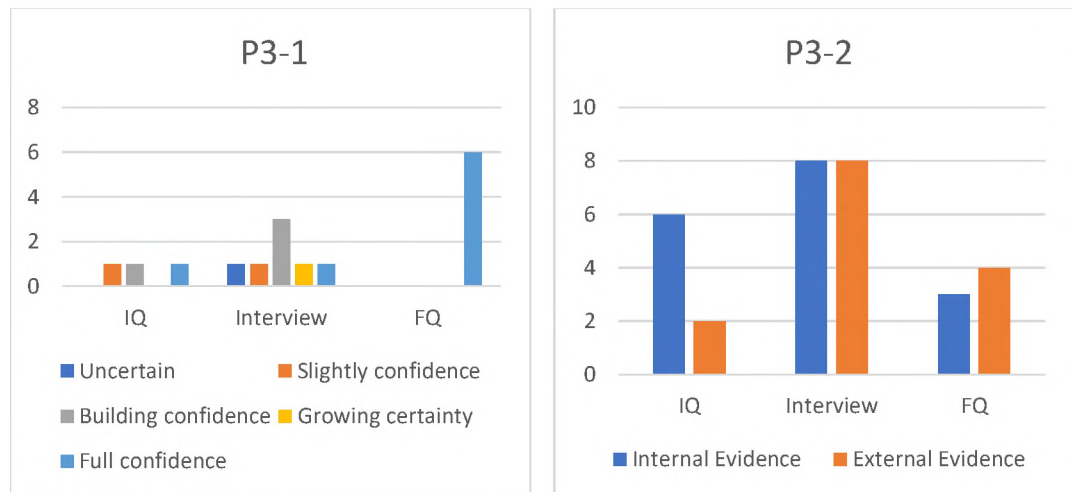
**Figure 3: P1's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

P1's responses demonstrated a significant increase in her sense of confidence concerning her vocational. Additionally, graph P1-2 shows that she doubled the number of times she linked her calling to internal evidence.



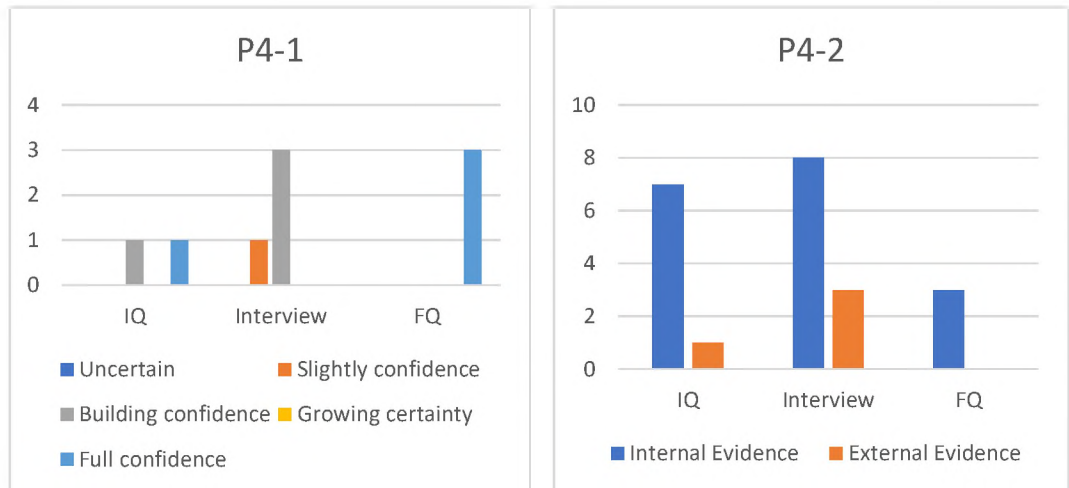
**Figure 4: P2's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

A data comparison across the three collection instruments showed that P2's vocational confidence grew during the research (Graph P2-1). However, in the end, P2-2 indicated a slight reduction in the number of confirmations through internal evidence.



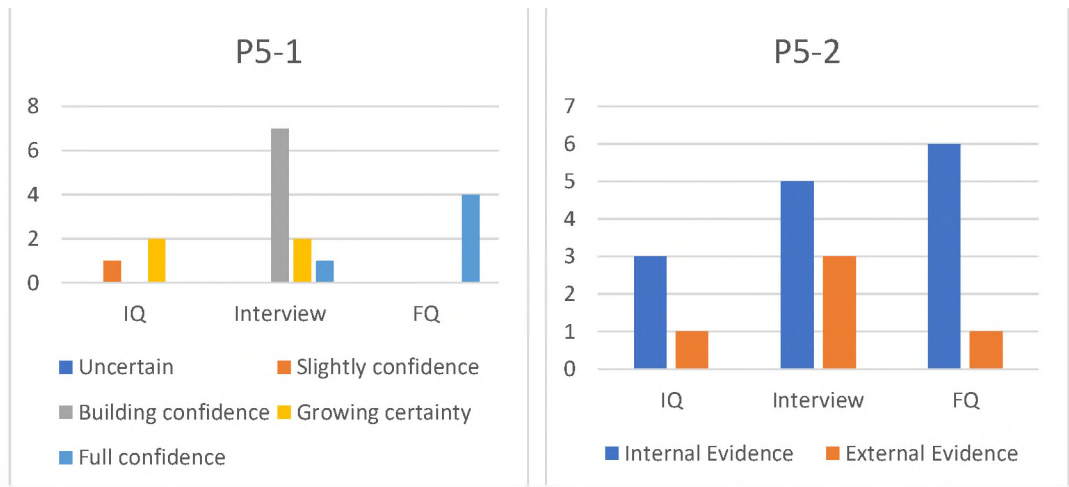
**Figure 5: P3's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

At the end of the research, the data revealed that P3 matured vocationally and became completely confident; however, graph P3-2 shows a substantially reduced number of confirmations through internal evidence.



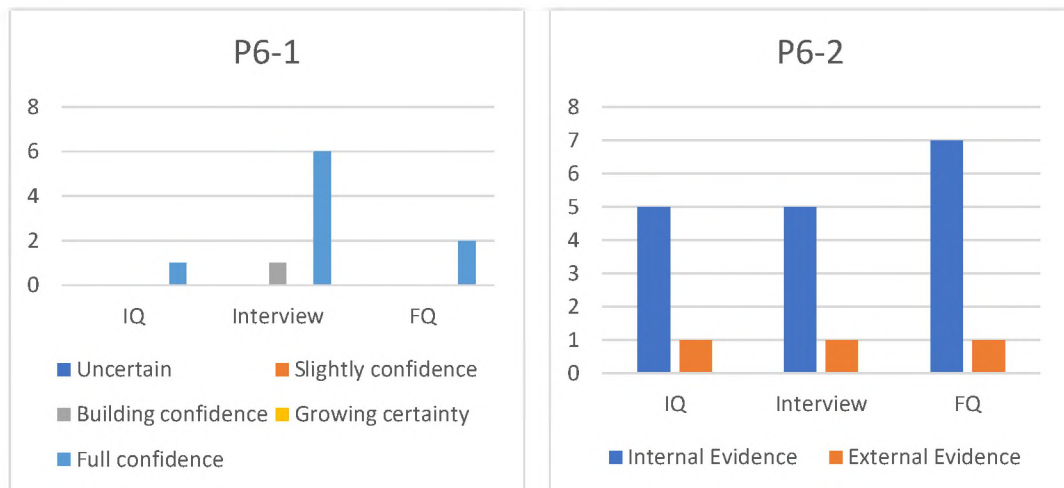
**Figure 6: P4's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

Graph P4-1 shows that the participant shifted to entirely confident, and P4-2 again indicated a reduction in the number of confirmations based on internal evidence.



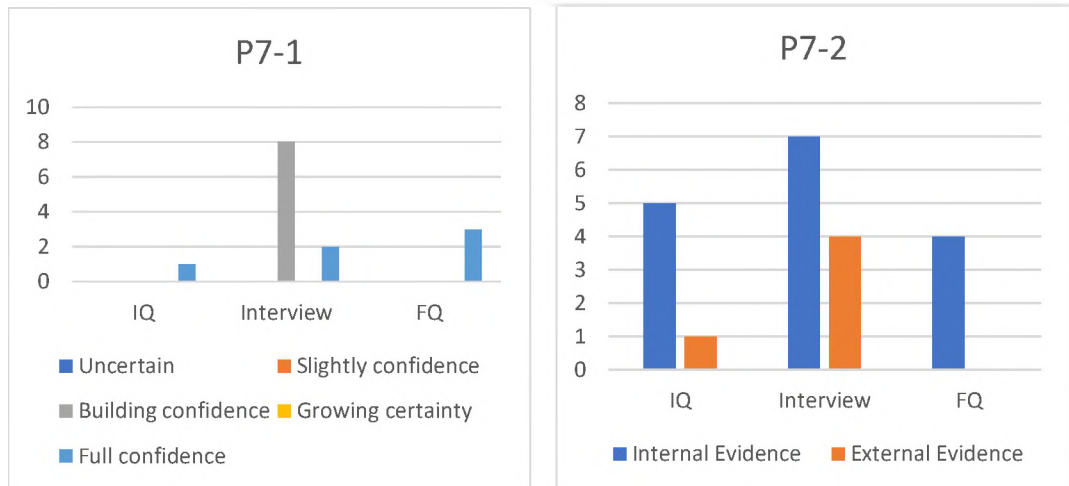
**Figure 7: P5's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

During the interview, P5 used expressions that demonstrated that he was developing his confidence. In the end, P5 presented a shift to complete confidence and a consistent increase in his reliance on internal evidence.



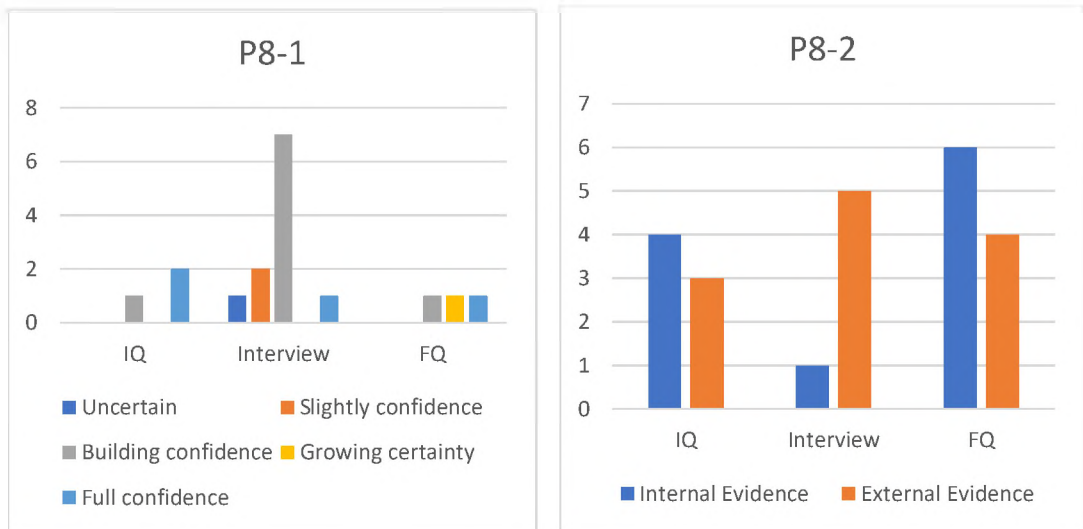
**Figure 8: P6's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

Throughout the course of the study, P6 remained relatively consistent, displaying comparable patterns across all three stages. While Graph P6-1 indicated a minor uptick in confidence levels in the FQ, the interview findings revealed that the participant had already possessed a strong sense of assurance regarding their vocational path midway through the research. Furthermore, P6-2 shows a slight increase in the use of confirmations by internal evidence.



