

AN EXPLORATION OF SAFE SPACE AND ANONYMITY
FOSTERING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY AND STRESS REDUCTION

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Lakota Instructions for Living

Friend do it this way - that is, whatever you do in life, do the very best you can with both your heart and mind.

And if you do it that way, the Power Of The Universe will come to your assistance, if your heart and mind are in Unity.

When one sits in the Hoop Of The People, one must be responsible because All of Creation is related. And the hurt of one is the hurt of all. And the honor of one is the honor of all. And whatever we do effects everything in the universe.

If you do it that way - that is, if you truly join your heart and mind as One - whatever you ask for, that's the Way It's Going To Be.

- *White Buffalo Calf Woman Lakota Sioux*

To the Siler-Marsh's, Headen-Overman's,
Rivers@Rehoboth - NY, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM),
My classmates from the DMIN program,
My Project Advisors, my Clinical Supervisor, Proofreader,
The participants of my project,
My NY and MN best friends,
My Mother – Jacqueline Marsh, My Father – Charles Overman,
The Matriarch – Aunt Gwendolyn “Piggy” Siler,
My Partner – Tana R. Roseboro,

To ALL of the known “related” ones,
Those listed here, the ancestors all around, and those in my heart,

I am because YOU are.

Thank YOU!

In our every deliberation,
We must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.
– *Iroquois Maxim (circa 1700-1800)*

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Chapter 1

The Statement of Need Addressed by This Project

The ministry, which I serve under, defines itself as a Radically Inclusive (RI), Open and Affirming (ONA) ministry. Radical Inclusivity is defined as, "The intentional inclusion of every person in the community of faith" (The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, 2011, www.radicallyinclusive.com). Radical Inclusivity is distinct in that it intentionally, "challenges major fundamental, deep-seated Christian beliefs, doctrines and theologies at the center of society which characterize people on the edge as enemies of God and routinely mistreats, oppresses and excludes people from the community of faith and its institutions" (The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, 2011, 12 steps handout). These theologies are crafted around Biblical literalism and gender inequality (Butler, 2001). This literalism leads to self-hatred and oftentimes self or corporate isolation because of the social disapproval attached to it (Helminiak, 1994). Typically marginalized people who experience this kind of treatment are, "people suffering from substance abuse; people living with HIV/AIDS; same-gender loving people; the recently incarcerated; and sex industry workers" (The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, 2011). Although this common classification is not specific to any race or ethnic group, when referenced in this project it is with use of the lens and frame of African-American culture, African-American church, and, more specifically, African-American fundamentalism. The African-American church (fundamentalist identified or not) is known for holding religious hostility towards those who fall into the marginalized population, (Gold & Drucker, 2008).

The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM) borrowed the term Open and Affirming from its covenant partner The United Church of Christ (UCC), who uses it to identify, "congregations,

campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions” (United Church of Christ, 2013, www.ucc.org). At the Radically Inclusive, Open and Affirming church where I serve, I minister under the title of Associate Pastor and in the office of Pastor of Pastoral Counseling and Mental Health. It is my duty to integrate psychological theories with a modus operandi of traditional and contemporary spiritual trainings and concepts in an effort to address psycho-spiritual issues. In addition to performing traditional counseling services, such as mental health assessments, referrals, addictions, etc., I strategically serve pastors and other leaders directly. I simultaneously serve the church’s covering body, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM), holding national standing. Therefore, this purview spans beyond my church base in New York and carries throughout TFAM as needed. TFAM’s core and purpose is to, “provide a safe place of refuge for persons who have been wounded by oppressive theologies and to provide a place of nurturing and training for those who feel called to this shared ministry” (2011, www.radicallyinclusive.com). TFAM’s essence is, “a coalition of Christian churches and ministries which recognize the need for networking, accountability, fellowship and resource facilitation”, whereby there is support for, “religious teachers and laity in moving towards a theology of radical inclusivity which, by its very nature, requires an equally radical social ministry, reaching to the furthest margins of society to serve all in need without prejudice and discrimination” (2011, www.radicallyinclusive.com). Essentially, TFAM is a sanctuary for those who have been hurt or placed under harsh judgment by Christian churches, particularly African-American Christian churches.

In working in my position as described, I have had the opportunity to have conversations with Pastors, Bishops, Elders, Associate Pastors and the like (all referred to moving forward in this

project as Leaders) on various topics concerning their church or personal life. With this privilege, it has been communicated that there is no space where Leaders feel comfortable speaking openly and candidly with their colleagues. As a result, it has been shared that Leaders feel as if they are the only one facing the personal, emotional or spiritual challenges that arise. Also, it has been communicated that there is no space where they feel they can talk about the stressors of life, amongst other colleagues, without fear of the response being laden with judgment. This perceived judgment inadvertently produces shame within the leader. Through these encounters, I have discovered that trust issues call for a need for anonymity, at least until individual trust issues can be worked through. This individual healing process will take some time; time that these busy Leaders will, most likely, not devote themselves to, for several reasons. These reasons have foundations rooted in cultural/ethnic and religious formalities that have proven to haunt them, even as RI and ONA representatives and Leaders.

Formality is a concept used, “to describe social occasions and the behavior associated with them” (Irvine, 1979, pg. 773). Formality is simply acted upon ideas of what people hold concerning social structures (Sharp, 1960). The set-up of these structures creates what we know as status or the way society honors an individual (Weber, Gerth & Mills, 1946). Max Weber, a British sociologist from the 1940’s, believed that honor is a situation of status whereby, “every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor” (Weber et al, 1946), creates status. In exploring the work of Weber, Sharp (1960) elaborates and says,

There are two sides to every status situation; the status must be claimed, and it must be accorded. Ideally, these two sides complement each other in a stable and

symmetrical system, first because each participant refers to the same criteria, such as mode of life, education, prestige of birth or occupation; secondly, because each participant connects these criteria to a common anchorage in the position of the maximum status. Ultimately, this sharing of standards on which the social order rests is to be traced to the common bond to the charismatic leader from which a given form of social system is alleged to stem (1960, pp. 124-125).

Therefore rules, procedures, and forms are set in place, or formalities, and accepted, adopted and adhered to.

One formality, a cultural one, is that the majority of these Leaders identify as minorities, more specifically as African-American. It is well-known through research that, overall, those within this population tend to shun any kind of structure that seems to be akin to therapy or counseling (Haynes, 2010). A second formality is that the majority of these leaders have a religious upbringing that stems from the traditionally identified fundamentalist denominations branded by, influenced by or affiliated with one of four major movements: Pentecostal, Apostolic, Church of God in Christ (COGIC) or Holiness. These denominations historically demonize identifying oneself with anything other than a behavior that does not exemplify a life where ones emotions and mental state are not directly guided by the Holy Spirit/Ghost. What this means is that if you own or acknowledge sickness, especially emotional/mental, (sadness, depression, despair, anger and the like), it is not the Spirit of God that is operational within you, but a spirit of the devil (Payne, 2008). A third, and possibly unique, formality is that each of these leaders are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ: referred to moving forward as Same Gender Loving -SGL) identified. The very fiber of their identification as SGL and Christian, and their

operations in the world, have etched minimal to some internalized level of oppression and non-acceptance that has to be worked through. Kelly Brown Douglas (2003) put it this way,

The black church is often characterized as stubbornly homophobic. Though recognizing the presence of gay musicians and choirmasters within the church, and vowing to love the homosexual sinner Black Church people rarely see homosexuality as an acceptable way of life. Far too often they brand homosexuality as an “abomination before the Lord” (p. 32).

I have previously suggested that a type of support group be established as a safe space for de-stressing and tackling some of the aforementioned inherited formalities that have followed these Leaders into leadership positions. This idea was formerly rejected, as there was no way a support group with colleagues could be established while upholding anonymity. My Project, however, offers a space for my local church’s mantra, “Not Church As Usual” (www.Rivers-At-Rehoboth.org) to be operational in meeting a need.

My project provides the opportunity to create a safe and enriching environment for Leaders to discuss underlined stressors and become encouraged by their colleagues anonymously. The aim of my project is to offer a chat (cyber) space that will be moderated by me, where Leaders will be able to enter at a set time to address these stressors and receive words of encouragement fashioned specifically for them as Leaders. My interest in this project is to see whether a group of such nature can create a form of cohesiveness and trust that will allow for a reduction in a Leader’s stress level and an ability to feel heard, understood, accepted, and supported by others in the group and within his/herself.

Affirmations of the Need, Beginning With History

“Any thought that is passed on to the subconscious often enough and convincingly enough is finally accepted.” – Robert Collier (American Motivational Author, 1885-1950)

According to Terrell, Taylor, Menzise & Barrett (2009), “It has long been recognized that the way a person behaves towards others is, to some extent, a function of whether they trust the other person, organization or institution” (2009, p. 300). Trust is linked to an individual’s belief or perspective of automatic safety and security (Erickson, 1980). I propose that the litmus for this is whether or not there has been any previous level of betrayal or exploit. Also, I submit that disloyalty or disappointments of hopeful expectations have become a readily semi-undetectable filter subconsciously set-up within the psyche. Specifically, African-Americans have a historical framework of mistrust of Caucasians (Whaley, 2001). This is due to perceived or practiced culture operating from a mold that depicts unjust and unethical treatment of their race as a whole (Fairchild & Bayer, 1999). Terrell et al. put it this way, “Unique to people of African descent is that, for the most part, this ethnic group was transported to the United States against their will, enslaved, and treated brutally by a dominant culture once they arrived. This mistreatment continues to be present” (2009, p. 299). Terrell et al. (2009) termed this concept *cultural mistrust*. Their ideology behind the concept is that, “Blacks who do not trust Whites tend to avoid sharing information with them, avoid interacting with them, and are apprehensive when asked to share information with them for fear of being betrayed or exploited” (2009, p. 299). They sum it up stating, “In contrast, cultural mistrust is the belief acquired by African-Americans, due to past and ongoing mistreatment related to being a member of that ethnic group, that Whites cannot be trusted” (2009, p. 299). With racism being the anchor that holds the ships

of time passed at the current docks of African-Americans' minds, this mistrust has now not only become rooted in their psyche, but has become reflectors depicting part of their culture (Terrell et al., 2009).

As history would have it, when it comes to counseling or therapy, the field began in domination by whites (Black, Spence & Omari, 2004). In 1920, "Cecil Sumner was able to earn his Ph.D. in Psychology against almost impossible odds because of his superior academic abilities" (2004, p. 41); "Only 11 Blacks had earned Ph.D.'s between the years 1876 and 1920, compared with 10,000 Caucasians" (2004, p. 41). Blacks were just approaching being free in the United States when the field of psychology was being cultivated in America. Psychology as a discipline did not take flight until the mid-to-late 1800's (James, 1890). Mr. William James is a noted catalyst for its introduction to America (James, 1890). His book, *The Principles of Psychology*, set the standards for the genesis of understanding how behavior actual works (James, 1890). By 1912, the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society had been established to oversee the settling-in of the now psychoanalytic movement, (Blocher, 2000). "Over time, a number of significant new leaders and innovators in more orthodox psychoanalytic thinking emerged in America" (Blocher, 2000, p. 126). "In addition to the psychoanalytic societies, a number of prominent centers of psychoanalytic practice were established during the 1920's and 1930's" (Blocher, 2000, p. 126). With focus mainly on the mentally ill, by the 1930's, the utilization of methods of treatment span from electric and insulin shock to the performance of cranial lobotomies, (Blocher, 2000). "The advent of the tranquilizing drugs in the 1940's and 1950's was the catalyst for new approaches to treatment, including psychotherapy" (2000, p. 132). However, at this point, because psychotherapy was seen as medical treatment to be performed only in medical settings, aside from carrying out the assessment role, psychologists were only seen in child guidance clinics and

university counseling centers (Blocher, 2000). The clients and trained therapists of focus from its inception throughout this point were Caucasian (Blocher, 2000).

In spite of the evolving field of psychotherapy being created by and for Caucasian Americans, there were a few African-Americans who penetrated the field (Patterson, 1996). Typically, African-American culture defines W.E.B DuBois as the first African-American psychologist (Black, Spence and Omari, 2004). This is due to his eloquent writing in *The Souls of Black Folk*, (1903) where he addressed their psychological struggles (Black et al., 2004). Even though DuBois's focus was concerning blacks "coming to grips with a phenomenon labeled *black consciousness* – seeing one's self from the perspective of the dominant culture and from the perspective of the African-American community" (2004, p. 40), he further emphasize how African-Americans were "constantly being judged by another culture's measuring stick – and coming out on the short end" (2004, p. 40). Although DuBois's boldness was an initial communication of mistrust and betrayal seen written for blacks, by a black for the first time (Lattimore, 1982), his mode of presentation was not generally counted as true psychotherapy (Phil Zuckerman, 2004). His contribution was seen as educational and foundational for the helms of understanding the African-American psyche, by African-Americans (Zuckerman, 2004).