**Figure 9: P7's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

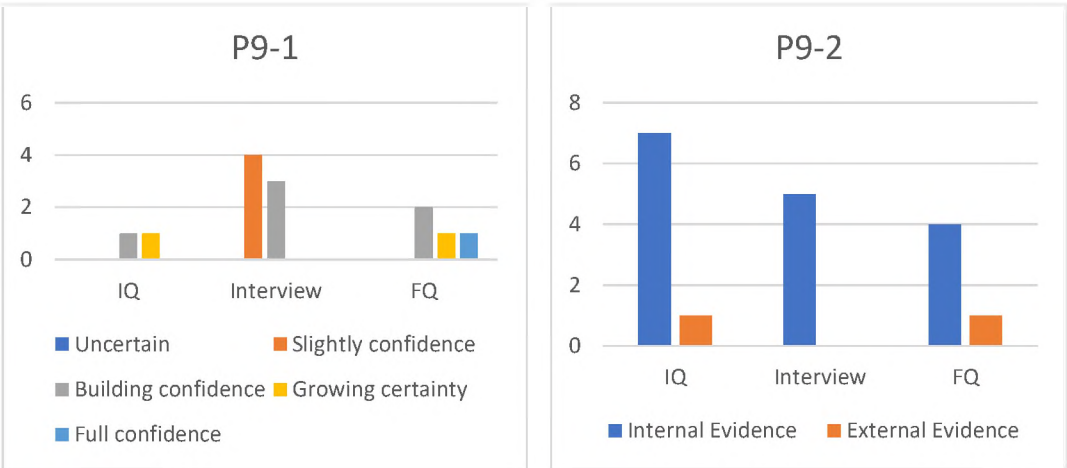
P7 showed growth during the process and, in the end, was completely confident in her vocational calling. However, the number of confirmations through internal evidence decreased.



**Figure 10: P8's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

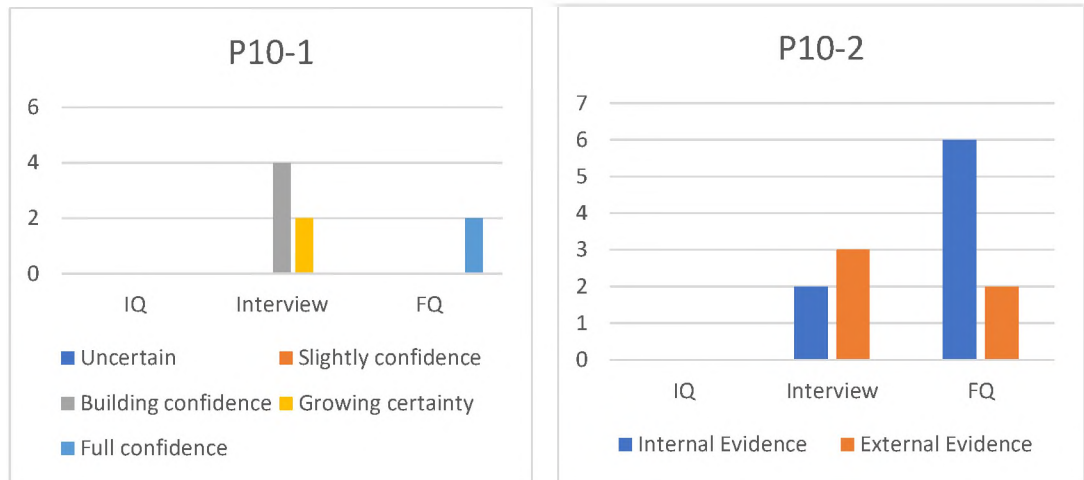
Graph P8-1 demonstrates that the participant was slightly less confident at the end of the research, and Graph P8-2 shows a slight increase in confirmations by internal and external evidence. In this case, the data collected during the interview differed from that collected in the questionnaires, demonstrating that

she was primarily building confidence and confirming her vocational calling through other people.



**Figure 11: P9’s Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

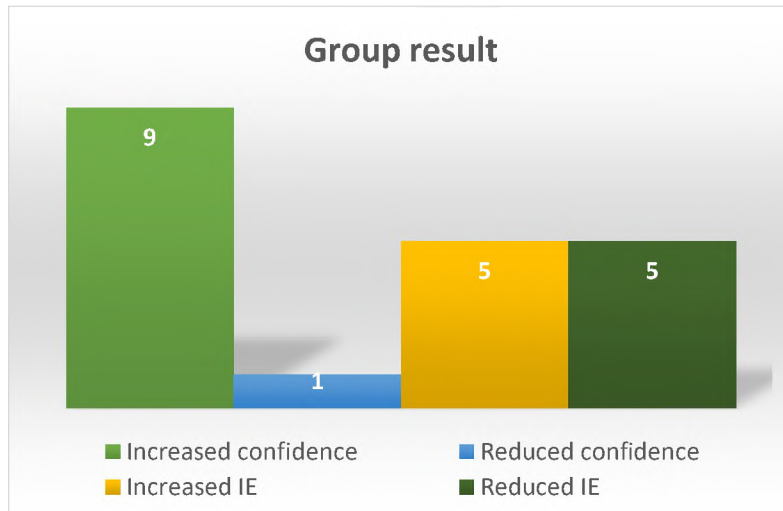
Observation of the data during triangulation showed that P9 was actively establishing trust. Additionally, the participant’s use of language and expressions during the interview conveyed a sense of diminished confidence. Despite this, Chart P9-1 displays a slight uptick in confidence levels; however, Chart P9-2 shows a notable decrease in confirmations based on internal evidence towards the end.



**Figure 12: P10's Confidence Level (Left) and Type of Evidence (Right)**

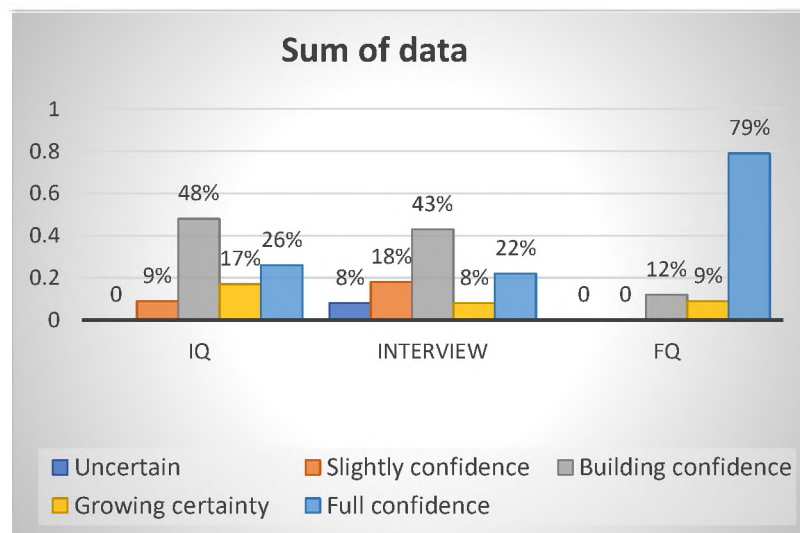
P10 did not participate in the IQ, which means that the data here only includes the interview and the final questionnaire. The participant's confidence appeared to grow from the interview to the final questionnaire, as evidenced by the shift from building confidence to complete confidence. Graph P10-2 illustrates a rise in the number of confirmations based on internal evidence when comparing the interview to the final questionnaire.

In contrast to earlier graphs, the subsequent graphs in this section display multiple bars that represent the total of corresponding results as specified in the legend below them.



**Figure 13: Group Results**

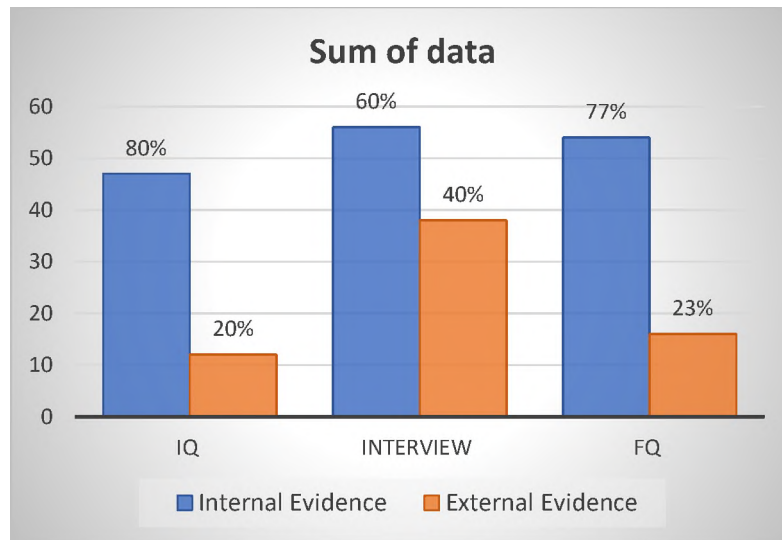
In comparing the participants’ results, this graph shows that nine out of ten participants increased their vocational confidence during the three months of the investigation, albeit at different levels. However, only five of them indicated an increase in the number of confirmations by internal evidence.



**Figure 14: The Sum of Data by Confidence Level**

The results becomes clearer when combining data from all participants. Although one of them did not grow in vocational discernment, and the growth of the other nine occurred to varying degrees, 79% of the responses in the FQ

indicated complete confidence, compared to 26% in the IQ and 22% in the interview.



**Figure 15: The Sum of Data by Type of Evidence**

This graph shows the number of references to certain types of confirmation and what percentage of the total number of confirmations participants described they represent. The data collected from the entire group indicated that despite the increase in confirmations by internal evidence in the FQ, the percentage of internal confirmations decreased, contrary to what I initially presumed. Other factors likely had a more significant influence on how participants received a confirmation of their calling.

It is worth noting that the data collection process primarily consisted of qualitative methods, utilizing open-ended questions. Additionally, the coding process was subjective, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the participants' responses. The numerical figures in the graphs were mainly used to aid in visualizing the results and guiding participants in their discussions during the concluding focus group, where they could interpret and apply the findings.

## Interpretation

The charts depicted in the preceding section reveal each participant's thought process during the data collection phases. Nonetheless, it was only through the juxtaposition of the gathered data that a qualitative assessment of individual and collective experiences was made possible. This approach allowed me to understand their circumstances and the transformations that took place throughout the study in a more profound manner. I will now outline my initial analysis of the results, which was subsequently deliberated upon with the other participants. This interpretation was shared with them during the focus group convened to analyze the findings.

### **First Steps in Data Interpretation**

During the initial stages, the participants displayed a keen interest in the topics of vocation and cross-cultural missions. However, as the interviews progressed, it became evident that they harboured varying degrees of confidence in their vocational calling, with many feeling hesitant about openly discussing their calling. Initially, the participants' responses were reserved, which was understandable considering their backgrounds. Many came from cultures that discouraged direct confrontation, and their seminary training emphasized missiology. Moreover, their participation was supported by a scholarship program designed for cross-cultural missionaries. However, the research design emphasized a safe and open environment. From the beginning, participants were assured of their freedom to express their opinions without negative repercussions. As the study progressed, particularly during the concluding focus group, they

became more comfortable sharing candid insights about their vocational experiences. Their vocational journey often diverged from my initial expectations, but they all experienced growth in their vocational discernment in the end. One of the participants shared during the interview that when she attended the project preparation class at CEAM, she struggled to decide on a specific ministry to pursue post-course completion. Consequently, she devised a fictional project to present to the instructor. She expressed feeling embarrassed; she was uncertain if God had truly called her to serve as a cross-cultural missionary. When questioned about her reluctance to share what she believed God had revealed to her regarding her calling, she countered with a query: “What matters more in my vocation, and what should I value more? Being a missionary in other countries or being authentic in relation to how I feel about God? I do not feel like a faithful servant because I am not called to work as relevant as cross-cultural missions.” She exhibited introverted tendencies and was deeply entrenched in a collectivist social environment. Her religious background instilled in her a desire for validation solely through internal cues, yet she yearned for external acknowledgment of her calling. Due to her divergence from the seminary’s emphasis on cross-cultural missions and her need for external validation, she struggled to discern God’s voice speaking to her heart. However, following a period of vocational growth and receiving positive feedback from her peers, she felt confident enough to disclose to the group that she believed God had called her to serve impoverished communities in the rural areas of Brazil.