As Caucasian Americans were trying to understand the mind and emotions of their own ethnic group, blacks were trying to get free and stay free (Vontress, 1970).

James Baldwin attributes the root of the black man's dispute with America to the fact that he has so little freedom and power to direct his own affairs simply and solely because of his skin color. Control over the Negro's life covers several related

areas: his education, employment, and income – thus his place in the social structure, his self image, and his relations with whites (1970, pp. 713-714).

Before the voice of DuBois arose, there was the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1866 and the ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendment in 1868 & 1870, respectively (Alfred, Mayer & Kobl, 1969). By 1871, Congress had reached a point of outlawing racial terrorism by implementing the Ku Klux Klan Act, and four years later by prohibiting racial discrimination in most public places during 1875 (Coyne, 1982). However, this did not last long. Although the maneuvering of the Compromise of 1877 was complex, Republicans traded the presidency (the election of Rutherford B. Hayes) by privately forfeiting principles to which they historically clung to (Woodward, 1966). This compromise not only effectively ended Reconstruction, but it also set back the hope of equality for southern blacks for decades (Ransom, 2005). In other words, Ransom (2005) stated, “It was the stubborn resistance of whites who refused to accept racial equality and the lack of support for freedman’s rights on the part of the federal government that undermined the efforts to “reconstruct” the South” (2005, p. 365). Ransom (2005) continued to say that the Compromise,

Was a tragic betrayal of nearly five million African American “Freedmen” who were abandoned to the racist policies of Southern Whites. As W.E.B. DuBois, the African American historian who anticipated the revisionist interpretation by several decades, put it “The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then went back again towards slavery.”(as cited in Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution*) (2005, p. 365).

Before anyone had completely processed what had actually taken place, the powerful white elite had returned to power in southern legislatures (Edward Ayers, 1992). Throughout the 1880's, "The Republicans controlled not only the White House but also both houses of Congress" (Ayers, 1992, p. 146). In turn, these legislations reinstated the racist policies in the South (George Rable, 1980). From this reinstatement, black codes or laws of offense were instituted. These laws were set to put and keep blacks in their place. The codes consequently made racism legal, giving the Ku Klux Klan motive and opportunity to spew their hate (Tischauer, 2012). In the midst of the venom spewing, taking a leap of faith first, even before DuBois, was a former slave by the name of Booker T. Washington (Washington, 1907). Attempting to change the status quo and create a footing for his race in 1881, he founded a technical college for blacks in Alabama called the Tuskegee Institute (Norell, 2003). He is coined the first black activist to spearhead the cause of economic equality for blacks (Meier, 1988). Although, through all of this, blacks were suffering greatly mentally and emotionally, it still was not yet a thought to assess or treat them; as they still were not yet seen as humanely as whites (Rabinowitz, 1974).

This negative perception of Black people is largely the result of the conceptual framework employed by the vast majority of professional counselors who unwittingly subscribe to the deficit hypothesis (Hayes and Banks, 1972). To elaborate, rather than searching in the environment for causal explanations of observed behavior, it is postulated that Black people have underlying deficiencies which are attributable to genetic and/or social pathology, which in the context of this reality, limits the probability of achieving successful academic and/or social adjustment (Jackson, 1977, p. 232).

Seeing and being a part of this oppression sparked an under-toned attitude of, if I can learn more, I can do more; if we, as a culture, can adopt and adapt understandings of our race, we can truly move from being enslaved to being free. In 1920, Francis C. Sumner became the first African American awarded the PhD in psychology from a U.S. institution; Clark University (Guthrie, 2000). In 1933, Inez B. Prosser became the first African American woman awarded a doctorate (EdD) in psychology from a U.S. institution; University of Cincinnati (Bernal, Trimble, Burlew & Leong, 2003 and *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 1997). In 1937, Alberta Banner Turner became the first African American woman awarded a PhD in psychology from a U.S. institution; Ohio State University (Bernal, Trimble, Burlew & Leong, 2003). The list of African-American pioneers in psychology continued from up to and throughout the 1940's (Guthrie, 2003). Even though there were a few African-Americans who ventured into this field, it still was heavily dominated and directed by Caucasians (Dwyer, 2006). Although the turning point for psychotherapy was World War II, the time had still not yet arrived where African-Americans fully embraced this field (Dworkin, 2012).

Reflecting upon World War II, spanning from 1939 – 1945, the need for practitioners became great (Dwyer, 2006). In the words of Blocher (2000), “The first real opportunities of psychologists to practice psychotherapy came during World War II when the need for therapists simply overwhelmed the supply of psychiatrists available” (2000, p. 133). After WWII, through the fifties and into the sixties, the field's fight became making distinctions between the different areas of psychology, and, more specifically, a difference between psychotherapy and clinical counseling (Blocher, 2000). At the time, counseling psychologists made the distinction this way, “Psychotherapy is about discovering why you are feeling anxious, counseling involves doing something about it” (2000, p. 151). Either way, as the field took form, African-Americans were

not included in the shaping of the frameworks for defining counseling or receiving it (Dwyer, 2006). I adduce that even though African-Americans had been through slavery and the failing of reconstruction, they were also forced to face and be held accountable for demeaning laws. They were yet found in a struggle to become equal in a society that continually denied them such validation. There was also no focus on assisting them with any type of therapeutic process to address the generations of trauma that had been, and were being, inflicted through Racial Superiority.

Racial Superiority is a branded, yet living, organism that keeps the idea of betrayal and exploited in the psyche of many African-Americans (Remillard, 2006). It creates a cesspool of mistrust because of actual or perceived unjust and unethical treatment (Remillard, 2006). When blacks ventured to trust the medical field, what they saw psychotherapy being a part of, they were yet again deceived and humiliated as the brunt of what turned out to be experimentation, not for discovering ways to enhance their mental or physical wholeness (Fairchild & Bayer, 1999).

The Tuskegee syphilis study has come to symbolize the most egregious abuse of authority on the part of medical researchers. Tuskegee has also come to serve as a point of reference for African-Americans distrustful of those with power, emblematic of a history of a people enslaved and then subject to social, legal and political oppression after the end of formal servitude (1999, p. 919).

Because stories of mistrust have been passed down from the slave-trade generation, to the Reconstructionist generation, to the Civil Rights Movement generation, to name a few, Blacks had no faith in anything Whites had established or attempted to offer them (Remillard, 2006),

especially something connected to the medical field (Meyer & Zane, 2013). Anything with a hint of white-oriented ideology was questioned or avoided, throughout generations.

Brethren, it is as wrong for your lordly oppressors to keep you in slavery as it was for the man thief to steal our ancestors from the coast of Africa. You should therefore now use the same manner of resistance as would have been just in our ancestors when the bloody footprints of the first remorseless soul-thief was placed upon the shores of our fatherland (Swift, 1989, p. 135 – as cited Ofari, “*Let Your Motto Be Resistance*,” 141-44).

Caucasians had not been able to show blacks that they held their best interest at heart (Drimmer, 1960/1966).

It is harder to "buy off" contemporary Negroes. From marches to sit-ins, from rent strikes to boycotts, from constructive non-violence to Mississippi Deacons, from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee to the Urban League, Negroes have established newer criteria to measure their role in American life and what they expect to receive out of life (1960/1966, pp. 102-103).

Affirmations Continued – How Did We Get There?

The one thing that African-Americans willingly kept that can be readily identified with white-oriented ideology is European Christian church and religion.

The founding of independent Afro-American churches was in itself a form of protest against white supremacy. During the First Great Awakening of the late

eighteenth century large numbers of Afro-Americans became Christianized. But rather enslaved or free, blacks found themselves much less than equal in white churches (Morton, 1991, p. 159).

Church is the one thing they saw they could utilize to redefine and empower themselves. “In 1840 the black American Baptist Missionary Convention, aiming to be a national body, was formed. By 1858 its leaders insisted that all churches in the convention cut their ties with white Baptist associations” (Swift, 1989, p. 2). Although the foundations of something so widely accepted, church and religion, could have been the cornerstone of true cultural solidarity, it too became an instrument of divisiveness. However, this time the divide was intra-cultural, among African-Americans. “Religion, or the lack thereof, informs and shapes people’s deep-seated values, their worldviews. Disagreements over religion are often disagreements over fundamentals: the immovable object of one person’s beliefs meeting the irresistible force of another’s” (Putnam & Campbell, 2012, p. 493). “No religious group in America feels warmer toward their own group than Mormons. In fact, Mormons feel warmer toward fellow Mormons than Black Protestants feel toward fellow African Americans”, (Putnam & Campbell, 2012, p. 503).

African-Americans are known to be communal people, “Zimbabwean Christians teach and learn communal vitality, experientially, by valuing people and asserting the importance of human interdependency, expressing hospitality, mentoring to influence life outcomes, and announcing God’s hope amidst grief and struggle” (Wimberly, 2001, p. 370). This is true even after having been taken from their environments and sold into one that was completely unfamiliar (Carmen Braun Williams & Marsha Wiggins Frame, 1999).

There is a plethora of evidence that communalism continues to be an important aspect of African American culture, especially within the church and the extended Black family. The Black Church is one of the few institutions owned by Blacks. Thus, the ministers and church members often feel a responsibility of the African American community at large rather than just the members of the individual church (Black et. al, 2004, p.54).

Whites taught an oppressive theology, “a theology that welcomes those who fit a normative definition of the dominant culture while excluding those who do not” (Yvette Flunder, 2005, p. 7), that somewhat shifted the natural communalism for Blacks. Whites’ philosophy was that there was something inherently wrong with blacks that they and their religion could save them from (Flunder, 2005). According to Flunder, this kind of theology is a, “ball and chain on the heart of the body of Christ, and with it we keep each other in bondage” (2005, p. 7). Any theology that gives credence to receiving some people and rejecting others is a divisive theology in and of itself (Flunder, 2005).

Although Jim Crow set the standard for separate but equal (Levy & Philips, 1951; Smith, 1983; Cockrell, 1996), and the Civil Rights Movement came a few years after slavery’s abolishment (Lemert 200), there was about a three year time span that began to set-up an internal mistrust within the African-American community (Litwack, 2010). With this new ‘colonized’ European religion as Blacks strong-tower, the village concept, along with any heritage of African religion, had been demonized (Flunder, 2005). At its pinnacle, the 50’s and 60’s, the church had fully become the, “principle source of sanctuary, education, socialization, information and community for people of African descent in this country” (2005, p. 6). The church, as it was fashioned by the reinterpretation by blacks for blacks, became the space where power and status was given

and validated (Flunder, 2005). Offices, positions, and ministries of function were instated. A few of these include Deacons, Board of Trustees, the Pastorate, and later the Church Mother.

Deacons are members of a congregation who are called by God, and confirmed by the Senior Pastor, to serve the needs of the congregation. They are viewed as Servant Leaders within the church. They are involved in various ministries, such as visiting the sick and assisting individuals and families that are in distress or food or shelter needs (www.baptistdistinctives.org, 2010). Trustees are responsible for ascertaining and maintaining the physical property of the church, which includes handling rent/mortgage, insurance liability and compliance with neighborhood regulations. Also, they are responsible for budgetary oversight. This includes all revenues and expenditures (self described as a member). Pastors are to shepherd or guide all congregants, Leaders and laity. They are to be the ultimate example of leadership, organizationally as well as concerning vision. Pastors are not only to teach and preach, but also to inspire and train people to do the work of the ministry (Christopherson, 1994). Through the Church Mother's wisdom, she provides spiritual and life education and guidance within the church (Butler, 2001). "The title of Mother is one that has been bestowed in the African American church tradition to the woman of the congregation who is among the eldest and most spiritually mature woman in a congregation" (Butler, 2001, p.26). The title and position has, "no parallel in white churches; it is derived from the kinship networks found in black churches and black communities" (Butler, 2001, p.26). "She is the discipliner, enforcing good conduct and a dress code, as well as an instructor and counselor both for women generally but also, typically, young persons of both sexes" (Butler, 2001, p.27). Although these positions came with automatic status and authority, the church still very much operated from a patriarchal structure.

This hierarchical structure not only played out with consequences within the church, but carried over into the community (Butler, 2001).

To understand how the Black Church, and specifically the Church of God in Christ, became a primarily patriarchal structure, it is necessary to consider at least three factors. These are: accommodation to culture (white), Biblical literalism, and the commitment to racial uplift at the expense of gender concerns (Butler, 2001, p.17).

The church became the lead for movements to strengthen the race as a whole (Barnes, 2005). The most well-known of these is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's March on Washington in 1963 (West, 1984).