Another participant encountered a similar situation. Despite being raised in a different social setting, because she grew up in the country’s capital and

possessed a prior academic background, she was initially self-assured about participating in a cross-cultural project. However, she faced challenges communicating this decision to her family and church leaders. Her spiritual growth took a different trajectory than what was anticipated. It was expected that she would become more self-assured as she cultivated the practice of discerning God's voice internally. However, an internal conflict hindered her from following God's guidance. A family issue complicated her ability to relocate to another country. The struggle to reconcile familial obligations with her internal sense of God's calling prevented her from progressing in her ministry. Additionally, she was raised in an individualistic society and a traditional church that emphasized internal signs for discernment. Through the course of the study, she learned to recognize God's voice through the input of others. By opening up about her struggles with the group and considering their suggestions and solutions, she was able to see previously hidden paths and comprehend the direction that God was leading her. The support from the group strengthened her resolve, enabling her to align her internal desires with external guidance, ultimately granting her the assurance to express her vocation publicly.

Conversely, one of the participants evolved in accordance with my expectations. This participant hailed from an area characterized by high levels of social deprivation and low levels of education. She was brought up in a collectivist society and eventually was converted and disciplined in a Pentecostal church. She affirmed that in matters regarding her vocation, she initially heavily relied on external validation, particularly from her church leaders. Nevertheless, she exhibited a deep love for God and a strong commitment to her calling.

Despite indicating in the survey that she was confident about her calling as a cross-cultural missionary, she struggled during the interview to provide a biblical basis and was unsure if it was truly God's will for her. While she mentioned experiencing God's presence internally, when asked what made her certain she consistently referred to prophecies or messages from pastors as confirmation of her calling. Arriving at the seminary with limited biblical knowledge and just starting her academic journey, she displayed remarkable motivation and appeared to be one of the participants who experienced the most growth throughout the program. Engaging with spiritual readings helped her develop the ability to discern and trust God's voice within her. Additionally, as she delved into foundational biblical teachings, her confidence grew. Her growth was characterized by spiritual development, and a deepening understanding of God's will as revealed in scripture. In her final questionnaire response regarding ministry expectations, she wrote, "My fear was of losing the fear of God. Now, in everything, I have been guided by Him, and through Him, all fear has been cast away."

Upon further reflection, my perception was that the process of learning, which involved reading, sharing experiences, and engaging in group debates, had a profound impact on the participants' ability to understand God's will for their lives. However, I realized that the three months spent collecting data were insufficient for the entire group to complete a cycle of development and self-discovery. Some just needed small adjustments in their theology or spiritual practices. For others, open exchanges with the group was essential for their growth. Although the group has matured and the collective result was positive,

two of them indicated in the focus group that they needed more time to reflect and grow more confident. One of these participants was extroverted and mature in faith but began the process without confidence in God's specific will for him. He was sure that he had a calling to serve God full-time, but he did not know in what kind of ministry and place he was willing to serve. Between the IQ and FQ, he did not change his way of listening to God. He continued to seek confirmation of his calling through internal means. He had begun occasionally thinking about serving in the interior of Brazil with some cross-cultural projects. When he answered the FQ, he was even less confident about what God expected of him. However, in the focus group a few months later, he reported that he continued to mature vocationally after answering the FQ and gradually discerned God's voice more clearly. So, finally, he felt fully confident and started writing his missionary project with details about the type of ministry he would carry out in Southeast Asia.

I realized I had underestimated the importance of groups in confirming individuals' inner perception of their calling. I was surprised to see that, in the end, they developed a greater ability to discern the voice of God through both internal and external evidence.

### **Preparing for the Focus Group**

After completing the data analysis, generating the graphs, and writing my initial interpretations, I distributed the file containing the graphs along with concise explanations to each individual so they could review their data and compare it with that of the group. Then we convened to interpret and analyze the

results. At the outset, I reiterated the importance of the participants being involved in all research process stages. I emphasized my role as the facilitator of the meeting. I proceeded to outline how I went about coding the data, identifying themes and patterns, and categorizing the codes. Furthermore, I explained the rationale behind presenting the findings in two parts and how I contextualized the data based on individual circumstances. This approach enabled participants to juxtapose their own outcomes with those of their peers. Consequently, during the meeting, they had the opportunity to either corroborate or challenge the findings and introduce fresh perspectives.

After praying, I proposed a set of questions to guide the discussion. I made it clear that the participants were free to offer their own analysis and criticisms and to bring up other research-related topics. They also posed questions to each other. I began by explaining the two assumptions I began my research with. They did not seem interested in delving into them, possibly due to the introductory nature of the material. They indicated agreement with the results. We then proceeded to the second part, where I outlined why the analysis was centred on validating and denying the previously presented assumptions. Each participant selected questions to address and discussed their experiences. They engaged in lively debates on various topics. They scrutinized the results and suggested potential applications for the research. I facilitated the discussion, then participated towards the end.

The participants posed questions to each other and to me. The most contentious topics were:

- Do you think the result reflected your experience and the other participants’?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree, and what would you like to add to the initial interpretation of the findings?
- In your opinion, how did the findings respond to the research assumptions?
- Do you think the duration of the investigation influenced the results?
- How could others benefit from the results of this research?
- Would it be possible to carry out new research with more participants?
- Can this project be adapted into a weekly study format?
- Based on this project, would it be possible to offer vocational training for Sunday Schools, lasting a maximum of one hour per meeting?

### Outcomes

In the focus group, a critical examination of the findings and my interpretation of them took place. Despite initiating the meeting and offering clarifications, I deferred answering questions and sharing my perspective until the end. My motivation in conducting this research project was to assist individuals grappling with vocational challenges akin to those I had encountered. Recognizing the importance of fostering an environment conducive to critical feedback, I prioritized listening to the participants before articulating my own views. Throughout the discussion, I wrote down direct quotes from participants in order to accurately convey the group’s stance on whether the research had bolstered their confidence in pursuing cross-cultural missions post-graduation. The debate revolved around two key assumptions: the impact of participation in

the research on the participants' confidence in their calling and the correlation between vocational maturation and the increased use of specific words and expressions. Initially, I believed that conviction in one's calling could only be substantiated through heightened internal evidence, a notion that was challenged during the meeting.

During the focus group, participants shared their thoughts openly and engaged in lively debates on the research subjects. Consistent with the project's overall approach, aliases were assigned to their comments. The pronouns utilized in the text conform to the gender associated with the alias selected by each participant.

### **Comments From the Group**

After the group collectively determined the questions that would serve as the foundation for the discussion, each participant was given a chance to respond to the questions that resonated with them the most. The group then engaged in a debate regarding each others' comments. Some comments were concise, while others delved into the intricacies of the findings. In the following section, I share the most pertinent remarks. All answers were given in Portuguese; I translated them into English.

Ruth1 (P7) initiated the discussion by expressing, "It was gratifying to see the growth of my vocational confidence and inner conviction visualized on the graphs." However, she was taken aback by how the context influenced her relationship with God and by the absence of an increase in confirmations through internal evidence among all participants. During the debate on this matter, the

group proposed that various factors could have impacted the outcome, such as the religious background of each individual, the denomination of the church they attended, and their personal connection with God. The data mentioned variations in the participants' contexts but did not provide enough detail to validate this notion. Nonetheless, the information that I presented at the outset influenced their eventual deductions. The participants engaged in a vigorous discussion on two key points. Firstly, despite having developed the ability to perceive God's voice internally, they had also progressed in discerning their calling through external evidence. Secondly, they thought that the three-month duration of the data collection phase was inadequate to finalize their transformation.

Timothy<sup>3</sup> (P3) stated that "external evidence was an important means of confirmation for me, but my shift to complete trust only came through internal evidence, which I experienced during and after answering the final questionnaire." He also commented that the duration of the investigative phase was insufficient to bring about more profound changes in how he heard God's voice. He was satisfied with the external and internal evidence, stating that confirmation from other people also was crucial for him. José<sup>3</sup> (P4) also commented on the investigation's deadline. He said he continued to reflect on his vocation after answering the final questionnaire. His vocational confidence continued to mature in the following weeks. During the meeting, he said, "I now feel completely confident and affirm that God has confirmed me by internal and external evidence." Timothy<sup>3</sup> (P3) again shared, "Before, I always tried to solve my inner problems by listening to others, looking for a mystical answer. I noticed my prayers were changing during the research, and I feel safer listening to God speaking to my heart. I feel closer to

him now.” However, he said he likes receiving direction from God through external and internal evidence. In addition, Ester7 (P2) said, “When I answered the FQ, I still did not feel confident enough; I was trying to align my thoughts and feelings. However, this gradually came to fruition, and now I can better understand God’s voice in my heart.”

Ruth1 (P7) then presented another perspective that sparked a lengthy discussion. She articulated that “when some became more confident, they influenced others, resulting in an environment of growth for the entire group.” This insight prompted a deeper examination of how the personal development of team members could impact the community as a whole. While their initial focus was on exploring the connection between personal spirituality and vocational confidence, the group came to realize that discerning individual vocations should also be viewed as a manifestation of God’s work within the church. I was taken aback by this profound insight. It made me realize that I had not previously considered the potential impact of individual vocational growth on the body of Christ.

Jose3 (P4) expressed a strong desire for me to adapt this research project into a tool that could be utilized in various settings. He emphasized the importance of his involvement in the research for his personal growth and expressed a desire to assist others in a similar manner. He said, “When we started this project, it affected us greatly, do you know? We do not talk about it here at CEAM, but sometimes, we get into conflict; we do not know if we are in the right place and thinking of giving up. So, it would be fascinating if other people called to cross-cultural missions could participate in this project. It would also be great to take this to churches, not just seminaries.” João3 (P6) echoed this sentiment by highlighting the necessity of

projects in seminaries that help students understand their calling. He said: “There is an urgent need to offer real, practical help so that seminarians can better understand their purpose. I see much confusion, much theory, and insufficient reflection on the issue of vocation and calling within seminaries, which reflects the missionaries’ lack of confidence when arriving in the field.” Still debating the same topic, Ruth8 (P1) said that she would like to get involved in applying this model in other contexts. She said, “We held a meeting to study about vocation in my church with more than fifty people, and some felt called to be missionaries. They taught a lot, but it was just theory. Here, we did something practical; I grew a lot listening to the experiences of my colleagues and through debates and readings. The interview helped me see how unsure I still was. I know they could be mature by participating in a project like this. I thought about offering this proposal there. Do you understand? A large group from the church is crying for help, and I would like to help them.” Ester24 (P10) commented along the same lines. She concluded by saying, “I think that from everything we said and heard here, we can say that research was essential for our career, even if the assumption of internal confirmation did not work, but we matured a lot. I wish others could go through this too.”

Jonas5 (P5) was critical about the duration of the research. Although, in the end, he became completely confident that God had called him to serve full-time, he was unsure whether God had called him to serve in Brazil or other countries. Esther24 (P10) told him that “perhaps God is calling you to serve in both contexts at different times.” Several colleagues and I agreed with the comment. However, he asked if we could still add another phase to guide those who were still completing

the vocational maturation process. Ester3 (P9) agreed with Jonas5's (P5) request. She wanted more time to complete the vocational discernment process and receive guidance while reflecting on what she had learned. For them, the project needed another phase, where spiritual direction would be offered to those who still required guidelines in choosing a ministry. Jonas5 (P5) told me to provide some help in the long term if I created a tool to help others vocationally. Ester3 (P9) suggested that AMIDE could support CEAM in this regard, offering this kind of assistance to the students. I replied that I could not add time to the research project, since I needed to follow the DMin schedule; however, I appreciated the suggestions and would work with CEAM and AMIDE to think about ways to help them.

Finally, Ester7 (P2) ended the discussion by saying something I had already been reflecting on during the meeting. She commented that her growth was undoubtedly more significant than expected. She now realized that she was initially less confident than she claimed in her answers. She said: "When I answered the questionnaires, I do not think I did an intense self-analysis. Sometimes, right away, it is easy to say: oh, I feel confident! However, when I learned, reflected a little more, and tried to explain my thinking, I discovered that I was still not as confident as I thought."