The transitional events were the Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964, the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, late August 1964, and the Selma campaign of 1965. The Freedom Summer brought to the surface the deep cultural and personal problems of interracial political struggle in America: white attitudes of paternalism, guilt and sexual jealousy, and black sensibilities of one-upmanship, manipulation and sexual adventure (West, 1984, p. 10).

The cross-cultural carry over of the one-upmanship into intercultural responsiveness began the creation of a divide within the race. Because of a, "low sense of self-worth" (Flunder, 2005, pg. 6), within the African-American community, it appeared to be necessary to implement what is more currently arguably called 'crabs in a barrel' or 'crabs in a bucket' syndrome (Aaron & Smith, 1992). I deduce that F.E.A.R. - False Evidence Appearing Real, became the filter for many within the African-American community, especially within the church. This fear was not only the fear of being left straggling behind ones counterpart economically, academically or even

spiritually, but also the fear that wiped away a natural communal trust that was once evident within this culture (Aaron & Smith, 1992). I assert that invisible, but alive and operative, systems of vying for position and status reigned within the church's structure and, outside of it, in everyday life. Furthermore, the culture no longer stood in solid agreement about being one another's keeper. Instead, it became every man for him/herself.

Affirmations Continued - Where Are We Now?

The Urban Dictionary (2005) describes the crabs-in-a-barrel syndrome as “A syndrome where a group of like situated people hurt those in their community attempting to get ahead.”

(<http://www.urbandictionary.com>). This hurt is not necessarily physical hurt, but more so emotional, mental, or spiritual inflictions, which then domino into economic instability (Aaron & Smith, 1992). I submit that jealousy of another's attempt at or achievement of success dispels trust. The dispelling imprints that once the achieving person excels, the achiever will treat those still striving identical to how those dominant over them have treated them. The mistrust arises due to preexisting perspectives and perceptions based in the striving individual's ancestral past and self-experienced past or present. If one has not heard of stories of betrayal or exploitation, one has experienced it themselves.

Phillip Aaron and Errol Smith (The Heritage Foundation, 1992) spoke about the unseemly behavior of apparent sabotage of one another within the African-American community. They propose that the gap, which slows the breaching, is that the unspoken, sub-conscious desire of, “we must all live or perish together” (1992, p. 2), has been misinterpreted. Aaron and Smith (1992) assert that such an idea should communicate that there is an “internal cohesiveness that

assures unity and devotion to each other” (1992, p. 2), but instead it has created, “tremendous disunity”, fostering, “resentment, anger and bitterness among African-Americans” (1992, p. 2). This fear in action is based on a false belief of threatened or endangered believed-security (Aaron & Smith, 1992). Alongside, they propose another false belief is “the progress of the black race must precede the progress of a black individual” (1992, p. 3), or the progress of a community must come before any individual of the community succeeds. The truth is that when you have such an extensive existence of oppression, individuals must rise in order for the whole community to be able to move forward as a community (Aaron & Smith, 1992). Aaron and Smith state, “If you were to invite a group of people to your house for dinner, but yet you turn away each individual when he comes to your door, then you can see how you will never get the group in the house” (1992, p. 3). These two false beliefs have instilled fear, and are what is identified as the root of the crab syndrome that infiltrates the African-American community, and the African-American religious experience.

In order to move forward from this corporal mentality, it will take African-Americans embracing and enacting accountability (Aaron & Smith, 1992). This entails not only acknowledging current operational conditions as a race, but also within religious community. African-Americans must accept the responsibility of being their brother’s/sister’s keeper. Nevertheless, before they can reach this juncture, African-Americans will have to take personal accountability of their own decisions and actions that may have perpetuated, or may be perpetuating, the crab-in-a-barrel syndrome (Aaron & Smith, 1992). This includes the effect their behavior has had on their personal lives by their own hands. Taking on responsibility is simply empowering oneself with the power to create change. But note, taking responsibility or being accountable does not

interpret taking the blame (Aaron & Smith, 1992). Owning responsibility, however, does communicate vision and concern for personal success and communal achievement.

Affirmations Continued - Let Freedom Free Religion

Alongside the patriarchal and hierarchical frameworks created within the Black Church, and adopted within the Black Community, were strict standards, beliefs, and guidelines that the race was expected to follow. An individual was automatically held accountable, as if they already knew what was expected through osmosis (Butler, 2001). This imposed expectation by the Black Church set the tone for public behavior,

When blacks were depicted by white Southerners as depraved, ungodly and sexually licentious, churches began to instruct their members in proper behaviors. If black women were thought to be loose and lazy, they were encouraged and instructed in ways of gentility, good housekeeping and chastity (Butler, 2001, p.17).

In spite of, denominations continued to emerge and expand and the people followed, while attempting to uphold the ascribed practices that deemed them Holy Christians (Swift, 1989). “The development of independent Afro-American churches began with Baptist and Methodist” (Swift, 1989, p.159); along came the Presbyterians, Congregationalist and Episcopalians who believed in black liberation (Swift, 1989). But the movement, perhaps because of its charismata, that exponentially grew in numbers was the Pentecostal and Holiness denominations. “Though often lumped under the rubric “sanctified church”, black Holiness and Pentecostal bodies primarily share similarities in piety, language and starting points that revolve around three

related expectations – sanctification, divine healing and a life of personal piety” (Alexander, 2011, p.62).

The life of personal piety was lived out in obedience to a set of holiness codes that governed most aspects of a believer’s personal and private life. The faithful lived by prescriptions on appropriate dress for saints (especially for women), acceptable and unacceptable social activities, marriage and family life, and even acceptable occupations as they attempted to achieve that piety. The penalties of breaching these proscriptions were severe and included silencing the violators within a congregation or community, and even possible excommunication (Alexander, 2011, p.63).

Some of the Baptist and Methodist began to attempt to adopt some of the rhetoric of the Holiness movement (Alexander, 2011). Following suite, for similar adoptions, are the Church of God, the Apostolic Church, and the Church of God in Christ (Alexander, 2011).

Although diverse religious expressions exist among African Americans, research suggests commonalities among those who identify themselves as Christian; scriptural interpretation, ritual development, and religious expression that are contextually relevant to the African American experience; emphasis on spiritual as well as temporal needs of congregants and community members; and, a self-help tradition (Barnes, 2005, p. 970).

The Bible itself is, “central to Black Church culture. Slaves, as members of the “invisible institution” and later, freedpersons in the organized Black Church, redacted scripture based on their own experiences” (Barnes, 2005, p. 970). Although biblical literalism was taught and upheld, they taught freedom from slavery but added to it fundamentalism, which created oppressive controls that did not allow for other freedoms to be experienced (Butler, 2001). “The

literal reading of Scripture, used, on the one hand, to speak of freedom, did not commit itself to freedom of women, particularly black women” (Butler, 2001, p.20). The Bible was used to keep them in their place (Butler, 2001), as well as to demonize anything the church believed to be unacceptable, or unholy. The teachings of black preachers had major influence concerning what would be tolerated as exemplary of not just Christianity or the church but, specifically, the Black Church and the Black Community (Swift, 1989).

The interpretations of the Bible, and expressions thereof, eventually led to community action, (Fraternal Associations; food banks and voting campaigns; Black Power movement), and Black Liberation Theology (Trotter 2004; Barnes 2005; Pimblott 2012). Although Black Churches may not have readily or directly adopted the beliefs of the Black Power movement, or the thoughts of Black Liberation Theology, the individuals from the churches were cross pollinating these ideologies with their religious beliefs (Pimblott, 2012). An attempt to identify with the evangelical Protestant faith (Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, etc) exhibited the fact that,

While important social and ecclesiastical differences existed between these traditions, all three shared a belief in the centrality of scripture as the inspired word of God, the primacy of personal relationship with Christ, and the power of the divine as a present and active force in the world (Pimblott, 2012, p. 167).

Yet, it is the differences that made the difference; the difference between ‘yet again’ oppression and ‘sought after’ freedom.

In an article titled *Black Theology in American Religion*, James H. Cone noted that,

Black religious thought is not identical with the Christian theology of white Americans. Nor is it identical with traditional African beliefs, past or present. It is both – but reinterpreted for and adapted to the life-situation of black people’s struggle for justice in a nation whose social, political, and economic structures are dominated by a white racist ideology (Cone, 1985, p.755).

Adopting Christianity, as presented, Blacks lost the spirituality of their ancestral African beliefs (Bekerie, 2007). Expounding on this concept, Cone proclaimed that,

But when black theologians began to concentrate on black culture and history, we realized that our own historical and cultural traditions are far more important for an analysis of the gospel in the struggle of freedom than are the western traditions which participated in our enslavement (Cone, 1985, p. 770).

Blacks within the Black Church began to examine their religious beliefs. This examination called for Blacks to infuse what they knew of their ancestral history with what European Christians had taught them. This merge created an enlightened identification of God and Jesus Christ (Williams, 1971). With pride many adopted a new, more validating, understanding that, “Black Theology is a theology that emancipates, that breaks shackles, that lets the oppressed go free. If it is less, it cannot be Christian” (Williams, 1971, p. 561). “The radical idea that God or Jesus, the ultimate value of religion, shares the race of the oppressed was to be a source of strength for liberation” (Calhoun-Brown, 1999, p.198). Black theology married religion to racial empowerment and social activism. However, it was not universally embraced within the Black Community, because of the power dynamics within the Black Church (Calhoun-Brown, 1999). Fundamentalism and oppressive controls still had much power over what was acceptable for the Black Church and,

therefore, the Black Community (Flunder, 2005). “Whatever is the way of the majority becomes the master narrative; everything else is a “lifestyle” and deemed to be of lesser value” (Flunder, 2005, p. 21). The fundamentalist perspective was the master narrative. Nonetheless, a cornerstone of fundamentalism is a protest against change (Emerson & Hartman, 2006). Alongside the Black Church refusing to fully accept the ideology of Black Power and Black Liberation Theology, is the refusal to make careful, non-literal interpretations of Biblical scripture (Butler, 2001). This subsequently added yet another oppressive factor to the Black Church experience; the oppression of SGL identified Christians (Griffin, 2006).

In *their own receive them not*, Horace L. Griffin states that, “African Americans are inheritors of a racist past that victimized all aspects of their lives, not the least of which was their sexuality” (2006, p.56). “Black leaders adopted a rigid biblical theology of sexuality and transmitted it to black Christians and black culture” (2006, p.58). “In most black churches, parishioners experienced sermons identifying homosexuality not only as a sin, but with a rage that placed it as an even greater sin, as a monstrosity, a part of a wicked spirit” (2006, p.59). The Black Church is known to be stubbornly homophobic (Douglas, 2003). This place (the Black Church) that is to be safe, as it denotes the history of the black race and the struggles of its ancestors, (who died for freedom of all of their future generations), is oppressive and non-liberating to SGL individuals (Douglas, 2003). The oppression is solely because of their sexuality (Douglas, 2003). “White cultural rhetoric claims that black people are oversexualized and controlled by their libido” (Douglas, 2003, p.37). “The fact that black people were declared ruled by passion was sufficient proof that they were inferior to white people, a people ostensibly ruled by reason” (Douglas, 2003, p.38). I propose that this same concept is what lies at the oppressive thought behind the Black Church’s non-acceptance of SGL individuals, specifically SGL Christians. “It has been

widely documented that in many of the West African traditions from which a large segment of the enslaved population originated, sexuality was seen and celebrated as a sacred gift from God” (Douglas, 2003, p. 39). “This sexual rejection/denial is most typically manifest in a refusal to discuss to acknowledge matters of sexuality. Sexuality is treated as a “taboo” issue within the Black Church community” (Douglas, 2003, p. 40).

“Religious authorities with a history of rejection turn into oppressors by excluding and condemning those of whom they disapprove” (Flunder, 2005, p. xii). “The historical position of Christian church regarding homosexuality has been abundantly clear; homosexuality is an abomination, and for some religious folk, it does not matter what science or personal experience says to the contrary” (Flunder, 2005, p. 32). “Unfortunately, and in spite of the scientific evidence, many SGL people have internalized the historical position of the church” (Flunder 2005, p. 32). This oppressive thought and internalization has added more stressors for African-Americans and African-American SGL identified individuals.