### **My Comments**

When I shared my thoughts with the participants, I explained to them that some of them had a mixed understanding of the topic at the beginning of the project, and they had varying levels of confidence. Some of their answers seemed to be more idealized concepts rather than an accurate reflection of their actual

understanding. However, by repeating questions in the questionnaires and interviews, I was able to extract reliable information from them. I also recalled Paulo Freire's teachings about practices in the Brazilian educational system. He emphasizes the importance of aligning speech with action. He explains that some people idealize and dissociate their thoughts from their daily lives. Freire states, "It is essential to reduce the distance between what is said and what is done in such a way that, at a given moment, your speech is your practice" (Freire 2003, 61. My translation). This led me to focus on extracting information from the participants that went beyond pre-defined concepts, as these could be disconnected from their true understanding and emotions. Additionally, I realized the need to delve beneath the surface and avoid getting caught up in generalizations and the cultural pressure to appear strong and confident. I also recognized that quantitative research methods in this context would not necessarily reflect the participants' experiences. However, the collection instruments (the IQ, interviews, and FQ) allowed me to capture their ideas, words, and feelings at different stages of the research.

I shared that the data was interpreted based on what I knew about them and their contexts. By utilizing data triangulation, it became evident that certain interpretations, which initially appeared contradictory, were actually complementary. These interpretations addressed various aspects of their thoughts throughout the research stages, ultimately revealing a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals arrive at their calling. Participant Jose3 (P4) exemplified this phenomenon. In response to question 8 in the IQ (refer to Appendix 4), he displayed unwavering confidence in selecting the type of

ministry he would pursue post-graduation. However, in question 7, where participants were asked to identify the context in which they envisioned serving, he chose both “in his Judea and Samaria” and “at the ends of the earth.” Initially, this seemed contradictory to me as I had not considered the possibility of individuals serving in different contexts at various stages of their lives. Until that point, I perceived calling as a singular and unchanging concept. P4’s conflicting responses stemmed from his inner conflict between two distinct impulses. Through this experience, the participant and I underwent a process of mutual growth in understanding vocational calling. Reflecting on Peter’s callings (Chapter 3) and engaging with the group allowed me to adopt a more flexible and inclusive perspective on vocational calling. The apparent contradiction in P4’s data reflected his journey toward self-assurance and self-discovery. A comparison of these findings with the interview and the FQ highlighted a developmental trajectory towards increased maturity and self-awareness in terms of vocational aspirations. As he matured vocationally, P4 confidently expressed his desire to serve in diverse contexts.

Upon reflecting on the arguments presented by the participants regarding the impact of an individual’s increased confidence on the group, I became aware of my own entrenched individualistic cultural perspective. The group was able to perceive something that had escaped my notice. They placed great importance on external evidence, as many of them embraced a more collective mindset than my own. My perspective significantly influenced my findings, particularly in regards to the validation provided by internal evidence. Participatory Action Research approach prompted the group to view themselves as a cohesive unit, to recognize

the divine presence in their communal interactions, and to appreciate individual growth as a means of mutual support. I recalled an instance when I referred to the list of ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:12. I labeled them as specific vocations intended for the church's edification. My primary focus was on expanding the kingdom rather than on the qualitative development of the church. While my initial thoughts were not entirely incorrect, they were limited in scope. Rooted in an individualistic cultural framework, I had overlooked the section where Paul emphasizes that God bestowed these gifts "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry [...] till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12,13). Paul emphasizes the importance of being part of a church community, providing mutual support, and fostering personal growth that positively impacts the body of Christ. Thanks to the group, I gained insight into God's vocational vision for the church. In conclusion, the utilization of a participatory approach to data analysis led to much better results than my independent analysis. This underscores the value of acknowledging the unique contribution of each individual participant in forming a collective understanding and generating a unified communal response to a specific need. As individuals become more confident in their personal calling, a more assured group emerges, akin to threads connecting and yielding to the Sovereign Weaver, who brings together disciples, families, nations, and humanity to create a tapestry that is redeemed and glorifies him.

During the focus group, the participants commented on how blessed they were with the readings and reflections on their calling. They also reported that

they grew through interacting with the other participants, hearing one another's experiences, and seeing how they dealt with similar challenges. This showed me that participation in the learning process catalyzed their development.

My last comment was about the suggestion that I transform this project into a vocational training tool to use in other contexts. During the discussion on this matter, it became evident that such a transformation could greatly benefit Christian organizations. Nevertheless, it was unanimously agreed that certain adjustments must be made first. The central idea that emerged from the debate was the integration of the experience-sharing meetings, which ran concurrently with the research, into the project. Apart from assisting individuals facing vocational crises and Christian organizations, integrating everything together into a vocational training tool could establish a continuous stream of data, serving as a valuable resource for future studies.

In the six experience-sharing meetings that ran parallel to the research, I applied a pedagogical approach that I acquired during my DMin studies. These sessions involved people sharing their conversion and calling experiences, group discussions on predetermined subjects, and mutual support among participants. The feedback received from the group following the meetings highlighted the significant impact of this teaching methodology. Rather than being passive recipients of theoretical knowledge from an instructor, they actively engaged in a collaborative learning process as a group. Although I could not collect data from these meetings and thus they were not part of the formal research project, they played a crucial role in the participants' vocational development.

Following this discussion I began designing the suggested vocational training tool. It consists of six steps. The research participants would offer their churches this training to develop mature people's sense of vocation. They would assume the dual roles of researcher and facilitator during the sessions. The training sessions would be conducted over six weeks, with each session lasting two hours, adhering to the structure outlined in Appendix 1. A maximum of ten participants would be chosen, and the facilitator would administer an initial questionnaire tailored to the specific setting. Throughout the six-week period, the facilitator would conduct individual interviews and conclude with a final questionnaire at the end of the sessions. The data collected would be securely stored by the CEAM secretary, forming a valuable database for future research endeavours. Lastly, upon completing the training program, the facilitator would provide personalized vocational guidance to interested individuals.

### **Conclusion**

The theme of my research emerged from my reflections on how I navigated vocational challenges, and my desire to assist others facing similar obstacles. During my time at the AMIDE base, I observed the significant need for vocational support among CEAM students. Despite the struggles I encountered throughout my journey, I acknowledge that God works in his own time and that these challenges were essential for my growth. Initially, I felt disheartened by the two-decade gap between God's call for me to serve as a cross-cultural missionary and the commencement of my ministry in Thailand. I believed that I had wasted valuable time. However, I now recognize that this period was crucial for my

personal development and preparation for my current work. This project was designed to aid students in discerning their vocational calling and help them feel assured about God's plan for their lives and ministry post-graduation.

This research project fulfilled its objective of collecting data and offering vocational help to participants. Drawing on the data presented in Figures 13 and 14, as well as insights from the focus group discussion at the conclusion of the research, I am convinced that the outcomes indicate a significant vocational maturation and increased confidence among the group. Through active engagement in the process, participants dedicated time to learning, reading, reflecting, sharing experiences, and responding to inquiries, which facilitated a deeper understanding of their calling. Moreover, the process enhanced their ability to discern God's voice and connect their specific vocation to their intended ministry post-graduation. Within a short span of time, some participants reported going on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth, which has the potential to continue throughout their ministry careers. As a secondary objective, the findings presented in this study can provide us with guidance as we support students at CEAM and other Christian institutions.

The final group meeting gave me fresh perspectives on the results. Despite the unanimous agreement within the group that personal experiences with God provided confirmation of their calling, participants still sought external evidence for validation. While I initially anticipated an increase in confirmations through internal evidence by the end of the research, this was not the case. It became clear to me that the influences from the group and the church played a significant role in confirming people's vocations through external evidence. It was only during

the meeting that I realized the impossibility of vocational development in isolation from the community and how individual growth positively impacted both the group and the body of Christ. The group's analysis taught me that instead of an increase in confirmations through internal evidence, there was actually an increase in confirmations through both types of evidence. This is supported by Figure 15, which demonstrates a growth in the individual maturity of the participants, ultimately benefiting the group and their churches.

The initial lack of vocational confidence among CEAM students and their subsequent growth throughout the project presents an opportunity to assist other organizations facing similar challenges. Repurposing this project into a vocational training tool could be a valuable resource for individuals and organizations struggling with vocational uncertainties.

In conclusion, I want to offer a final reflection on the focus group discussion. Contemplating the various callings of the apostle Peter makes me wonder whether a specific vocation is a singular and unchanging occurrence in the life of a follower of Jesus. Upon examining Peter's journey, it became evident to me that God summons his disciples to diverse ministries at different junctures in their lives. Initially called to be a disciple, Peter was later tasked with the role of an evangelist and eventually a shepherd to his flock. Moreover, following the dispersion of the church in Acts 8:1, Peter ventured to cities beyond Israel, serving as a cross-cultural missionary (Acts 8:25). Therefore, I conclude this analysis by emphasizing the importance of remaining attuned to God's voice, striving to heed his directives. As we navigate through various phases of life, God

may unveil new specific callings for us, guiding us in ways that enhance our productivity and mould us into individuals after his own heart (Acts 13:22).

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **CONCLUSION**

I began this portfolio by reflecting on my leadership journey. I revisited my history, origins, and upbringing, and re-examined the challenges I faced to reach this point. Enrolling in Tyndale's DMin program was a transformative experience that provided me with new insights and expanded my perspective on what it means to be called into ministry.

My interest in delving deeper into the subjects of vocation and leadership was sparked during my tenure as Vice President of my organization. I observed a significant number of individuals struggling with their vocational confidence. Pursuing a DMin degree seemed like the perfect opportunity to gain a comprehensive understanding of this issue through research. To address the root cause of this problem, I collaborated with ten CEAM students to conduct a research project based on PAR principles. My perception was that the outcomes of this project revealed that engaging in topical readings, self-reflection, and group discussions in which people share their personal experiences significantly contributed to the vocational growth of the entire group, including myself. It became evident that the range of methods I employed in the research catered to the unique needs of the participants, some of whom required theological knowledge, while others sought to cultivate spiritual disciplines. Furthermore,

individuals with internal barriers stemming from past traumatic experiences found solace in sharing stories of transformation and calling. This fostered a sense of empathy and solidarity among the group members. This portfolio encompasses three main sections: my personal Leadership Journey, my Philosophy of Leadership, and my Research Report. All together, it highlights the internal transformation I have undergone over the course of the past three years.

In this final section, I will discuss the conclusion of this cycle and the way in which my comprehension of Christian leadership has been refined by God. When I commenced my DMin studies, I also embarked on a period of substantial personal transformation. During this time, I was preparing cross-cultural missionaries for service in Asia and Africa, yet I had not yet established a clear strategy for providing vocational support to them. Simultaneously, I was relocating with my family to Thailand to lead a team of Brazilian missionaries in a small town in the country's interior. In both of these contexts, my focus was on preparing and training individuals.

As I delved into the study of leadership and broadened my perspectives on Christian ministry, I found that the lessons I learned were directly applicable to my everyday life. The theoretical knowledge that I gained through class time and the ministry challenges that I encountered along the way formed the foundation of my growth during this period. Additionally, Tyndale's approach to teaching, which involved extensive discussion and debate of the course content, pushed me beyond my comfort zone and taught me the importance of seeking innovative solutions, listening to others, and remaining receptive to criticism. It also underscored the fact that leadership is a journey of continual development.

Subsequently, I have implemented this model in my teaching and training, fostering discussions in small groups and striving to draw out students' questions and experiences in order to build knowledge collectively.

### **Growth Cycles**

During our DMin classes, we reflected on seasons as an analogy for our spiritual life. We undergo cycles of inner transformation and maturation directed by God. I learned that the process I went through to develop my sense of calling was guided by God. I realized that the cycles I went through were natural life stages, which opened and closed periodically. Through them, God prepared me for the challenges I would go on to face. These inner transformations were complex experiences that brought discomfort and sometimes loneliness. Each time a season was complete it brought aspects of my personal and ministry life to an end. These conclusions led to times of reflection and preparation. They were like winter seasons, burying the rest of that year's life and bringing stillness and peace. I realized that through them, God was preparing me for new paths and challenges that were coming, like the hope of spring and summer.