My Personal Understanding of Who God Is

When I think about my personal belief, I look to the life of Paul. I see Paul’s transformation to be the epitome of spiritual growth. He finds himself at a place where he not only has to question his self-identified traditional belief, but he also has to acknowledge its exclusiveness and error; Error being defined as a mistake, or a moral offense against something that is good, as in something valid or fit for honor. Paul’s personality of change is important to me and has impacted me in that I can relate to an enlightening or a shift in my understanding of what I have

grown to believe is the true desire/message of God. This message is hinged on the command to love God with our entire being, and mirroring that love for every human being God has created. Operating from this place leaves no room for injustices or “exclusives”. It creates a round table reality and mentality where all are not only welcome but equal in their beliefs and practices, or lack thereof. This push for the expansion of inclusion takes others also being open to not excluding or accepting to realize that they too, perhaps, may be operating from a place of mistake. Had Anais not been willing to hear and follow the impression upon his heart to go and assist not only one who persecuted those like him, but accordingly him, Paul would have been stuck in darkness and error. Paul would have remained in obscurity until someone with a willing spirit became open enough, to be bold, and follow what God dictated through an expression of love. Paul summed up this teaching best in 1 Cor 15: 3 – 4, by basically saying we are all alike at the core. Though branches from the core bear different kinds of expressions, we each individually should respect and honor how the other’s branches present. It is about One Tribe, One Table (Flunder, 2005). There is no inferiority or marginalization at the table. The inclusive love of God is big enough, strong enough, sustainable enough to reach beyond boundaries that traditions create, and form bridges for unified commonality for everyone. This commonality is in spite of difference; it is based on the agenda of ‘my I am is no greater than your you are’. This is a both/and place of living that is intentional and not self-seeking. In a story relayed by our Presiding Bishop (Rev. Dr. Yvette Funder) of a man from the Mutu tribe in Africa, she asked the man where is his tribe. He stated that wherever his people are, there is his tribe. I interpret this to mean his people being all those who see him, honor him, respect him, and all that encompasses that which makes him ‘he’. Paul has taught me that it is about the spirit of it, not the law (that which creates divisions) of it. The spirit of it is that there is one essence we all share, one essence

that is important, and that is that we are spiritual beings created in the image of God, by God, for God, and for each other. Hence, my interest in this DMIN project for Leaders, and them being each other's keeper, and for breaking traditional chains that keep us separate and oppressed.

Chapter 2

Principles That Guide and Inform This Project

Religious Principles

“He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him.” (John 1:11, Good News)

In a meeting of the minds amongst several Leaders, our Presiding Bishop proposed the idea that religion is culture. My understanding of what the Bishop was saying is that religion, or the conglomerate of a set of fundamental beliefs, blue prints what is excellent, formidable, or acceptable for a group of people who choose to adopt and incorporate those beliefs into their lives. Religion sets forth values and ideas that characterize and inform what should be enforced as public appropriateness for daily living in the world. But whether or not we uphold or falter on these institutionalized ideas, and whether or not they or we are received, there is one spiritual and religious principle that can be seen as the same thread running throughout. That thread, or tie, that binds humans together, no matter their spiritual or religious identification, is relationship. Having a good solid relationship with another human being, could be the difference between physical and spiritual life or death. Leaders need these bonds with each other in order to be mentally and spiritually fruitful and whole. Receipt and validation of who a Leader is, with all of the flaws and mishaps that happen within a Leader’s journey, is paramount for evading burnout, severe depression, and the like. The key to upholding each other in a vein of listening, understanding, and support is realizing and modeling the age old adage of being our brother’s/sister’s keeper. God uses a story about two brothers, and shows us the importance of honor and respect. These are two foundational principles of relationships.

In reading Genesis 4: 1- 16, we learn that there are two brothers who have very important leadership roles within their family. A non-traditional way of looking at this story is from the perspective of how Cain works the position of tending to the land under the title of farmer, while Abel carries out the duties of tending to the animals under the title of shepherd. They both were the heads over something. In overseeing anything, modern or traditionally, typically, there is a form of accountability that one must uphold. In this context it is known as an offering. Cain offers a non-set-aside portion of his crops to God while Abel offers God firstborn flock. God's response to the offering was that of pleasure concerning Abel, but that of disappointment and disapproval with Cain's. This rejection angered Cain, even though it was a result of his own volition. Cain chose to not completely uphold the expectations of a leader, in relation to being appropriately accountable over what he had been given. As a result of God's displeasure of him and praise of his brother Abel, Cain devised a plan to kill his brother, and carried it out. When God inquired about where Abel was, Cain posed a question to God asking Him if he (Cain) was his brother (Abel's) keeper. In other words, Cain was saying to God, 'How would I know? His whereabouts are not my responsibility'. God, in his response to Cain, indirectly let Cain know that certainly he was his brother's keeper. God stressed that the livelihood of them both were connected and dependent on each other, as leaders, in the positions they were given. Cain was not allowed to be free from what he had done that disrupted the dependent relationship that He (God) had put into place. Cain had to face consequences. God, in his own way, even said to Cain that because he (Cain) had not grasped the importance of what serving within the confines of a relationship mean to Him (God), Cain's position and title would be revoked. Leaders, the individuals referred to in this DMIN project, need each other for sustainability and multiplicity

of carrying out the call of God on their lives, just as Cain and Abel did. They are each other's keeper.

Leaders feel they cannot come to each other with their mess ups or mishaps and continue to be honored and respected. Although they should be able to be naked and not ashamed, they cannot. One would think that they could come freely to those who hold the same, or similar, level of position, have similar or the same religious backgrounds (and therefore possibly struggles), for understanding, encouragement, or just an ear, but they cannot. Experience has led them to believe that if one does, they will have subjected themselves to not only being rejected by their brother or sister in the Lord, but to also be unfairly judged.

When it comes to SGL Leaders, there tend to be a forgetting of a principle that they readily teach and uphold amongst laity, yet struggle to transfer amongst their own colleagues. That principle is found in Matthew 7:1 – 2, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

(Quest Study Bible: New International Version – NIV, 1994) This is a foundational concept of my project. As a component of creating a space where there is honor, respect, and understanding that one will not be judged, there must be a level of equality established. There must be a blanket rule that no mishap or mess up is above or beneath another. SGL Leaders must actively enforce amongst one another the beginning words of Romans 3:23, that we all have missed the mark one time or another, and maybe even presently.

Being our brother's/sister's keeper is an enormous duty. It comes with expectancy to hold or retain things that are unsettling to our brother's/sister's mind, and even more so the things that are presenting challenges to their spirit. Being each other's keeper comes with the territory of

being Leaders. The charge is for Leaders to attend to each other's affairs, as they are presented, and to store for them the things that only they, other Leaders, can hold. Leaders are called to be each others preventers of harm to good names and weary, but strong, souls. If Leaders do not uphold this charge they, essentially, are carrying out the crime of Cain, and speaking his language of turning a blind eye to that which God has entrusted them to do, be their brother's/sister's guard.

“If you put shame in a Petri dish, it needs three things to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence and judgment.” – Brene' Brown

If we look at the New Testament, the book of John, chapter 4, we see a story about Jesus having a conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well. The woman had quite a reputation, as she had five husbands, and the man she was living with was not one of them. Because of the lowly status her past and current situation placed her in, she made a choice to go and draw water at the hottest point of the day. This was her way of avoiding the other townspeople; they did not draw in the noonday sun. She had a need for something natural, water, but had to be strategic about acquiring it. The townspeople made her feel ashamed because of the realities of her living and life situation.

Continuing in the same book, looking at chapter 8, we read about Jesus encountering a woman who had been caught in adultery. Her accusers wanted to stone her, as was customary by their law. But, they also wanted to see what Jesus had to say about the matter, so they asked him what to do. The accusers caught her in the act, so there was no denying what she had done. All of this is happening at dawn, just when daylight is beginning to show forth.

There are several things Leaders can glean from these passages. One is that there is no room for shame and judgment in their line of work, especially among each other. There is power in a confession that brings with it life and light from shame and secrecy. James 5:16 tells us to, “Confess your faults one to another” (KJV – biblegateway.com, 2011), and then to, “pray for one another so that you may be healed” (KJV – biblegateway.com, 2011). The scripture then says that, “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results” (NLT – biblegateway.com, 2011). There should be a type of refreshing that Leaders should be able to offer one another. Spiritual enlightenment and inspiration should be able to be expected amongst brothers and sisters of the gospel. The Leaders are the earthly representations of mercy and grace, as they are surrendered vessels, for God’s work. Jesus had authority in both of these situations, and could have exercised judgment, or continued to perpetuate shame, but he did not. He simply restored respect and dignity upon these women, as they stood center stage in their truths. Christ calls Leaders, through these passages, to take a moment before replying, condemning, slandering, or accusing, and reflect and think before signing on to the possible demise of another. Leaders are charged to listen and pray. No one is without some kind of fault. Leaders are to “do what is right” (NLV – biblegateway.com, 2011), “to treasure the LORD’s gracious love” (International Standard Version – biblegateway.com, 2011), i.e. kindness, faithfulness and mercy, and to “walk humbly with your God” (NLV – biblegateway.com, 2011). In this humble walking, one will then see and know that it is truly God’s grace and mercy that have kept them and sustained them in every area of their lives, especially as a Leader. Believers, particularly Leaders, are to exhibit these qualities to one another, as they indeed are their brother’s/sister’s keeper.

Another perspective to be gleaned from these two women is how Jesus identified with them in their marginalization, instead of continuing to perpetuate separation. Jesus ultimately shifted power dynamic right before us. Although these women were identified as marginalized during their time, Jesus addressed them as an equal. Through the pericope, as well as the specific descriptive language utilized by the author, both women are clearly presented to be objects instead of humans. The accounts highlight prejudice, rejection, and even isolation because of their identification. However, these are also things that Jesus experienced. “Jesus is rejected by his own people and goes, either by necessity or as part of his divine mission, to Samaria (4:4)”, (Okure, 2009, p. 409). Utilizing either perspective, Jesus positions himself in a place where women usually gather, by a well. He began a dialogue with the woman there and, immediately, broke gender, ethnic, religious and moral barriers (Kim, 1997). Jesus’ request for water was met with a non-passive response from the woman that, actually, was questioning Jesus’ action. Jesus should not have been speaking to her because she was a Samaritan; she should not have been speaking to him because he was a Jew and a man. However, Jesus answered her in terms of his identity and not based on any cultural or religious relationship between them. Even after this, the typical boundaries that were present shifted again. Instead of the woman actually giving water to Jesus he, without asking whether or not she needed or desired it, offered living water to her. She in turn wanted to know where the water was coming from. He utilized yet another opportunity to emphasize the superiority of the water he was offering. The Samaritan woman finally got that what Jesus was offering her was liberation. He was giving her an opportunity to lay the burdens and labels that society had placed upon her aside, and receive the gift of affirmation. Jesus spoke truth to power and empowered her to claim her authentic self, and still be used for God’s glory. The woman was freed from the socio-cultural shackles that bound her. In her freedom she did

not only become a spokes-woman, or missionary as most scholars defer to, but she also became the mediator between Jesus and the people of her community. There she was an outcast turned promoter whom Jesus trusted to get the job done (Nelavala, 2007). Jesus took what others had rejected, and claimed power over, and gave power to it. He fashioned the woman into a literal vessel of living water that went from one who had received, to one who now gave.

Jesus did the same with the woman who was caught in adultery. She was half-clothed and drug out into the public, with her dignity immediately stripped from her. I can imagine she was terrified, as she was made to stand in plain sight of everyone, and with clear evidence before her of being guilty as accused. She was instantly de-humanized, and de-valued to the point of not even being given a name in her story. It is questionable as to whether or not the intentions of the accusers had anything to do with the accused (the woman), or if it their intentions were solely about testing Jesus. The accusers first distorted the law by saying it commanded them to stone the woman. But, in actuality, the law called for both partners in adultery to be stoned, not just the woman (Deut. 22:22). The mere tone they used to identify her as “such women”, speaks to the belittling thrown at her. This criticism suggests they are somehow different from her, even to the point of it not being possible for them to be associated with such actions, in any way. Jesus gave the accusers no direct response, but instead began to write in the sand. Scholars theorize what Jesus wrote, but I submit that what was written is not as important as where Jesus wrote it. The exposure was done publicly, but it was not permanent. With the first blow of the wind or scuffling of feet, the exposure would be erased. Jesus took this opportunity to show how to extend grace, and to teach about forgiveness and forgetfulness, not only one to another, but also receiving that which comes from God. The accusers were clearly hypocrites with double standards. Through this example, Jesus calls for us to take a minute to reflect back on our own

lives before we seek to punish another for something that has happened in theirs. Wisdom led the accusers as the Elders retreated first. There were only two left; Jesus and the woman. Although she was still on display, she stood before him differently. Prior to that moment she was covered in shame but, standing in the middle before no one but Jesus, she was covered in love and treated with compassion. Up to this point no one had spoken to the woman, only about her. Jesus spoke to her and gave her respect, as a human, versus treatment as if she was simply an object. Traditionally, the woman would have been completely condemned, but Jesus did not condemn her. He forgave her and gently corrected her before sending her on her way.

I propose that these stories are presented as they are because they build up to a shift from what the scenes and sensibilities of socio-culture and religion set in place. These two stories offer an excellent example of how God will 'come' to meet us right where we are, even when we cannot get ourselves to God. "...human traditions of worship cede place to God's action in the individual's life. It is no longer a question of worshippers seeking God, but God seeking people who will worship him in the way God wants, "in spirit and in truth" (4:24)", (Okure, 2009, p. 409). Liberation is the door that leads to truth. True liberation is only attainable when we go beyond merely speaking out for justice and equality, but rather when we are successful with, truly, weaving these transformations into society. This incorporation exemplifies others affirming all human identity with dignity and respect, not just the direct liberators, (Nelavala, 2007). "True liberation, however, calls for participatory approach of transformation from both the privileged and the discriminated-against", (Nelavala, 2007, p.2). Mutual reconciliation breeds repentance, acceptance, and radical transformation (Nelavala, 2007). It is reconciliation and acceptance that fostered the success of the Samaritan Woman's witness, and her receiving trust amongst her community. The Leaders in this project must undergo individual and corporate

reconciliation and acceptance. These Leaders are vessels called not only to be living water to those they lead, but also to each other. They are called to be boundary and barrier breakers, which mean they are to embrace and offer what it means to enjoy the fullness of being created equally in the image of God. They are to dispel myths about who can authentically proclaim and claim the goodness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly within marginalized communities and specifically amongst each other. Wherever these Leaders are, and with whomever they are speaking to, there should always be a presence of freedom felt, and that is freedom to stand in truth without judgment.

Clinical Principles

For this demonstration project, we are going to look at aspects of human development that are relatable to the perspectives of Erik Erickson, Melanie Klein and Stephen Mitchell.

Human development consists of growth. Growth or development requires the individual going through a process of external and internal change and adaptation (Mitchell and Black, 1995).

This process consists of there being a following of, or a pattern that is subsequent to the completion of a stage or delineation of a point in time (Erickson, 1980). Reaching these junctures and going through them successfully, or not, give rise to what we know as identity or personality. The shaping of such is characterized by mastery or deficiency at certain milestone markers for the individual (Erickson, 1980). Erik Erikson (Erikson, 1980) theorizes there are eight of these markers, or stages, that an individual goes through in order to achieve full involvement or maturity. A successful completion of each stage denotes what is referred to as healthy personality, and characteristic strengths, that can be drawn from to resolve subsequent

crises. The first of these stages begins at birth, and the last concludes with death. Erikson asserts that at each of these stages a crisis occurs. He calls the crisis psychosocial crisis because there is a clash between the psychological need of an individual and the need of society. If these crises are not resolved, or an individual is not successful in completing a stage, the individual can be arrested in the stage, and risk a reduction in the ability to complete further stages. When this happens, the individual is also at risk for an unhealthy personality and sense of self. However, these stages can successfully be resolved at a later time.

Erikson’s eight stages and psychosocial crises are noted in the adapted chart: (McCrea, 2013)

| Stage | Age/Period | Psychosocial Crisis | Basic Virtue | Significant Relationship | Issues(I)/Positive Resolutions (PR)/Questions (Q) |
|----------|------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> | Infancy: 0 - 2 | Trust vs. Mistrust | Hope | Mother | (I)If needs are met, child develops a sense of trust. (PR)Sense of security. (Q)Can I trust the world? |
| <u>2</u> | Early Childhood: 2 - 3 | Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt | Will | Parents | (I)Develops a need to do things for themselves or will doubt their abilities. (PR)Sense of Independence. (Q)It is okay to be me? |
| <u>3</u> | Play Age: 3 - 5 | Initiative vs. Guilt | Purpose | Family | (I)Initiate and carry out tasks or feel guilty for not being independent (potty training?). (PR)Balance between spontaneity and restraint. (Q)Is it okay for me to do, move and act? |
| <u>4</u> | School Age: 5 - 12 (puberty) | Industry (Competence) vs. Inferiority | Competency | Neighbors, School | (I)Gain pleasure from applying themselves or feel inferior (Do I have worth?). (PR)Sense of Self-confidence (Q)Can I make it in the world of people and things? |
| <u>5</u> | Adolescence: 12 - 18 | (Ego) Identity vs. Role/Identity Confusion | Fidelity | Peers, Role Model | (I)Testing roles and integrating to form a single identity or will be confused about self. (PR)Unified sense of self. (Q)Who am I? What can I be? |
| <u>6</u> | Young Adult: 18 - 24 | Intimacy vs. Isolation | Love | Friends, Partners | (I)Forming close, intimate relationships or feel socially isolated. (PR)Form close personal relationships. (Q)Can I love? |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--|
| 7 | Adult/Middle Adulthood: 25 - 64 | Generativity vs. Stagnation | Care | Household, Workmates | (I)Develop of sense of contribution to the world or feel lack of purpose. (PR)Promote well-being of others. (Q)Can I make my life count? |
| 8 | Maturity/Late Adulthood: 65 - death | Ego Integrity vs. (Ego) Despair | Wisdom | Mankind, My Kind | (I)Have I lived a full life? Satisfaction or failure? (PR)Sense of satisfaction with life well lived. (Q)Is it okay to have been me? |

The chart depicts how Erickson expounds upon Freud's phases and adds three additional stages of adulthood. Erickson also differentiates his theory from Freud's by looking beyond the individual to attain knowledge and understanding of the growth process. Erickson includes in this framework, named the life cycle, the environment in which the individual lives.

Erickson also theorizes that if completion of a stage is not successful, there will be a high probability that the challenge that one was to confront and master, at that particular stage, can be expected to reappear as a challenge in the future. This concept advocates for the idea that the ego is malleable and capable of continual development. The concept also speaks to the possibility of potential perpetuated healing, no matter the stage. When reappearance does happen, and individuals find themselves stuck, this experience is known as arrested development. This arrest plays out as a person matures numerically, yet finds him/herself internally stuck with outward behavior manifestations of the internal suspension. A suspension is when there is a temporary stoppage of forward movement that leads to an interruption of process completion. The suspension lasts as long as it takes for the individual to successfully move beyond what has caused the cessation. These suspended or arrested places, or stages, are the foundation of what we strive to identify in the counseling situation. This DMIN project is concerned with the beginning of healing of these suspended places, and the possibility of a first step for completion

of a stage for the participants. This DMIN project is interested in exploring the suspension stages of trust, more accurately mistrust, and shame, synonymous with Erikson's first stage. This DMIN project assumes that participants will present levels of frustration, isolation, suspicion, and unstable self-confidence, as exhibited in stage one. This DMIN project anticipates stage one observances because of an underlined suspension of mistrust. In the place of hope, fear will be displayed. This DMIN project also speculates that participants will present with feelings of social and positional inadequacy, that revolve around shame, signifying a loss of self-esteem. This DMIN project will examine how mistrust and shame go beyond obvious connections to arrested development. It will also explore how mistrust and shame, even more so, stem from generational occurrences that have been adopted and adapted into daily living.

Melanie Klein's path to theory development began by way of an observational process coined the 'play' technique. Klein (Mitchell & Black, 1995) would observe children in play. She thought their unconscious motivations would manifest consciously through their interaction. She postulated that the observer would become witness to the uncovering of the child's unconscious, as it is projected outwardly through their play or the drawings they would create. Klein then connected the process and outcome, of the observation, to insight of the child's earlier infantile fantasies and anxieties. Klein theorized that children could very well be understood through non-verbal communication. Hence, her hypothesis that observing play would teach us a new language, per se, for understanding emotional development. After observing, she concluded that the child's inner aggressive feelings towards the mother, and therefore other interpersonal relationships, are much more important to an individual's development than Freud previously theorized. My Demonstration project comes from a perspective that is similar to how the child would 'play' with the toy and exert inner aggression through interaction with the objects. We

shall examine a similar exertion with the participant's interactions with objects (computer, keys, words). This interaction allows for projection that will uncover the participant's untapped unconscious. The difference between Klein's study and this DMIN project is that this project is not focused on infantile fantasies and anxieties. Instead, it is focused on current ones. As we witness the trust and shame suspensions of this DMIN project's participants, we will also explore their emotional life through external manifestations (their responses and story telling). This will be verified through an observance of aggressive feelings towards that which has, or should, exhibit "motherly" characteristics of nurture.

Klein believed that, "Each of us struggles with the deep terrors of annihilation (paranoid anxiety) and utter abandonment (depressive anxiety)" (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p.88). Alongside comes the idea that, "emotions are always expressed toward an "object", usually a person but sometimes even a part of a person" (Butler-Bowden, 2007, p.181). The splitting of good or bad and the feelings of love and hate towards the relationship of the mother's breast, and later in life other relationships, dictate for Klein the presence of anxiety. This anxiety comes from an attempt to balance the external and internal world. The individual's goal is to get what they need, but also to temper jealousy, anger, and aggression towards the 'object' when there is lack of love, attention, or nurture (Butler-Bowden, 2007). My Demonstration project considers that the participants may exhibit unbalance between what they need and what they are getting from their relationships with other Leaders. The significance of Klein's theory is the objective for a multi-faceted internal struggle with anxiety, which encompasses wrestling with active feelings of annihilation and abandonment.

Stephen Mitchell proposes a concept called the Relational Paradigm. The essence is that we live in a “relational matrix” (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, p. 20) where “The person is comprehensible only within the tapestry of relationships, past and present” (2005, p. 20).

We are portrayed not as a conglomerate of physically based urges, but as being shaped by and inevitably embedded within a matrix of relationships with other people, struggling both to maintain our ties to others and to differentiate ourselves from them. In this vision the basic unit of study is not the individual as a separate entity whose desires clash with an external reality, but an interactional field within which the individual arises and struggles to make contact and to articulate himself. *Desire* is experienced always *in the context of relatedness*, and it is that context which defines its meaning. Mind is composed of relational configurations (Mitchell, 1988, p. 3, italics in original).

Mitchell speculates the mind to be a social product that is an interactive participant in experiences (Mitchell, 1988). These experiences are built by relational positions that are based on interactions. Mitchell asserts that whether an ‘object’ is manageable or unmanageable, a communal existence must be maintained (Mitchell, 1988). This coincides with Bowlby’s idea that “attachment is a property of the relationship” (Bowlby, 1988, p.127). The stability of the attachment will attribute to temperament, and increasingly become a property (mind) of the individual (Bowlby, 1988). Mitchell’s theory supports the idea that we are built to relate, to ‘attach’ to one another. The theory provides clinical foundation for this demonstration project, in that although attachments have the potential to offer satisfaction or a struggle, connectivity with individuals is important for growth and full function. My DMIN project assumes that without connection, one will not be able to effectively operate in any office or position.

Indeed research can attest to the adverse consequences of unsatisfying relationships, or one finding him/herself battling loneliness (House, Landis & Umberson, 1998). Social isolation exhibits just as much risk factor for premature mortality as physical risks of smoking and obesity, (House et al., 1998). Looking at the work of Harry Stack Sullivan, Yalom & Leszcz (2005) state that, “Sullivan contends that the personality is almost entirely the product of interaction with other significant human beings. The need to be closely related to others is as basic as any biological need and is, in the light of the prolonged period of helpless infancy, equally necessary to survival” (2005, p. 21). With these connections, individuals have the ability to experience being heard, being understood, and being accepted. The relational paradigm provides opportunity for Leaders being each other’s keeper, and having an inherited responsibility for one another.

Erikson, Klein and Mitchell’s concepts are applicable to SGL Leaders that will participate in my DMIN project. Meaningful relatedness is not something we ever outgrow, but it is instead a process that is constructed on a continuum. The therapeutic group process of my DMIN project will allow for emotional shifts to be made, as the group develops its own cohesive, yet organic, process. As trust is established, previously fractured stages of development will have the opportunity to begin to solidify. This DMIN project will also create an opportunity for internal suspensions to begin to change. Just as play technique decreased the inner aggressive feelings that manifest in interactions (Klein), my project yields for the content and process of being heard and being held (Winnicott, 1971). This DMIN project presents a safe space designed to explore the approach and general management of the participant’s emotional life, along with the idea of a reduction of impingements. The purpose is for experiences of positive gratification, instead of annihilation, as “Everything is interpreted in terms of the individual’s love and ambivalence”

(Buckley, 1986, p. 233). My demonstration project's goal is for the work and process of the project to be a beginning of acknowledgment and ownership of responsibility and healing.

STRESSors

Stressors can be looked at from many different angles, but no matter the perspective, they can be placed into two categories. Those categories are daily hassles and chronic stressors (Serido, Almeida & Washington, 2004). Chronic stressors are difficulties that may persist or be reoccurring in ones life (Serido et al., 2004). The sources of these stressors can range from expectations of upholding major social roles, sheer conflict between dual social roles one operates under, or excessive restrictions experienced daily (Serido et al., 2004).

Regardless of the origins, there is agreement that it is the ongoing and open-ended nature of the stressor that qualifies it as chronic. What makes chronic stressors particularly debilitating to the individual is the uncertainty associated with the timing and resolution of the stressor. It is difficult to identify when the stressor began, and it is often more difficult to know when or even if it will end. Thus, another aspect of chronic stressors that contributes to their individual impact is the lack of control one may have over the onset or remission of the stressor (Serido et al., 2004, p. 18).