I discovered that the numerous cycles I had completed were all significant. I can never view them as time wasted. In certain instances, I experienced solitude, akin to Jacob prior to crossing the Ford of Jabbok (Genesis 32:24). After sending away his family, team, and possessions, he spends time in isolation on the opposite side of the ford, preparing for a solitary struggle. There were matters that could only be addressed between him and God. I also resonate with Moses standing before God at the burning bush. Despite sharing much of his ministry

with his brother Aaron, during that pivotal moment he has to confront God alone (Exodus 3:2). God summons Moses to reveal his will and the tasks he wants Moses to undertake moving forward. In both of these stories, Jacob and Moses are concluding chapters in their lives. God guides them toward a new phase of ministry. Although these valleys are challenging to traverse, and we typically try to avoid them, they are essential for our vocational development. In these instances, we stand vulnerable before God, remove our metaphorical sandals, and sometimes emerge on the other side with a limp. Nevertheless, these experiences mould our character and bring us closer to resembling Jesus.

In addition to learning about the importance of life cycles, I also learned about the importance of waiting. As Moses leads Israel through the wilderness, God, through the pillar of fire and cloud, determines when they should move and when they should wait (Numbers 9:15-23). We cannot accelerate or delay God's action in us; our role is to be attentive to his movement, as he closes and opens new seasons. We learn to trust God and remain attentive to his direction through waiting. The doctrine of sovereignty teaches us that God does not lose control of our lives and that the challenges we face are not beyond his agenda for us. They are integral parts of his plan for us. Understanding this encourages us to embrace the waiting periods in our journey. God's timing is perfect and his control is never relinquished. Acknowledging his sovereignty reminds us to remain steadfast in faith and attentive to his divine direction, even in moments of uncertainty.

This lesson was crucial for me. For a long time I carried a sense of sadness about the time it took for me to embark on my ministry as a cross-cultural

missionary. Despite feeling that God had called me to this path at a young age, I only began my missionary career after reaching the age of forty. I attributed this delay to my own poor choices and the challenges they led to. However, the Bible shows that delays in commencing ministry are common and are often part of God's divine plan. Figures such as Moses and David, who are not destined to be shepherds, spend years in this role before stepping into their true calling (Exodus 3:1; 1 Samuel 17:34). Similarly, even though Paul is not called to be a Jewish scholar, he undergoes years of preparation at the rabbinical school of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Even Jesus, whose ultimate calling is not to be a carpenter, works in this profession until the age of thirty (Mark 6:3). These periods of apparent delay are, in fact, crucial stages of learning and growth, during which those individuals are being equipped for their true purpose. This helped me understand the importance of persevering towards one's goal without being deterred by setbacks. Failures are inevitable, but I also learned to trust in God's sovereign guidance, knowing that he will lead us according to his perfect timing and will.

### **From Focus on the Individual to Focus on the Team**

The Participatory Action Research principles allowed me to take on the dual role of both researcher and group participant. The preparation for my research commenced nearly a year prior to its execution. Unbeknownst to me, this set the stage for my individualistic perspective on ministry to undergo a transformation. As I planned the research, I operated under the assumption that the participants' vocational growth would be confirming primarily through internal experiences. In the end, the data did not support this assumption. Driven

by my previous focus on the individual rather than the group, I sought to demonstrate that vocational discernment was solely the result of personal spiritual growth. I aimed to illustrate that participants who became more confident in their calling over the three-month period did so because of answers received from God through prayer, scripture reading, and personal reflection. The findings of the research led me down an unexpected turn. Interpreting the data prompted me to enter a prolonged period of reflection on life within a community.

During this time, I gained deeper insights into the value of residing in a community, the privilege of belonging to a church, and the importance of operating as the body of Christ. I thought about the movement of the Holy Spirit within the congregation, where various gifts and talents are distributed among the members. We are supposed to collaborate harmoniously as a cohesive unit with complementary and interdependent abilities and responsibilities, to function as a vibrant, thriving, and fruitful entity. This approach to ministry is not egocentric but rather centred on the spiritual growth of God's people and need to reach those who are not yet believers.

Prior to embracing this new perspective, I tended to approach tasks independently, influenced by my personality and cultural upbringing. Solitude was a key element in my spiritual growth. I believed that a deep connection with God could only be achieved through individual effort. Even before commencing the DMin program, I found it challenging when individuals emphasized the importance of groups in personal and spiritual advancement. Upon reviewing my portfolio, I recognize that I went through a significant shift from individualism to a collaborative approach to Christian living. This is God's intention. Relocating to

Thailand and starting my studies at Tyndale played a crucial role in this shift. Collaborating with fellow doctoral students and participating in the PAR project exposed me to a new way of growing. Previously, my focus was on imparting my knowledge to others, but as I completed the project, I realized the profound impact of group interactions on my own personal development. The feedback, suggestions, and critiques from my peers helped me discern God's will more clearly and discover paths that I would not have explored on my own. This experience prompted me to reflect further on the concept of community within the church and the influence of groups on individual spiritual growth.

I comprehend that my research findings show that the study had a positive impact on the other participants. It helped them identify their calling and future ministry activities. The supportive environment created by the participants contributed to a growing sense of confidence for all of them. This prompted me to reevaluate my leadership approach. I recognized that my focus on individual development may have limited the potential for collective growth in my ministry. Reflecting on my past leadership experiences, I see that my emphasis on personal prayer and internal discernment may have overlooked the benefits of communal collaboration and support. While my intentions were sincere, my rigid adherence to specific values and cultural norms may have hindered the development of a more inclusive and supportive approach to leadership. In recent years, I have come to understand the significance of Jesus's teachings on caring for others and the importance of collective service that should take place within the body of Christ. I now recognize the interdependent nature of the Christian community. Mutual support and collaboration are essential for ministry to take place. I have

learned that individualism can limit ministry effectiveness and may lead to pride and self-centeredness, whereas a communal approach fosters a spirit of unity and shared purpose.

It has become clear to me that collaboration is essential. Each member of a community possesses unique skills and gifts bestowed upon them by God. It is through our unity and the demonstration of love towards one another that we are able to showcase our discipleship to Jesus, as stated in John 13:35. The apostle Paul refers to the church as God's fellow workers, God's field, and God's building in I Corinthians 3:9. This shows our role as partners in God's mission. This underscores the importance of maintaining a solid connection with God and my fellow believers if I want to fulfill my God-given calling.

### **God Is the Essential Source of our Leadership**

Combining the models of Servant and Transformational Leadership enables me to lead in a way that focuses on nurturing individuals and equipping them to realize their inherent potential. While these models draw inspiration from Jesus' leadership style, they primarily address the practical aspects of leadership within a ministry context. They do not sufficiently emphasize the foundational principles of Christian leadership. A leader committed to aligning with God's purpose must prioritize their relationship with God and anchor what they do in the teachings of Jesus outlined in chapters 5-7 of the Gospel of Matthew.

Prioritizing our spiritual connection with God should precede efforts to support the team and enhance their productivity. Jesus exemplified this by consistently seeking God's guidance through prayer and solitude before making

significant decisions. He attributed all of his actions to divine direction, underscoring the importance of aligning one's leadership with God's will (John 5:19). By following this example, a Christian leader can develop a leadership style that is not only effective but also reflects their faith and values.

The teachings of Jesus Christ should be integrated into every aspect of our lives. If we view leadership solely as a means of managing people and achieving outcomes, we may struggle to fulfill God's expectations for us as leaders. Jesus' decision to alter his route to Galilee in order to spend time with a single Samaritan woman (John 4) and God's redirection of Philip from ministering to crowds in Samaria to ministering to a lone Ethiopian (Acts 8) demonstrate that God's priorities may differ from our own. At times, we may not fully comprehend God's intentions, and it is essential for us to listen to his guidance and follow his instructions. By dedicating time to discerning God's direction, we can become servant leaders who contribute to the transformation of our teams and lead in a manner that aligns with God's will.

### **How Can I Apply This Learning**

Firstly, I intend to convey the knowledge I have acquired to AMIDE and CEAM, which could potentially aid our organization in overcoming various leadership obstacles.

Additionally, my perception was that as a result of their involvement in this project, a group of CEAM students grew in their confidence and ability to identify their calling. During our last meeting, the group expressed their desire to convert this study into a vocational training tool suitable for various Christian

environments. This initiative would involve training individuals and continuously collecting data concerning vocational challenges, which would support future research endeavors on this subject. Since that last focus group meeting, I have been pondering how we could address the participants' request for a replicable process to help individuals who are struggling to discern their calling.

Despite the extensive exploration of the topic of vocation in recent years, certain methods used to teach cross-cultural missionaries in Brazil are overly theoretical. The primary advantage of using this study to develop a training program lies in its participatory and collaborative approach, which is based on the teaching methods employed at Tyndale. I recognize that the majority of CEAM students are experiencing vocational challenges. I think this is true of other Christian institutions, too. Therefore, utilizing a tool that fosters confidence in one's vocation could serve as a valuable resource for Christian organizations. The objective would be to assist individuals in recognizing God's voice and identifying whether they are called to various kinds of Christian ministry, including cross-cultural missions.

### **How Can the Findings Be Explored in Future Research?**

Upon reviewing the results of my research, I pinpointed an area that warrants further investigation. Upon scrutinizing the data, I deduced that God's particular calling was more flexible than I initially assumed. In regards to cross-cultural missionaries, a rigid understanding of vocation, which determines the nature, duration, and location of someone's service, could impede a missionary from embracing it when God redirects them. Roberts explains that the role of

cross-cultural missionaries has evolved in recent years to encompass a broader community perspective, diverging from the traditional view that characterized missionaries as individuals who received a specific divine call to serve a particular group indefinitely (Roberts 2012, 7,8). Nevertheless, the examination of Peter's various calls to different roles and locations in Chapter 3 demonstrates that God may issue a different calling for someone at different stages of their life. This underscores the importance of always being receptive to God's guidance and being open to vocational changes.

In the course of one of my missionary trips, I engaged in a conversation with a missionary from Brazil who had spent over a decade serving people in Asia. She was aware that her time in that region was drawing to a close, yet she found herself grappling with uncertainty as she contemplated new mission fields or even returning to Brazil to engage in local church ministry. I have heard similar stories from other missionaries who spent years serving in the same location.

There is potential for research to be conducted concerning individuals who have transitioned from one vocation to another. It would be worth exploring how they identified that God wanted them to change their calling and what the process of starting anew in a different ministry involved. Delving into these topics that are pertinent to those who commit themselves wholeheartedly to Christian ministry could offer insights about and solutions to their dilemmas. While my own research did not delve into these specific areas, it seems to me that there is room for future studies on this front. It would also be good to provide support mechanisms to missionaries and others who have dedicated a significant portion

of their lives to serving in a particular location. By addressing these challenges, it may be possible to assist those navigating vocational transitions.

### **A Final Word**

Through this journey, my confidence as a leader has been significantly strengthened. I have gained a fresh perspective on my calling. To the professors and peers who played instrumental roles in my growth: I extend my gratitude to you. The past three years have been marked by rigorous learning. They have provided me with insights into God's intentions for my life and ministry through collaborative group experiences.

Looking back, I realize that if I could start the DMin program again, I would approach almost everything in a similar manner, as I recognize how the grace of Jesus has worked within me through the influence of professors, peers, and the overall learning experience. However, I would like to emphasize one particular point. While learning about leadership in a broad sense has expanded my perspectives on the subject, I wish I had dedicated more time to reflecting on Christian leadership. Although I find the servant-transformational leadership model useful for Christian organizations, I understand that it becomes incomplete when focused solely on individuals and organizational objectives. It was only later that I grasped the importance of beginning Christian leadership with God, deriving from a calling received from him. This operates as a cycle of learning and service, always commencing with the understanding of God's will, flowing toward the people of God, and exercised within the framework of Christian

ministry, all for the glory of God. I believe that all leadership styles studied in the course would be enriched by this perspective.