Although daily hassles cannot be ignored, it is the chronic stressors that present the greatest threat (Serido et al., 2004). "Chronic stressors present an ongoing threat to the individual, the *ever-present potential* to erupt in ways both large and small in an individual's daily life" (Serido et al., 2004, p. 30).

The social roles or positions that one claim, identifies them through a normative emphasis that society has placed on the role (Krause, 2007). These normatives direct the occupant of the role, as well as the non-occupant, with what to expect, and what one is to do who holds the role (Krause, 2007). “As a result, these norms provide a sense of purpose and direction in life, as well as a basis for evaluating the adequacy of one’s own role performance” (Krause, 2007, p. 20). This role identification is not only seen as a chronic stressor, but it is also known as a macrostressor (Smith, Allen & Danley, 2007). Macrostressors are wide-spread, large scale, systems related, stressors (Smith et al., 2007). But, whether at the micro- or macro- level, discrimination is a universal stressor for Blacks (Smith et al., 2007). I propose that the same stands true for Black, SGL identified, people of faith. When an individual has experienced a traumatic, discriminatory event,

It is normal to have feelings of detachment or emotional numbness or a feeling of distorted or altered reality (e.g., wondering, “Did I hear what I thought I just heard?”). Surprise, shock, and frustration are oftentimes followed by the attempt to force the event from memory, denying that it occurred, or reliving the event in dreams or in conversations with others. Unfortunately, for most people of color, these negative feelings or the associated collective memories seldom fade; instead, they become a part of a person’s life history (Smith et al., 2007, p.555).

The Black Church has enforced such feelings through their discrimination of SGL identified individuals. The enforcement has impacted the life and work of SGL individuals who have distanced themselves from the church and, even the more, those who have answered the call to serve in ministry and to the community.

That's a SHAME

Rosenblatt (2010) asserts that it would be inaccurate to attempt to apply a single culture's reality of norms against others cultures and evaluate the other cultures. However, despite any cultural context, shame is a very complex and exhaustive matter (Rosenblatt 2010). "Shame is a mix of feelings, thoughts, awareness, wants, values, and beliefs that vary considerably from culture to culture, because these cultures create, support, reinforce, and define different feelings, awarenesses, wants, values and beliefs" (Rosenblatt, 2010, pp. 113-114). This can be applied to how status is perceived and received amongst Leaders and in the Black Community.

Schermer (2010) asserts that shame has several characteristics, but one importance. First, shame can be depicted as an emotion that is relational (Schermer, 2010). It, "occurs actively within the "here-and-now" interaction" (Schermer, 2010, p. 41). It contains a facet of intervention, coupled with self-deprivation. One may avert or avoid it as an anticipatory act (Schermer, 2010). Shame can also be seen simultaneously as a protector, yet while paradoxically making one more vulnerable (Schermer, 2010). Thus shame perpetuates avoidance. Avoidance is a primitive defense of disapproval, but it also creates a strong vulnerability for isolation (Schermer, 2010). Therefore "shame is a mechanism of the self that has the specific connotation of being disapproved, rejected, and cut off. As an active process, it is an "admission of failure" (Schermer, 2010, p. 41). "Shame prompts disconnection; and disconnection is, itself, experienced as shameful" and "disconnection *exposes* the self" (Kauffman, 2010, p.4).

Shame regulates by its power to create a very painful emotion, and it is this emotion that is usually called to mind by the word shame. This operates as an enforcer of self-valuation and social order. It regulates through constituting experiences of valuational

privation, such as dishonor, disgrace, devaluation, dehumanization, stigmatization, failure, subjugation, annihilation, defilement, exclusion, objectification, and so forth (Kauffman, 2010, p. 10).

Shame can be an extremely heavy burden of the soul (Kauffman, 2010).

Pattison (2000) discusses how, for some people, shame becomes a permanent trait, or an engrained characteristic. “Such people may be described as shame-bound, shame-ridden, shame-prone or toxically or chronically shamed” (Pattison, 2000, p. 93). These people not only fail to do good, what is right, but they also have a tendency to do harm to themselves or others (Pattison, 2000). In the harming of others, they may exhibit behaviors such as envy and greed (Pattison, 2000). “Envy and greed may be products of a perception of the self as inferior, depleted, inadequate and lacking in relationship to others who appear to have more” (Pattison, 2000, p. 127).

Some shamed people lack a sense of personal worth and value. This means that they may act compliantly and in such a way as to attract approval from outside themselves rather than being concerned to do the right thing, or what is best for others. The need to be acceptable may also cause shamed people to lie or to be dishonest. The cumulative effect of the need for approval and the need to avoid shame may mean that they function as unreliable hypocrites who act the part of doing right but cannot be relied on to act as they say they will (Pattison, 2000, pp. 127-128).

The perpetuation of shame is deeply rooted in the SGL community and amongst SGL Leaders. Shame is a stumbling block for the Leaders, hindering complete integration within self and

amongst each other. For SGL Leaders shame prevents spiritual growth and reduces the ability to see a need for brotherly/sisterly nurture and accountability.

Trauma

Meszaros asserts that trauma happens when,

“An event in life of a subject which is characterized by the fact that a set of physical and/or psychic stimuli affecting the personality exceeds the tolerance level of the individual’s given developmental stage/condition. The individual, therefore, is incapable of the usual means available of preventing, stopping or effectively processing this psychically damaging stimuli or of restoring the previous state of balance. (p.486)”, (as cited in Meszaros, 2010, p. 330).

Trauma is therefore founded on real events that occur and affect the interpersonal dynamics of object relations (Meszaros, 2010). Trauma can be experienced in different subsets. It can originate from person-to-person or be produced by an external force such as a natural disaster or mass accident (Meszaros, 2010). Solidarity is usually experienced when trauma occurs with one of the latter two, but when there is person-to-person trauma, these gestures are more so to be lacking than present. Another way one can experience trauma is generationally, or through history. Historical trauma is a collective and cumulative phenomenon that manifests emotionally and psychologically within different cultural groups. It, “can be experienced by “anyone living in families at one time marked by severe levels of trauma, poverty, dislocation, war, etc, and who

are still suffering as a result” (Cutler, n.d.)”, (“How being trauma-informed”, n.d.). As a result of historical trauma, internalized oppression can develop.

Traumatized people may begin to internalize the views of the oppressor and perpetuate a cycle of self-hatred that manifests itself in negative behaviors. Emotions such as anger, hatred, and aggression are self-inflicted, as well as inflicted on members of one’s own group (Johnson, n.d.), (“How being trauma-informed”, n.d.).

Bowlby, being concerned with Object Relations and Attachment Theory, explored the impact of the object on the self. He emphasized the importance of the environment as a determinant of trauma appearance (Holmes, 1993). If the caregiver did not detect the infant’s signal correctly and respond appropriately, the attachment would be disrupted. Bowlby believed that this trauma set patterns that would follow us the rest of our lives. He stressed that any traumatic situation, such as fundamental needs not being met, disrupts attachment and a sense of basic trust. Bowlby believed that emotional security could only be reflected when there is confidence in the availability of the attachment figure (Mitchell & Black, 1995). Bowlby suggested that all defenses have a root that can be found in, “detachment, a deactivation of the fundamental and central need for attachment, around which emotional experience is organized” (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p. 137). Because of these traumatic situations, it disallows for adequate regulation of emotional distress.

Maltby and Hall (2012), state that, “researchers quickly realized that people experience God as an attachment figure, and subsequently began applying attachment-based categories to describe attachment to God” (p. 303). Although data has been inconsistent with whether there is a relation between the attachment styles one has with God and humans, it is hypothesized that one’s

attachment to God compensates for traumatic disruptions in human attachment (Maltby & Hall, 2012). With trauma simplistically thought of as excess beyond ability to cope, it represents a threat to personal/inner integrity. Therefore it is proposed that trauma shapes ones attachment significantly. While already trying to make sense of past traumatic experiences, individuals also have to re-negotiate new trauma, both at the approached developmental and spirituality stage, along its developmental trajectory.

This DMIN project will allow for the symptoms of trauma, as described, to be observed within the sessions. It is proposed that traumatic disruptions undergird the behavior experienced between the Leaders. This trauma history will also play out in the Leaders' relationship and in reference to their spirituality. Balance will be sought, as the beginning of healing takes place.

The Group Process: Cohesiveness

Yalom & Leszca (2005) assert that there are various pathways in which the cohesion of a group can play out and have influence on the process. They state that, "relationship is germane to a positive outcome in group therapy" (2005, p. 53). Although relationships within a group situation sets-up for more complexities than individual therapy, solely depending on establishing a good relationship between the therapist and the individual participants is not a good enough expectation within this DMIN project's model (Yalom & Leszca, 2005). One must specifically determine which alternate or collective relationship(s) is/are paramount. Cohesiveness is defined as the similarities between the group participants to the connection that one would establish within individual therapy (Yalom & Leszca, 2005). In other words there should be bonds established within the group that mimic those found within the confines of individual therapy.

On a broader spectrum, Yalom and Leszca define it as, “the result of all the forces acting on all the members such that they remain in the group” (2005, p. 55). Whatever way one tries to describe it, cohesiveness is difficult to encapsulate, as it consists of layers and cross-layers of intertwined dimensions.

The Group Process: Outcomes

Yalom & Leszca (2005) contend that, “the average person who receives psychotherapy is significantly improved and that the outcome from group therapy is virtually identical to that of individual therapy” (p. 53). They state that, “Furthermore there is evidence that certain clients may obtain greater benefit from group therapy than from other approaches, particularly clients dealing with stigma or social isolation and those seeking new coping skills” (2005, p. 53).

According to Vogel, Wade & Hackler (2007), “Perceptions of public stigma contributed to the experience of self-stigma, which, in turn, influenced self-seeking attitudes and eventually help-seeking willingness” (2007, p. 1). This public stigma speaks to the fact of individuals making an association of their natural essence being unacceptable. This non-acceptance is due to the fact of them making a decision to seek help (Vogel et al., 2007). Self-stigma is the perception that the individual holds of him/herself, or creates in their mind that, for whatever the reason, they are socially unacceptable. This non-acceptance is centered on there being something ‘wrong’ with the individual for having to seek therapeutic assistance. Those who self-stigmatize are listening to the perception that their internal voice speaks about, and those who have issue with public stigma are listening to what they believe others (society) say about them (Vogel et al, 2007).

Being a part of a group brings with it a sameness that normalizes whatever the skewed

perception may be. Yalom and Leszca (2005) state that, “it is not only the discovery that others have problems similar to one’s own...” “It is the affective sharing of one’s inner world *and then the acceptance by others* that seem of paramount importance. To be accepted by others challenges the client’s belief that he or she is basically repugnant, unacceptable, or unlovable” (2005, p. 56). The design of this DMIN project exemplifies positive outcomes from the participant’s interactions. The mere fact that they will be participating will embody normalization.

The Group Process: Synchronous Internet

Taylor & Luce (2003), see internet-based therapy not only having great potential, but also producing great outcomes. They found that computer-assisted therapy appeared to be as effective as face-to-face treatment, for treating anxiety disorders and depression (Taylor & Luce, 2003). They propose that internet support groups could have advantages over face-to-face therapy, and it may be just as effective (Taylor & Luce, 2003). In an internet-based therapy group, coined Interapy, Christine Knaevelsrud & Andreas Maercker (2007) found that German individuals suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) showed a decrease in their distress after being a participant in their Interapy group.

Ninety-six patients with posttraumatic stress reactions were allocated at random to ten sessions of Internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) conducted over a 5-week period or a waiting list control group. Severity of PTSD was the primary outcome.

Secondary outcome variables were depression, anxiety, dissociation and physical health.

Follow-up assessments were conducted at the end of treatment and 3 months after treatment (Knaevelsrud & Maercker, 2007, p. 1).

From baseline to post-treatment assessment, PTSD severity and other psychopathological symptoms were significantly improved for the treatment group. Additionally, patients of the treatment condition showed significantly greater reduction of co-morbid depression and anxiety as compared to the waiting list condition. These effects were sustained during the 3-months follow-up period. High ratings of the therapeutic alliance and low drop-out rates indicated that a positive and stable therapeutic relationship could be established online” (Knaevelsrud & Maercker, 2007, p. 2).

Interapy proved to be a viable treatment alternative for PTSD with large effect sizes and sustained treatment effects. A stable and positive online therapeutic relationship can be established through the Internet which improved during the treatment process (Knaevelsrud & Maercker, 2007, p.8).

This DMIN project will exemplify how an internet-based therapy group is beneficial to this population of Leaders. The feedback from the participants will be utilized to establish effectiveness.

The Group Process: Models Utilized

This DMIN project group will be a topic-oriented group. Because the topics will reflect pertinent underlined stressors, it is projected that this will create a powerful catalyst for the success of the group (Marianne Schneider Corey & Gerald Corey, 2002). The main focus of the

group will coincide with the topics. The purpose for using this modality is not only to create a secure space of exchange for the group, but also to spark and promote personal reflection. In this demonstration project, the group members will have a role in determining three of the four topics for the group. Corey & Corey (2002) assert that, “If members have a role in selecting the topics, there is a greater chance that they will be able to face the issues explored in the group” (2002, p. 347). Corey & Corey also state that,

If a group is too tightly structured and driven primarily by a concern with presenting information, it is likely that participants will not have an opportunity to bring up their own emerging concerns. Even when there is keen interest in exploring a particular theme, the topics should not become more important than the pressing needs of the members of the group. For meaningful sharing of ideas on a topic, members need to feel free to express their reactions to one another. A balance between content and process is important for a successful group experience. And interpersonal, process-oriented focus will increase the chances that members will feel trusting enough to discuss topics in a personal way (2002, p. 349).

This DMIN project seeks to uphold the outlined recommendation of mutual selectivity of topics.

Chapter 3

Approach and Procedures: Method and Steps of Carrying Out This Project

The Invitation

The first method for carrying out this project is to invite Leaders to participate (Appendix 2). These Leaders will be from TFAM. Initial contact will be done via an email blast. The email will contain an attachment (Appendix 3) that will explain that this is an opportunity for them to be a part of an online chat group whose conversational focus will be to decrease stress in Leaders. They will be informed that if they choose to participate in the group that their identity during the sessions will be kept anonymous. They will also be told it will not be permissible to use any identifying information (such as real names, etc). I will expound on my expectations for participation, which include that I anticipate their agreement to be a part of the project to mean they will attend all sessions, unless there is an emergency. They will be expected to complete any homework given. I will emphasize that confidentiality will be honored and that whatever is shared within the group will not go beyond the group. Possible participants will be informed that only the first ten Leaders to respond will be able to participate. The project can successfully run with fewer than ten, but more than ten would create difficulty for the project.

Assistance

The Administrative Assistant (Admin) of the church will sign a confidentiality statement (Appendix 4) stating they will not divulge or ascertain any knowledge of participants in the project. The Admin will be assisting with setting up an email communication process for the participants.

Participants Contacted

After interested Leaders have responded, they will be sent an email from a third party (the Admin) assigning them a random email between participant one and participant ten. Once this email is assigned, all correspondence with the participant will be done through this email only. This process is being implemented so that I will not be able to identify who is speaking in the chat room, so that anonymity can be maintained. The same email name given will be the same ID that will be used in the chat room. The Admin will produce a list of who each assigned email and handle belong to. This list will be sealed until after the last day of group is held.

Questionnaires

Once emails have been assigned, a confidentiality statement/consent form (Appendix 7) and demographical questionnaire (Appendix 5) will be sent. Three days before the first session, a questionnaire (Appendix 6) to determine a baseline for stress will be given. At the end of the project, the same stress questionnaire will be given. Please note, all conversations that take place in the session will be copied and appended to the final project.

The Schedule & The Environment

This project will span four Mondays with a fifth Monday for wrap-up and feedback. I have chosen Mondays because it is typically a non workday for Leaders. The time of the session is non-conventional, as it will be from 10PM to 11PM/EST. The sessions will take place in a chat room that I will moderate. The room will open three minutes to the set start time. Each session will begin with a greeting by me, and then each participant being asked to type two words that describe them in that moment. Afterward the topic for the evening will be introduced.

Discussion on the topic will last for twenty-five minutes. The discussion will then shift for the next twenty-five minutes to a free-flow conversation. I will facilitate the conversations and set the direction as needed. However, it will be the participants' responsibility to set the tone for this section. The next three minutes will allow for positive affirmations or words of encouragement to be shared amongst the participants. The next one minute will be allowed for any proposed topics for the next week. The last minute will consist of a prayer, which will be typed by a participant who is randomly chosen by me. If homework was assigned the week before, the session will open up with the homework as the focal point, as it will be the intentional topic for the week. Most people have been in chat rooms or have texted or IMed, so this form of communication (self-coined blind communication) should be comfortable and familiar to the participants. In terms of ambiance and atmosphere, participants will have been instructed to dedicate this time as focused, un-interrupted time.

Letters

Over the time of the project, I will send brief encouraging words, or reflections, two days after a group session. They will originate from something that was discussed in the session, or something that was a rippled touch point that came up.

Homework

Each participant will be asked to do a written reflection immediately following each session. The reflection includes two words that describe how they feel in that moment, and one to three sentences on how they feel the session went, or something that stuck out for them. These will be emailed to me no later than twenty minutes after a session ends.

Session Readings

It is my desire that this group runs organically. I will provide brief biblical or spiritual readings three days prior to each session. These readings will be incorporated into the upcoming session's discussion. The only one that will be pre-selected is the initial reading. That reading will be Genesis 4: 1 – 16. The next three will be selected based upon the issues that arise from the sessions.

Methods for Recognizing if the Project Execution Has Led to Gains, Losses or no Change

The anticipation of this process is that the Leaders will gain a voice and a sense of camaraderie by being able to be kept anonymous. This voice will be able to be heard through typed words that will allow for the Leader to not only confront underlined stressors by sharing, but to also be heard and held by their colleagues without judgment. This type of group will also build a community amongst these Leaders that will cultivate respect and honor of each individual's journey without being critical towards the person sharing. Because this space is deemed safe, by the end of the project the Leaders should feel connected (that they are not the only one; they're not alone) and encouraged in their positions, as the underlined stressors will have been addressed through the sharing and the holding. If people are not conversing within the session, this will be assessed immediately. The moderator will examine whether shifting something within the process will help, or if the particular method should be abandoned by this demonstration project.

Group Description

The target group for this DMIN project is ordained religious Leaders within The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. These leaders will also identify as SGL. Although this group will contain only SGL Clergy, the project can be modified and used with any Leader who identifies as African-American or any ethnic minority, regardless of sexual orientation. Through presented topics with an underlined stressor specifically for the minority group, participants will share their thoughts on the material previously presented, and how it inadvertently brings up stress for them either mentally, emotionally, physically or spiritually. Topics will be purposefully chosen that are, subsequently, stress triggers for the participants. This will be based off of conversations from the previous sessions. One way of overcoming stress or a stressor is to talk about it, confront it and have your feeling about it be heard and held, without judgment or shame. This group will also offer the opportunity for Leaders to be poured into positively after sharing the effect of the stressor.

Group therapy is unique in being the only therapy that offers clients the opportunity to be of benefit to others. It also encourages role versatility, requiring clients to shift between roles of help receivers and help providers. And, of course, clients are enormously helpful to one another in the group therapeutic process. They offer support, reassurance, suggestions, insight; they share similar problems with one another (Yalom, 2005, pp. 13-14).

Chapter 4

Summary: Description of Outcomes

First Attempt

The Invitation (Appendix 2) was originally sent out via email to the Bishops of each region of TFAM. There are four regions: East Coast, West Coast, Midwest and South. Each Bishop was asked to send an email blast to all the Leaders in their region. There were no responses that came back from this effort.

There was a second attempt at gaining participants through in person invites. During the 2013 National Convocation for TFAM, there were two outreaches done. The first was an announcement made (Appendix 8) by one of the TFAM Pastors during one of the main sessions. I was unable to make the appeal myself because I was working in another area. Prior to, I selected a point person to be available to handout information (Appendix 9) and receive contact information from interested Leaders. No one came to receive information or to give their contact information.

The second attempt was one-on-one. After the last main session of the conference, I approached Leaders, informing them of my project, and gave those interested the brief overview letter (Appendix 9). I prepared twenty-five copies of this letter. I gave nineteen of them out, and six were returned signed for interest. Upon returning from the conference, I emailed six letters (Appendix 9) of possible interest to Leaders who left prior to my one-on-one attempt. Two of these six signed and returned the letter of interest. The Senior Pastor of my church gave a verbal interest and commitment, hence giving me a group of nine participants across all four regions.

An email with the detailed description of the project was sent to all interested Leaders (Appendix 11). Included in this letter were the project's time and dates for the online sessions. Between the date of the email and approximately two weeks from the scheduled first session, only three participants had committed to being a part. The other six communicated that they could not participate because of either changes in their schedules or an overlooked capacity of an already overbooked schedule that would not allow them the time. Because of the number of non-committals, an email was sent to the three that committed, informing them that the project was not going to go forth as planned (Appendix 12).

The next step taken was communication with the Director of the DMIN program. I inquired about expanding the terms of my project, concerning how Leader would be defined. In addition to opening the project to Bishops, Apostles, Senior and Associate Pastors, it was now also open to Ordained and Licensed Clergy, and Minister's in Training (MIT's). After approval was given participants were sought.

Second Attempt

An announcement was made at my local church, by me, for participants for my study. An email blast (Appendix 13) was sent to all Leaders (as newly defined) within the East Coast region. There were eleven replies of interest. The description of the project was emailed to interested Leaders (Appendix 14). One perspective participant Leader later emailed that their schedule would not accommodate for participation, and another reported that their computer crashed, so they would not be able to participate. This left nine participants.

The Assistant was put into place. Email accounts were created for the nine participants, using my church's (Rivers-at-Rehoboth's) hosting. Each email operated as the personal ID or handle for the participants. Each participant was called "Volunteer" and randomly assigned a number (Appendix 45) two through ten by the Assistant. As the moderator, I used the ID Volunteer1. Confidentiality forms (CF's) (Appendix 7) and four questionnaires were emailed (Appendix 6, Appendix 15, Appendix 16 and Appendix 46). Eight participants returned their CF. One participant reported having to discontinue due to personal matters. This left eight participants.

The four questionnaires and CF were emailed three days prior to the scheduled first session. Questionnaire 1 is for demographical information (Appendix 46). Questionnaire 2 is for assessing stress (Appendix 6). Questionnaire 3 is the propensity to trust (Appendix 15). Questionnaire 4 is emotional and spiritual health inventory (Appendix 16). Each participant was asked to fill out the CF and questionnaires and email them back. The first reading, consisting of one spiritual and one non-spiritual reading, was placed in the body of the email (Appendix 17). No reply for receipt or confirmation for reading the material was requested. Seven participants returned the requested materials. One individual made contact that their schedule would no longer be able to accommodate being a part of the group. This left seven participants.

The Group – Questionnaire 1

The break down of the individuals in the group is as follows (answers from Appendix 46):

- Five are female identified, two are male identified.

- Six participants identify their race as either Black or African-American and one participant identifies as Human.
- Five participants identify their ethnicity as either Black or African-American, one as African-Caribbean and one as Cape Verdean American.
- The ages range from 36, 41, 42, 43, 43, 48 and 49.
- The highest levels of education range from 2 Associate degrees, 2 Bachelor degrees and 3 Master degrees.
- Three of the participants are single, two are partnered and two are married.
- Four are MIT's and three are ordained clergy. They have served as such as follows: Two MIT's 2 years; Two MIT's 3 years; One ordained 2 years; One ordained 7 years; One ordained 12 years.
- Two participants define their current religious/spiritual affiliation as Christian; One as Protestant; One as Baptist; One as Non-Denominational/Open & Affirming; One as Spiritual; and one did not answer.
- They each defined their religious/spiritual affiliation for which they grew up under differently. Church of God, Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Pentecostal (Holiness), Christian, Baptist.

The purpose of obtaining these demographics is to be able to examine differences and similarities. These include looking at external forces that appear to operate the same across group lines. Timpona (1998) suggests that, "Simply knowing that population groups are distinct

does not directly address the underlying theoretical issues. While plausible reasons may be provided, they are often simply conjecture without further analysis to support the suppositions” (1998, p. 54). Allowing self identification and placement takes away suppositions.

Questionnaire 2

The questionnaire (Appendix 6) is taken from a burnout self-test (Appendix 21) as an informal approach to look at possible levels of stress. The purpose of the questionnaire is for intuitive usage, not for validating scientific or diagnostic techniques. The questions are geared towards the participant’s feelings regarding the roll or position they operate in within the church. Note that the questionnaire is modified in relation to word choice and value placed upon the responses. The ideology behind the interchangeable terms “burn out” and “stress” is that chronic stress leads to burnout. Spickard, Gabbe & Christensen (2002) say that, “The risk for burnout increases in individuals who consistently experience work overload and a perceived lack of control over the extent to which the load exceeds their capacity” (2002, p. 1447). Simplistically put, we are referring to emotional exhaustion (Spickard et. al, 2002). As caregivers, of sorts, these Leaders will experience some level of stress, even if minute, but it all has a possibility of leading to something more, such as severe anxiety or depression (Bevans & Sternberg 2012). The original questionnaire was created by mindtools.com (Appendix 21).