To the individuals who participated in my research project I urge you to actively pursue your calling to know God and to make Him known wherever you are led. May the initial steps you took in learning to discern God's voice serve as a foundation for continuous growth, enabling you to support and uplift others on their respective journeys.

To those who are still uncertain about their vocation, I challenge you to invest time in nurturing your relationship with God, thereby enhancing your ability to recognize his guidance. Furthermore, I encourage you to connect with ministry leaders, peers, and fellow travellers on the path of faith. As members of the body of Christ, let us support one another, extend blessings, and serve God collectively. May all of our journeys be guided by the quest to understand God's will and grow in our self-awareness. May we produce abundant fruit for God's glory in every stage of our life.

## APPENDICES

## **Appendix 1: Outline Suggested During the Focus-Group Meeting**

- According to the group's needs perceived in the interview and first questionnaire, the facilitator will choose six of the themes below for the sessions.

- 1- Understanding the specific vocation, Ephesians 4:1-16, citing Palmer.
- 2- The practice of paying attention, Exodus 3: 1-10, citing Barton.
- 3- Who am I? Exodus 2: 11-22, citing Barton.
- 4- The four stations: phases of life, citing Palmer.
- 5- The mentoring model of Jesus and Peter, citing Barton.
- 6- The reinstatement of Peter, citing Nouwen.
- 7- Finding God's will together, citing Barton.
- 8- When the ways close, citing Palmer.

These themes were chosen based on Tyndale's DMin classes and readings. Furthermore, I decided on them because they helped resolve conflicts and doubts about my vocational calling.

- Structure of the meetings: They will take place in the virtual environment through the Zoom platform and last two hours each, with the time divided into two parts.

Part one (55 minutes)

- \* Reading the biblical text.
- \* Reading quotes from chosen authors (Barton, Nouwen, or Palmer).
- \* The facilitator will present three questions about the theme of the meeting, but he will not give the answers or personal opinions. Then, he will ask participants to raise questions if they have any doubts or difficulties with the theme. He will choose three of them that he evaluates as more relevant. The six questions will serve to foster the debate and the construction of knowledge in small groups.
- \* Divide into groups of three participants, time for debate and reflection on the six questions we were presented.
- \* Each small group will choose one of the participants to share their findings.
- \* The facilitator will close this first part by summarizing small group findings.

10 min stop for a coffee break.

Part two (55 minutes per presentation)

- \* Two students will be invited (separately) to tell their conversion story, context, calling, and vocational challenges.
- \* The other participants will be encouraged to offer concise guidance, encouragement, or comfort. Biblical texts and prayers will also be welcome.
- \* One of the participants will say a prayer for the presenter.
- \* At the end of the meeting, all participants will email me a short report describing what they learned and their impressions of God's words that day.

## Appendix 2



### Certificate of Ethics Review Approval for Research Involving Human Subjects

Primary Investigator:	Orlando Bruno Carneiro Costa
Faculty Supervisor: (if applicable)	Dr. Narry Santos
REB File Number:	2023 00005
Title of Project:	Helping CEAM/AMIDE Seminary candidates discern their vocational calling through a small group program
Original Approval Date:	May 15, 2023
Most Recent Approval Date:	October 23, 2023
Amendment History:	October 14, 2023
Expiry Date:	May 15, 2024

This certificate indicates that the Tyndale Research Ethics Board has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the delegated review process.

This protocol has been approved for a period of one year and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date. Please ensure that an Ethics Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report is submitted 30 days prior to the expiry date of this protocol.

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Heather J. S. Birch, Ph.D.  
*Chair, Research Ethics Board*

## **Appendix 3**

### **Consent to Participate in the Study**

Helping CEAM/AMIDE Seminary Students Discern Their Vocational Calling for Cross-Cultural Missions in Brasília, Brazil.  
July 11, 2023 – March 31, 2024.

#### **Conducted by**

Orlando Bruno Carneiro Costa

Tyndale Seminary- Doctor of Ministry (Leadership)

#### **Under the supervision of**

Dr. Narry Santos, PHD  
DMML 0952 D1 2022-2023 Integration Proposal

I understand that I am invited to participate in the above research study. This study intends to investigate how the lack of confidence about vocational calling in some CEAM students influences the selection of the Seminary that will offer the best ministerial training and career after the studies end. By signing this form in the space provided at the end, **I declare my agreement to participate in the study.**

#### **What Will Participation Involve?**

The research will be conducted in these sequential steps:

In the first stage, data will be collected through the first questionnaire. Through the responses, the researcher can see what the participants think and how confident they are about their calling. A semi-structured interview will then be conducted. There, the researcher and participants can talk about specific issues. This way, they will have more time to share their points of view, express their doubts and propose questions to the other participants. At the end of the process, they will respond to the final questionnaire to measure changes over the three months. The researcher will gather the data, code it, and prepare a summary of the results.

Then, the results will be delivered to participants for individual analysis. Afterwards, a Zoom meeting will be scheduled to discuss and evaluate the findings in a collaborative focus group.

#### **Are there significant risks?**

The following are the potential risks related to their involvement in this study:

1. The eight weekly meetings will take place in a virtual environment. Participants will be invited to share part of their personal and ministerial stories. No one will be coerced to participate or disconcerted to provide some contribution to the other participants. Participation will be voluntary; you can leave the virtual

room anytime. It will be clearly explained at the first meeting. During meetings, there will be no audio or video recording, and no data for the research will be collected. All the surveys will be anonymous. Moreover, no individual data or information will be shared; it will only be combined as a group response. The data lifetime will cover the need for analysis, and the researcher plans to destroy all information after it.

2. You can refuse to answer any questions from the questionnaire or refuse to send the weekly report. You may end your involvement in the study at any time if you want.

### **What Benefits Will My Participation Bring?**

Lack of confidence in vocational calling can bring several problems to the future of the seminarian, starting with the choice of school. Seminars have different specializations, doctrines, and outbreaks. The seminar with another focus will not offer the student essential disciplines for their career, thus compromising their formation.

Another issue is that opportunities and experiences during the seminar already prepare for a specific ministerial career. Finally, the students develop a relationship net with people with similar careers who will accompany them throughout their lives.

So, this study will allow participants to learn more about their vocational calling and help them choose the ministerial career after completing their studies.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

All information shared will remain strictly confidential. To protect the confidentiality of questionnaires and reports, names will be replaced by pseudonyms and information that could identify participants will be changed or omitted. Each participant will receive access to the results when the research is completed.

### **Voluntary Participation**

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. There will be no penalty if you choose not to participate, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to

answer any questions without suffering any negative consequences. If deemed necessary, any personal information may be deleted at the request of the participant who provided it. Besides, if you opt-out, all information collected about you prior to my withdrawal will be deleted from the research.

### **How Will the Study Results Be Shared?**

The researcher will utilize the results in his final Tyndale Doctor in Ministry portfolio. They will also be available for sharing across the research library and

in Tyndale Digital Collections. In addition, study results may be offered for scholarly publication or shared at conferences and forums. Ultimately, all study participants will receive a copy of the results. By participating in this research, you have not waived any legal rights.

**Consent to Participate**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the above information, and I freely consent to participate in this research study by signing in the space provided below. If I have any further questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or study supervisor at any stage.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale University. If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study or my rights as a participant, I may contact the Research Ethics Board at [reb@tyndale.ca](mailto:reb@tyndale.ca).

**Participant's signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

### Initial Questionnaire

**Name:**  
**Fictitious name:**  
**Age:**  
**Gender:**  
**Email/Phone:**

**This questionnaire was conducted at the beginning of the research**

1- What do you think about the idea that God still calls people to specific vocations to edify his church?

2- In your understanding, how does God call someone to a specific vocation?

3- After reading and reflecting on Ephesians 4:12, underline the ministry (s) you most identify with below:

Apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist, none of them.

Please explain your choice.

4- Why did you choose to come to study in a missiological Seminary like CEAM/AMIDE?

5- Have you practised any spiritual discipline to help discern your vocation calling?

6 - Do you understand that God still communicates with his disciples? If so, what means does he usually use to communicate with you?

7- Considering the options listed below, in which of these contexts do you feel most directed by God to work?

In my Jerusalem and Judca (geographically close and culturally close)

In my Samaria (geographically close and culturally distant)

At the ends of the earth (geographically distant and culturally distant)

I do not feel directed by God to work in a specific context

8- How confident do you feel about choosing a ministry according to your calling after reflecting on your general and specific vocation during the research?

Uncertain  Slightly confidence  Building confidence  Growing certainty

Full confidence

## Appendix 5

### Final Questionnaire

Name:  
Fictitious name:  
Age:  
Gender:  
Email/Phone:

**This questionnaire was conducted at the end of the research**

1- What do you think about the idea that God still calls people to specific vocations to edify his church?

2- In your understanding, how does God call someone to a specific vocation?

3- After reading and reflecting on Ephesians 4: 12, underline the ministry (s) you most identify with below:

Apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist, none of them.

Please explain your choice.

4- Why did you choose to come to study in a missiological Seminary like CEAM/AMIDE?

5- Have you practised any spiritual discipline to help discern your vocation calling?

6- Considering the options listed below, in which of these contexts do you feel most directed by God to work?

In my Jerusalem and Judea (geographically close and culturally close)

In my Samaria (geographically close and culturally distant)

At the ends of the earth (geographically distant and culturally distant)

I do not feel directed by God to work in a specific context

7- How confident do you feel about choosing a ministry according to your calling after reflecting on your general and specific vocation during the research?

Uncertain  Slightly confidence  Building confidence  Growing certainty

Full confidence

The following two questions are a summary of the questions suggested by the participants:

1- Describe your vocational calling, if any, including evidence and factors that helped you discern it.

2- Describe your expectations (fears, hopes and joys), if any, for working in a ministry in accordance with your vocational calling.

## **Appendix 6**

### **Guiding Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview**

The following questions served as guides for the interview. Other questions arose during the conversations. These were the topics covered; however, each interview followed its own flow.

- 1- Could you identify the ways in which God has spoken to you?
- 2- Could you tell me what impacted you the most in your conversion to Christ and in your vocational calling?
- 3- Could you explain how you identified God's voice in these processes of conversion and calling?
- 4- How confident do you feel about your vocational calling?
- 5- Do you feel safe sharing your calling with other people?
- 6- Do your family, friends, and church leaders accept and agree with your calling?
- 7- Do you understand that God has a specific calling for you? Please explain!
- 8- How confident do you feel about the ministry you will exercise after completing your studies?

## **Appendix 7**

### **Letter of thanks for the research project participation**

**Doctor of Ministry Project:** Helping CEAM/AMIDE Candidates Seminary discern their vocational call through a small group program.

**Date:**

**Dear:**

Thank you so much for your participation in this research project. Your contributions were significant to the growth of the entire group. I expect the experience has been edifying and constructive for you and your ministry. Also, I hope you have learned more about your vocational calling and be more confident about God's will for your life. Thank you for sharing your story, your challenges, and your concerns. I know that God, in His sovereignty, will continue to teach us His will and guide us toward His call to us.

I plan to complete this project until December 2023 and share access to the results after completion with you. If you have any questions, please contact me at

Thanks again, and many blessings while you keep loving God and serving your neighbour.

With my sincere gratitude,

Bruno Costa

Tyndale University, DMin

## Appendix 8

### List of all collected and classified codes

#### Specifications:

- Participants are identified by order and codename.
- The data were collected in Portuguese, and because they were coded in the first cycle using the In Vivo method, they are presented in Portuguese (except the subcategorization made in the third cycle, presented in green, which was classified in English).
- Direct question: Participants answered multiple choice questions about their confidence level in the questionnaires.
- In black: In Vivo codes.
- In red: Codes classified according to how they understood the voice of God
- In green: Codes classified according to confidence level
- In blue: Number of codes collected
- In brown: Sum of codes classified into subcategories

#### Participante (P1): Ruth8

##### Questionário inicial

- 1 “numa visão” Intimidade
  - 2 “Deus o instruí” Razão
  - 3 “direcionar o povo de Deus” Intimidade
  - 4 “fala ... em meio a Sarça ardente” Outros meios
  - 5 “confirmação de Deus em nosso coração” Sentimento
  - 6 “Deus falou a seus pais” Outras pessoas
  - 7 “vida de oração” Intimidade
  - 8 “Vida de oração, relacionamento com Deus, devocional” Intimidade
  - 9 *Direct question*: Building confidence
  - 10 *Direct question*: Building confidence
- 10\* (número de códigos coletados por instrumento de coleta)**
- Internal evidence: 06  
External evidence: 02  
Building confidence: 02

##### Entrevista

- 1 “testemunhos” Outras pessoas
- 2 “um testemunho e outros” Outras pessoas
- 3 “documentários” Outras pessoas
- 4 “o senhor (Espírito Santo) me perguntou” Intimidade
- 5 “ardente no meu coração” Sentimento
- 6 “Eu sei que eu não estava ficando em paz” Slightly confidence
- 7 “um pouco de insegurança” Slightly confidence
- 8 “Eu não acho que eu estou convicta” Slightly confidence
- 9 “eu fui definhando eu fui entristecendo” Slightly confidence
- 10 “orando e o senhor foi trazendo ânimo e confirmação” Building confidence

- 11 “Deus me falou” Outras pessoas
- 12 “quando Deus te chama, Deus acalma” Building confidence
- 13 “mexe com as nossas emoções” Sentimento
- 14 “orando e Deus. Ele continuou com a palavra dele confirmando” Oração
- 15 “pessoas ... para furar os nossos balões” Outras pessoas
- 16 “falando aquilo tudo através do homem” Outras pessoas
- 17 “resposta de Deus através da própria palavra” Escrituras
- 18 “somente a palavra” Escrituras
- 19 “confirma no coração” Sentimento
- 20 “eu me vejo mais como missionária” Growing certainty
- 21 “oração para eu poder ter um direcionamento” Oração
- 22 “o se mantém é somente a palavra de Deus” Escrituras
- 23 “não é o sustento. Não é o apoio” Growing certainty
- 24 “Deus que vai abrir nas portas” Outros meios

**24\***

Internal evidence: 07  
 External evidence: 09  
 Slightly confidence: 04  
 Building confidence: 02  
 Growing certainty: 02

Questionário final

- 1 “revelar seu Filho em mim” Intimidade
- 2 “Espírito Santo me disse” Intimidade
- 3 “depois de jejuar (para conhecer a vontade de Deus)” Intimidade
- 4 “oramos” Oração
- 5 “agindo em nossos corações” Sentimento
- 6 “pessoas próximas” Outras pessoas
- 7 “em meu coração” Sentimento
- 8 *Direct question*: Full confidence
- 9 “próprio entendimento” Razão
- 10 “oração” Intimidade
- 11 “profundidade da palavra” Escrituras
- 12 “ouviu Sua voz” Intimidade
- 13 *Direct question*: Full confidence
- 14 “falou ao meu coração” Sentimento
- 15 “ver uns documentários” Outros meios
- 16 “Em tudo temos direcionamento por Ele” Full confidence
- 17 “mas sua Palavra” Escrituras

**17\***

Internal evidence: 12  
 External evidence: 02  
 Full confidence: 03

**Participante (P2): Ester7**

Questionário inicial

1 “Respondendo as orações” Oração  
2 “relacionamento profundo com Deus” Intimidade  
3 “Oração” Oração  
4 “palavra” Escrituras  
5 *Direct question:* Building confidence  
6 *Direct question:* Building confidence  
**6\***  
Internal evidence: 04  
External evidence:00  
Building confidence: 02

#### Entrevista

1 “Ouvindo a palavra de Deus” Escrituras  
2 “no meu coração, fui tocada” Sentimento  
3 “chamado assim específico, eu não tenho, não tenho ainda” Uncertain  
4 “Deus fala muito o meu coração” Sentimento  
5 “esperando em Deus ... direção” Uncertain  
6 “Elas vêm ... um ministério” Outras pessoas  
7 “eu não tenho sentido essa paixão” Sentimento  
8 “Deus tem colocado no meu coração” Sentimento  
9 “vem do coração, né? Você sente aquela paz” Sentimento  
10 “aprender a ouvir a voz de Deus” Intimidade  
11 “estou realmente orando a Deus” Oração  
12 “Use o pastor, use, seja quem for” Outras pessoas  
**12\***  
Internal evidence: 08  
External evidence:02  
Uncertain: 02

#### Questionário final

1 “colocando em nosso coração” Sentimento  
2 “é testificado por outras pessoas” Outras pessoas  
3 “oração” Oração  
4 “não me sinto totalmente dirigido por Deus para trabalhar em um contexto específico” Building confidence  
5 *Direct question:* 4/5 Growing certainty  
6 “eu sei que Deus tem me direcionado ... Ajudar alguém a caminhar de acordo com os princípios bíblicos” Full confidence  
7 “mexe com o meu coração” Sentimento  
**7\***  
Internal evidence: 03  
External evidence: 01  
Building confidence: 01  
Growing certainty: 01  
full confidence: 01

### Participante (P3) Timóteo3

Questionário inicial

- 1 “palavra” Escrituras
  - 2 “oração” Oração
  - 3 “o próprio corpo de Cristo” Outras pessoas
  - 4 “relacionamento com Deus” Intimidade
  - 5 “a própria palavra de Deus” Escrituras
  - 6 “através da leitura bíblica” Escrituras
  - 7 “de oração e jejum” Oração
  - 8 “da comunhão” Outras pessoas
  - 9 “levei muito tempo para discernir do que se tratava” Slightly confidence
  - 10 *Direct question: 5/5* Full confidence
  - 11 *Direct question: 3/5* Building confidence
- 11\***
- Internal evidence: 06  
External evidence: 02  
Slightly confidence: 01  
Building confidence: 01  
Full confidence: 01

Entrevista

- 1 “enquanto eu estava orando” Oração
  - 2 “missionária, orando por mim” Outras pessoas
  - 3 “você foi lá na igreja” Outras pessoas
  - 4 “as pessoas da igreja já identificaram” Outras pessoas
  - 5 *Direct question: Full confidence*
  - 6 “a igreja tem certificado” Outras pessoas
  - 7 “sentir falta dessa segurança” Slightly confidence
  - 8 “Acontece do nosso coração” Sentimento
  - 9 “será que eu não deveria ... estudar para um concurso” Uncertain
  - 10 “alguns pensamentos ainda, às vezes aparecem” Building confidence
  - 11 “convicção do chamado e Deus vai certificando” Growing certainty
  - 12 “relaciona” Intimidade
  - 13 “sondando nosso coração” Intimidade
  - 14 “foram dando segurança” Building confidence
  - 15 “impulsionadores mesmo na questão da vocação” Outras pessoas
  - 16 “buscava conselhos ... e as pessoas me ajudaram” Outras pessoas
  - 17 “aquecendo mesmo o coração” Sentimento
  - 18 “ele testificou” Outras pessoas
  - 19 “a missão de Deus e que do nosso chamado” Escrituras
  - 20 “abrindo a mente” Razão
  - 21 “Deus falou” Intimidade
  - 22 “Deus, foi abrindo as portas” Outros meios
  - 23 “bem ligadas à minha ... vocação” Building confidence
- 23\***
- Internal evidence: 08

External evidence: 08  
Uncertain: 01  
Slightly confidence: 01  
Building confidence: 03  
Growing certainty: 01  
Full confidence: 01

#### Questionário final

1 “A Igreja” Outras pessoas  
2 “sei que Deus me chamou” Full confidence  
3 “Hoje não vejo outro lugar” Full confidence  
4 “oração” Oração  
5 “leitura da Palavra” Escrituras  
6 “comunhão” Outras pessoas  
7 “ouvir a voz de Deus no corpo” Outras pessoas  
8 *Direct question*: Full confidence  
9 “sempre fui missionária” Full confidence  
10 “amigos” Outras pessoas  
11 “levarei as boas novas” Full confidence  
12 “paz” Sentimento  
13 “Deus que me chamou garante ... tem feito até agora” Full confidence

**13\***

Internal evidence: 03  
External evidence: 04  
Full confidence: 06

#### **Participante (P4): José3**

#### Questionário inicial

1 “Na comunhão diária Ele se revela” Intimidade  
2 “como uma voz ao coração” Sentimento  
3 “que vai sendo respondida e confirmada na Palavra” Escrituras  
4 “e pelas outras maneiras em que Deus se revela” Outros meios  
5 “O coração arde e torna-se ansioso” Sentimento  
6 “Palavra” Escrituras  
7 “oração” Oração  
8 “intimidade com Deus” Intimidade  
9 *Direct question*: Full confidence  
10 *Direct question*: Building confidence

**10\***

Internal evidence: 07  
External evidence: 01  
Building confidence: 01  
Full confidence: 01

#### Entrevista

1 “no meu coração... revelou completamente” Sentimento

- 2 “foi sendo desenvolvido por Deus” Building confidence
- 3 “eles também trabalham com música” outras pessoas
- 4 “como é que vai ser quando eu penso nas minhas dificuldades” Building confidence
- 5 “não estou seguro, de vez em quando dá uma estremecida” Slightly confidente
- 6 “Todo mundo disse que tinha demorado muito” Outras pessoas
- 7 “já estava com o coração preparado” Sentimento
- 8 “Orar é bom demais, né? Porque a gente fica sabendo antes” Oração
- 8 “faz o meu coração aquecer” Sentimento
- 9 “coração arder” Sentimento
- 10 “nova perspectiva” Building confidence
- 11 “falado no meu coração” Sentimento
- 12 “leitura da palavra” Escrituras
- 13 “através da oração” Oração
- 14 “por outras formas também” Outras formas

**14\***

Internal evidence: 08  
 External evidence: 03  
 Slightly confidence: 01  
 Building confidence: 03

Questionário final

- 1 “Meditação na Palavra” Escrituras
- 2 “pela oração” Oração
- 3 *Direct question*: Full confidence
- 4 “através do Espírito Santo” Intimidade
- 5 “Sei que foi Ele que me chamou” Full confidence
- 6 “conduza em todas as coisas” Full confidence

**6\***

Internal evidence: 03  
 External evidence: 00  
 Full confidence: 03

**Participante (P5): Jonas5**

Questionário inicial

- 1 “orando” Oração
- 2 “abrindo o coração com as pessoas” Outras pessoas
- 3 “oração” Oração
- 4 “leitura da palavra” Escrituras
- 5 “ainda não de forma completa” Slightly confidente
- 6 *Direct question*: 4/5 Growing certainty
- 7 *Direct question*: 4/5 Growing certainty

**7\***

Internal evidence: 03  
 External evidence: 01  
 Slightly confidence: 01

Growing certainty: 02

Entrevista

- 1 “ele resgatou esse ano o chamado” Building confidence
- 2 “estudantes de de teologia na minha igreja” Outras pessoas
- 3 “eu sentia algo” Sentimento
- 4 “alguém me disse que eu tinha um chamado” Outras pessoas
- 5 “creio que Deus fala também diretamente para mim” Intimidade
- 6 “pra que eu pudesse entender de uma forma clara” Building confidence
- 7 “tenho essa Certeza” Full confidence
- 8 “todo um direcionamento de Deus para as nossas vidas” Building confidence
- 9 “essas coisas para mim são peças se colocando no lugar” Building confidence
- 10 “Eu sinto que” Sentimento
- 11 “sinto que eu tenho um chamado” Growing certainty
- 12 “as pessoas falam” Outras pessoas
- 13 “a ficar mais confiante” Building confidence
- 14 “sinto uma paz” Sentimento
- 15 “longo dos estudos” Escrituras
- 16 “concluí que isso é um chamado que Deus” Building confidence
- 17 “E eu creio que isso não veio de mim. É uma confirmação de Deus” Building confidence
- 18 “Então eu ficaria .... Eu sinto que. Hoje eu entendo. Compreendo. Tenho a certeza ... Deus está me chamando” Growing certainty

**18\***

Internal evidence: 05

External evidence: 03

Building confidence: 07

Growing certainty: 02

Full confidence: 01

Questionário final

- 1 “agracia a pessoa com a disposição e disponibilidade” Sentimento
- 2 “Deus direcionou tudo” Full confidence
- 3 “oração” Oração
- 4 “e o estudo da Palavra” Escrituras
- 5 *Direct question:* Full confidence
- 6 “confirmo que Deus me chamou” Full confidence
- 7 “confirmação de algumas pessoas” Outras pessoas
- 8 “buscando a Deus em oração” Oração
- 9 “estudo da Palavra” Escrituras
- 10 “com a paz no coração” Sentimento
- 11 “servirei a Deus da melhor forma com todo o aprendizado ... tempo de preparo” Full confidence

**11\***

Internal evidence: 06

External evidence: 01

Full confidence: 04

**Participante (P6): João3**

Questionário inicial

- 1 “entendimento da igreja” Outras pessoas
  - 2 “através de respostas de oração” Oração
  - 3 “desejo no qual Deus colocou por algo” Sentimento
  - 4 “através de oração” Oração
  - 5 “leitura da palavra” Escrituras
  - 6 “coração aberto” Sentimento
  - 7 “Deus direcionou” Full confidence
  - 8 *Direct question:* Full confidence
  - 9 *Direct question:* Building confidence
- 9\***

Internal evidence: 05

External evidence: 01

Building confidence: 01

Full confidence: 02

Entrevista

- 1 “no decorrer dos anos eu fui conhecendo melhor Jesus” Building confidence
- 2 “tive plena convicção de que Deus me chamou” Full confidence
- 3 “falou forte ao meu coração” Sentimento
- 4 “A convicção plena” Full confidence
- 5 “uma certeza que eu tinha” Full confidence
- 6 “no meu coração” Sentimento
- 7 “ter mais convicção do meu chamado” Full confidence
- 8 “nunca tive dúvida” Full confidence
- 9 “sempre houve um reconhecimento do chamado” Outras pessoas
- 10 “a parte de missões a arde coração” Sentimento
- 11 “me sinto mais preparado” Sentimento
- 12 “(estou preparado) para estar onde estou” Full confidence
- 13 “se eles estariam convictos ou satisfeitos” Sentimento

**13\***

Internal evidence: 05

External evidence: 01

Building confidence: 01

Full confidence: 06

Questionário final

- 1 “Através da igreja” Outras pessoas
- 2 “certeza, através da palavra” Escrituras
- 3 “nosso coração” Sentimento
- 4 “Oração” Oração
- 5 “estudo (da Bíblia)” Escrituras
- 6 *Direct question:* 5/5 full confidence
- 7 “Deus falou forte ao meu coração” Intimidade
- 8 “meu coração ardeu por missões” Sentimento

9 “Esperança ...Alegria ... medo” Sentimento

10 “Deus fará apesar de nós” Full confidence

**10\***

Internal evidence: 07

External evidence: 01

Full confidence: 02

### **Participante (P7): Ruth1**

Questionário inicial

1 “Deus gera a convicção no coração” Sentimento

2 “na palavra” Escrituras

3 “Deus comunicou audivelmente a Moisés” Intimidade

4 “no coração” Sentimento

5 “Deus havia me chamado, mas não fazia a menor ideia de como e por onde”

Building confidence

6 “Deus iria mostrando as aptidões” Outros meios

7 “revelado na Palavra” Escrituras

8 *Direct question*: Full confidence

9 *Direct question*: Building confidence

**9\***

Internal evidence: 05

External evidence: 01

Building confidence: 02

Full confidence: 01

Entrevista

1 “lendo no evangelho de João” Escrituras

2 “Eu sei que é orando” Oração

3 “ele falou muito comigo” Intimidade

4 “mas estou orando de novo” Oração

5 “lendo a bíblia” Escrituras

6 “Deus dá dom a alguém” Outros meios

7 “Sim, apesar de” Building confidence

8 “esse último semestre ... e foi muito diferencial” Building confidence

9 “Que um dia nós vamos” Building confidence

10 “Já deu mais, já deu ... Essa essa crise durou pouco tempo” Building confidence

11 “orei muito” Oração

12 “reconhecimento de ser chamado por parte deles” Outras pessoas

13” a igreja toda reconheceu e consagrou a gente como missionário mesmo” Outras pessoas

14” dúvida assim sobre isso, depois que eu entendi que Deus me chamou, nunca tive” Full confidence

15 “Mais claramente” Building confidence

16 “E Deus falou com ela” Oração

17 “entender qual era o meu chamado” Outras pessoas

18 “Sim, com certeza” Full confidence

19 “Pronto? acredito que não tanto” Building confidence  
20 “achava eu que estava mais perto de estar pronta, mas pelo jeito não” Building confidence

21 (chamado) ainda está meio verde no pé” Building confidence

**21\***

Internal evidence: 07

External evidence: 04

Building confidence: 08

Full confidence: 02

Questionário final

1 “do coração” Sentimento

2 “põe no íntimo” Intimidade

3 “oração” Oração

4 *Direct question*: Full confidence

5 “conduziu minha vida e tem conduzido até aqui” Intimidade

6 “vocalização que Ele me confiou” Full confidence

7 “já que me deu a incumbência” Full confidence

**7\***

Internal evidence: 04

External evidence: 00

Full confidence: 03

### **Participante (P8): Ester2**

Questionário inicial

1 “uma paixão no coração” Sentimento

2 “imposição de mãos” Outras pessoas

3 “paixão no coração” Sentimento

4 “através de um sonho” Outros meios

5 “ou usando outra pessoa” Outras pessoas

6 “Oração, jejum, devocional” Oração/devocional

7 “leitura da bíblia” Escrituras

8 “Acredito que o Senhor tem me chamado” Building confidence

9 *Direct question*: Full confidence

10 *Direct question*: Full confidence

**10\***

Internal evidence: 04

External evidence: 03

Building confidence: 01

Full confidence: 02

Entrevista

1 “Eu tenho certeza” Full confidence

2 “não sei especificamente” Building confidence

3 “recebi palavras de outras pessoas” Outras pessoas

4 “sempre queimou no meu coração ... sentia vontade de ir” Sentimento

- 5 “hoje sim. Mas até alguns meses atrás, eu ficava meio hesitante” Building confidence
- 6 “me assusta, mas vontade de desistir de voltar atrás não” Building confidence
- 7 “Eu Acredito nos sonhos” Outros meios
- 8 “mas eu não estava confiante” Uncertain
- 9 “pessoas, os meus líderes, a minha família” Outras pessoas
- 10 “e aí é ele que me falou” Outras pessoas
- 11 “não é uma coisa que eu tenho certeza, é o que tem passado pela minha cabeça, que eu tenho pedido direcionamento para o senhor” Slightly confidente
- 12 “Eu sinto isso muito forte, mas eu ainda não tenho certeza” Building confidence
- 13 “Sim, 100% por mais que eu não saiba” Building confidence
- 14 “sei que eu estou no lugar certo” Building confidence
- 15 Não sei como ele vai fazer, não sei como é que vai ser daqui quando acabar” Slightly confident
- 16 “sempre tiveram uma ligação com o meu chamado” Outros meios
- 17 “a gente está mais confiante e mais tranquilo, mas ainda assim ainda precisa” Building confidence

**17\***

Internal evidence: 01  
 External evidence: 05  
 Uncertain: 01  
 Slightly confidente: 02  
 Building confidence: 07  
 Full confidence: 01

Questionário final

- 1 “através de convicção interior, revelação divina e direção espiritual” Intimidade
- 2 “Ele muitas vezes usa a oração” Oração
- 3 “a Palavra de Deus” Escrituras
- 4 “a comunidade de fé” Outras pessoas
- 5 “Por meio de dons, habilidades e oportunidades providenciais” Outros meios
- 6 *Direct question:* Growing certainty
- 7 “circunstâncias e oportunidades que o Senhor tem me dado” Outros meios
- 8 “de profecias recebidas, através dos dons e talentos” Outras pessoas
- 9 “em oração” Oração
- 10 “meditação da palavra” Escrituras
- 11 “experiências espirituais” Intimidade
- 12 “mas trabalho e aplico no hoje” Building confidence
- 13 “a obra é Dele ... é de viver a vontade de Deus” Full confidence

**13\***

Internal evidence: 06  
 External evidence: 04  
 Building confidence: 01  
 Growing certainty: 01  
 Full confidence: 01

### **Participante (P9): Ester3**

#### Questionário inicial

- 1 “Construindo um relacionamento com o Espírito Santo” Intimidade
- 2 “Através da oração” Oração
- 3 “meditação da palavra” Escrituras
- 4 “e também usando pessoas” Outras pessoas
- 5 “palavra” Escrituras
- 6 “e de sua voz audível” Intimidade
- 7 “oração” Oração
- 8 “meditando na Palavra” Escrituras
- 9 *Direct question: Growing certainty*
- 10 *Direct question: Building confidence*

#### **10\***

Internal evidence: 07

External evidence: 01

Building confidence: 01

Growing certainty: 01

#### Entrevista

- 1 “experiência muito forte” Intimidade
- 2 “através da palavra” Escrituras
- 3 “onde ouvi a voz” Intimidade
- 4 “estudar a bíblia” Escrituras
- 5 “Deus tem algo comigo em relação a me levar a outras nações, mas no sentido de dar um suporte também nos Campos missionário” Building confidence
- 6 “Deus tem algo comigo em relação a me levar a outras nações, mas no sentido de dar um suporte também nos Campos missionário” Building confidence
- 7 “sinto muito assim no meu coração” Sentiimento
- 8 “Algo do senhor nesse sentido” Building confidence
- 9 “E o meu chamado é como” Slightly confidente
- 10 “se eu não tinha clareza, né? Eu também nunca tive” Slightly confidente
- 11 “Deus nos chama de vez em quando” Slightly confident
- 12 “entendi isso do senhor, né? Por alguns, alguns momentos” Slightly confidente

#### **12\***

Internal evidence: 05

External evidence: 00

Slightly confidence: 04

Building confidence: 03

#### Questionário final

- 1 “chama em momentos de oração” Oração
- 2 “usando pessoas para confirmar o chamado” Outras pessoas
- 3 “mas primeiramente Deus fala aos corações” Intimidade
- 4 “Oração” Oração
- 5 “Leitura Bíblica” Escrituras
- 6 *Direct question: Building confidence*
- 7 “está muito interligada ao meu chamado” Growing certainty

8 “por isso as vezes tenho insegurança” Building confidence

**8\***

Internal evidence: 04

External evidence: 01

Building confidence: 02

Growing certainty: 01

Full confidence: 01

**Participante (P10): Ester 24**

Entrevista

1 “eu tive um sonho” Outros meios

2 “pregou sobre a vinda de Cristo” Outros meios

3 “E aí ele (pastor) falou assim” outras pessoas

4 “senti Deus falando no meu coração” Sentimento

5 “quando o pastor pregava” Outras pessoas

6 “eu sentia que esse era meu chamado” Building confidence

7 “eu tenho me sentido” Sentimento/ Building confidence

9 “Eu senti assim que eu poderia fazer algo” Building confidence

10 “Da minha zona, né, de conforto” Building confidence

11 “amigos lá do Rio de Janeiro que reconhecem esse trabalho” outras pessoas

12 “é que estou ficando mais convicto” Growing certainty

13 “tive mais convicção. Fortaleceu, né” Growing certainty

14 “Pouco esclarecido, me fortalecendo” Building confidence

**14\***

Internal evidence: 02

External evidence: 03

Building confidence: 04

Growing certainty: 02

Questionário final

1 “mente e ao coração” Razão/sentimento

2 “quando lê a Palavra” Escrituras

3 “ou ouve uma pregação, testemunho” Testemunho

4 “ao coração” Sentimento

5 “através da Palavra” Escrituras

7 “da oração” Oração

8 “por alguém” Outras pessoas

9 “através de sonhos” Outros meios

9 *Direct question*: Full confidence

10 *Direct question*: Full confidence

**10\***

Internal evidence: 06

External evidence: 02

Full confidence: 02

Totalizando 352 códigos coletados dos participantes através dos três instrumentos de coleta.

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