Of the seven participants, one falls into the category of being at a severe risk for stress/burnout. Four of the participants fall into the category of possibly being at risk for being under stress/burnout. Two participants fall into the category of experiencing little signs of stress/burnout.

Questionnaire 3

This Questionnaire (Appendix 15) is a self-assessment, propensity to trust scale with McGraw Hill Higher Education (Appendix 20), created by Steven L. McShane (2009). With this scale we are estimating the participant's willingness to trust people in general. An individual can score between eight and forty-eight. The higher the score, the closer one's propensity is to trust. The lower the score, the harder it is for the participant to trust in general. We are noting that trust can have both emotional and behavioral dimensions (Lewis & Weigert, 2012), and that it is a relational construct (Franzini, 2008) that has internal (self) and external (environment/societal) foundations.

The majority of the participants had a moderate propensity to trust. Their numbers were as follows: 28, 28, 29, 30 and 31. One participant had a low propensity to trust scoring a 22. One participant did not return the questionnaire.

Questionnaire 4

The fourth questionnaire (Appendix 16) is an inventory of emotional and spiritual health. It is called The Emotionally Healthy Church Inventory (Appendix 22). It focuses on seven principles: Look Beneath The Surface; Break The Power Of The Past; Live in Brokenness And Vulnerability; Receive The Gift Of Limits; Embrace Grieving And Loss; Make Incarnation Your Model For Loving Well; Slow Down To Lead With Integrity. The section titles were omitted from the questionnaire given to the participants (Appendix 16).

An inventory gives you an idea of what is being represented or accounted for. This inventory allows us to see what is present. In the examining of what is present, we can see gaps or places where there is lack or a need. It assesses or measures, but it does not make a projected determination.

From the guide for the seven principles of this inventory, an interpretation of emotional/spiritual maturity is given. A pattern indicates one of the following through the adding and plotting of the results on a graph. The person is either at or between one of four emotional places; emotional infant, emotional child, emotional adolescent or emotional adult. There were three participants whose score dictate they are emotional adults. One participant scored overall as an emotional adult with spikes between being an emotional adolescent and an emotional child. Another participant's score depicts they are between being an emotional adolescent and an emotional adult. Another participant's score depicts them being between an emotional adolescent and an emotional child. Two participants did not do the questionnaire.

Session One

There was an outline created for facilitating Session One (Appendix 18). There was also a time outline done for how much time should be spent on each question, and how much time should be allowed for posts to be read, and the participants to respond (Appendix 43). The time outlines were done to keep within the timeframe of the sessions.

The session began by the Moderator welcoming everyone into the session (Appendix 23). This was done collectively and individually. Once the session was ready to begin, the Moderator

thanked everyone present for their participation. The session began with a brief relaxation exercise to welcome all parts into the space. The exercise consisted of taking deep breaths, three cycles, and then typing the word “Present” once done. The participants were then asked to write two words that described them in the moment. The following words came up: “pain and angst”, “conscious and peaceful”, “comfortable and clear” and “free and calm”. After those present had shared, the topic for the evening was introduced. The first session topic was “A Trustworthy Keeper”. The Moderator asked the participants to share what came up for them from the readings they were pre-assigned (Appendix 17). The Moderator then posted the pre-assigned reading into the conversation. The group began with the non-biblical reading that had to do with trust. Only parts from the session will be shared here. Please see the Appendix for the entire session.

Volunteer 4 (V4) responded first saying, “trust is seems to be something that is earned and is not automatically given.” Followed by, “Because we have pre-judgments about individuals based on previous experiences others. We have to invest some time and have some experiences with a person before we can openly trust”. Volunteer 6 (V6) shared that, “It’s a sore spot for me as I am learning to get in touch with what I am feeling at the moment. I am having to search how I am feeling and where the feeling is coming form at the time”. The Moderator asked V6 for clarity; if they were stating that they were learning to trust. V6 continued with, “Yes I am learning to trust me in order to trust others”.

The Moderator interjected that they were making good insightful points and then shifted the conversation to the second reading. The Moderator posed, “Concerning relational trust and the second reading, tell me your thoughts about the passage read in Genesis 4: 1-16; clarifying, not

in relation to relationship to God, but the brothers”. Volunteer 3 (V3) responded with, “Cain could not be trusted to protect his brother. He let jealousy get in the way, and because he was disobedient and scolded for it, he killed his brother”. V3 went on to say that, “Sometimes the word “family” is loosely used to mean relationship, but it doesn’t mean that necessarily. People get jealous and sabotage your life”. Volunteer 9 (V9) added that, “Those closest to you can hurt you the most”. The Moderator inserted a thought, “Yes, but the bottom line is that people have to be trusted in every part of our lives, especially working in ministry”. The Moderator then introduced a parallel perspective concerning the Cain and Able story and posed, “As leaders, how do you see a correlation for sustainability and multiplicity of carrying out the call of God on your life, in relation to your brother/sister being your keeper?”

V9 responded with, “I understand the concept that we all must work together for kingdom work, but I’m not sure that all in the work understand that everyone is equally valuable”. V4 emphasized, “LEARNING to value the people in our relationships regardless of our role”. V6 added, “I am my brothers/sister keeper with out a doubt, however I feel like my brother/sisters feel the same towards me. I’ve become more dependent on god because I don’t feel like I can trust my peers. I feel like given an opportunity to hurt me, throw me under the bus or just not be supportive in the church he/she would hurt me.” Correcting, “Oops – Don’t feel the same”.

The Moderator posed another thought to the participants, “But are we not to just trust people who serve with us? And if not, how do we get to that place? V9 says, “NO! All must earn trust!” V3 responded with, “We have to have open dialogues, to invite in authenticity. Dialogues where people know to leave the masks off, as well as the spirit of gossip and nosey-ness”. V4 added, “I believe when each one of us takes responsibility of truly being a keeper seriously”.

The Moderator thanked everyone for their responses and presented another thought, “Lack of trust is one of the foundation destroyers of much that is attempted to be built. The first place to begin is with the self”. The Moderator began to close the session by challenging the participants to switch how they look at the brother/sister keeper concept and look at it in terms of “My brother/sister is my keeper”. The Moderator presented commentary for them to read where they were left with the question, “Am I a Trustworthy Keeper?” In conclusion the Moderator informed them that each session would end with a positive thought. The question was posed, “What is something affirming or encouraging you would say to yourself, if you could have spoken to yourself during the recalled time where you experienced mistrust?” Some of the responses included, “I am not worthy of this behavior and not allow it to sit with me longer than the encounter” (V6) and “My hope and faith is in God alone and I will not be hindered by man’s shortfalls” (V4).

The Moderator then asked, “What encouraging or affirming words can you give in this moment to someone from this session?” V3 said, “God made us all in his image and likeness. While we may have flaws, God is yet working on us. Have the loving mercy on your brothers/sisters that God has on us. We can grow together”. V9 said, “Look in the mirror and tell yourself “I am trustworthy”, then be it!” V4 said, “The process of ‘Trust’ begins with me and you”.

The Moderator thanked them for their responses and randomly chose V6 to close them in prayer.

The Moderator then reminded the participants to remember to send their two words via email within the next twenty minutes, along with one to three sentences on how the session was for them. The Moderator also asked if there were any proposed topics for moving forward. The

following was mentioned: forgiveness, vulnerability and effective communication between leaders. V6 closed the session in prayer. Everyone said good night.

Post Session One

The words that the participants used to describe how they felt after the session were:

Naked/Exposed; Lighter and thoughtful; Heard and honored; Enlightening and freeing. The responses about the sessions included: “I was a bit timid with the questions at first. But the anonymity really aids in being absolutely open to responding to the prompts, readings, and others responses.” (V9) “I think this session went very well and also showed that I am not alone in feeling alone or separated.” (V6) “It was great to have a relevant issue to discuss and get feedback. I would say that this is a great exercise for leaders. I’m looking forward to next week’s discussion.” (V4)

There were four participants in session one. All but one sent a post session response.

Reflection One

A reflection was emailed to the assigned email on the Wednesday following session one (Appendix 26). The reflection was entitled “Rebuilding Trust”. The participant was instructed to reply to the email and place their initials in the subject line to indicate they read it.

Session Two

There was an outline created for facilitating Session Two (Appendix 24). There was also a time outline done for how much time should be spent on each question, and how much time should be allowed for posts to be read and the participants to respond (Appendix 25).

The session began with the Moderator welcoming participants to the chat room. The Moderator then gave a reminder to email reflections after the sessions, and to check their emails on Wednesdays and Fridays. The Moderator then began the same breathing exercise from before, except this time the participants were directed to take continual deep breaths while noting how their body was feeling. The Moderator instructed them to listen to what their body was saying as they breathed. The Moderator then directed them to calm their thoughts and to lightly shake their arms and body and to feel any tension leave their body. At the end of the relaxation exercise the Moderator asked the participants to type two words that described them in that moment. The words were: relaxed, free; warm, hopeful; warm, relaxed; peaceful, happy. The Moderator then thanked them for sharing.

The Moderator proceeded with the following: “Last week our topic was “A Trustworthy Keeper”. You were sent a reflection to read on Wednesday (Appendix 26) that spoke to rebuilding trust. Friday you were sent two readings on Shame and Rejection (Appendix 27). Our topic for tonight is “Shameful Rejection”. The Moderator introduced the biblical reading first. It was not posted within the conversation. The Moderator simply opened the floor for discussion. There was no response. The Moderator then posed two questions, one of them being if they had been able to read the passage. No one responded to the question, but the participants began to speak about the passage.

V9 shared that, “I’ve done things that I hoped wouldn’t be found out.” “But as sure as I tried to hide the more it would come out”. “Keeping my actions secret made me think I was ok. If I just asked God to forgive me, it would ok”. “Also if others found out, I might not be trusted or looked upon as less valued”.

Volunteer 10 (V10) shared, “I believe at times I find myself worry about what others may think of me and not wanting to be rejected helps me to no share it.”

V6 shared, “I’ve been a loner because of not wanting to be rejected/shamed”. “Growing up I stayed to myself because I was ashamed of not having a lot and also the fact that I was being molested”.

When the Moderator asked how the participants saw the place where they were with rejection effecting them in leadership, they responded as such. V9 shared, “I’ve been rejected in my social group. It’s painful”. “I still have some healing to do as a person to be more effective but I can say I’ve come a long ways”. V4 stated that, “It would not affect me in leadership by not allowing me to be a free to lead or lead as effective”. V10 said, “It sometimes prevent me from becoming more involved or expressing how I truly feel”.

The Moderator posed the question of how the participants had handled rejection from peers, as it relates to the place in God that God has graced them to (their position). V6 said, “I have begin to look on the inside to see why I really feel rejected, and if was really begin rejected at that moment”. “I then begin to step out and ask god for help with the spirit of rejection and also to be mindful not to make anyone else feel reject”. V4 adds, “I have tried to focus more on the “call” and responsibility than on the rejection”.

The Moderator thanked everyone for sharing and moved to the second reading. The second reading is a non-biblical reading on shame. This reading was posted in the chat room. V6 responded with, “The second reading brought up the fact that I ran from ministry for years because of shame. Therefore wanting to disconnect and or disconnecting at times during my journey once I said yes to the call”. V9 said, “This piece really cut me. I want to find strength to deal with shame”. “Not so long ago, someone I loved spread some untruth about me throughout the [church] community. The community rejected me and ashamed. I didn’t and had no strength to defend myself”. “The shame made me say just forget the work I was called to do”.

The Moderator then asked what the participants thought of the idea ‘abandon because I have been abandoned’. The Moderator asked it twice before there was a response. V6 said, “I did the opposite of that and instead stayed around people places and things because I was abandoned”. V4 added, “I don’t think it’s appropriate to abandon because you’ve been abandoned”. “If anything one should try to make sure that since they have been abandoned that someone else is not”. The Moderator thanked them for sharing.

The Moderator began to close the session with a scripture, Acts 7:35 AMP, “It was this very Moses whom they had denied (disowned and rejected), saying, Who made you our ruler (referee) and judge? Whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer and redeemer, by and with the [protecting and helping] hand of the Angel that appeared to him in the bramblebush.” There was also an elaboration on shame for them to read. After the reading the Moderator instructed the participants to say something affirming or encouraging to themselves. V6 said, “What you’re going through will make you stronger later but don’t internalize it to be the gospel”. V10

responded with, “I would read Luke 10:6 “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me”.

The Moderator then asked the participants to offer uplifting words to each other. V4 said, “you are of God’s unique workship”, and V9 said, “Be encouraged. Take this forum a step towards becoming a more effective vessel for God”. The Moderator thanked them for sharing, and then reminded them to send their two words and one to three sentences within the next twenty minutes. V4 then closed the session with a prayer.

Post Session Two

The words that the participants used to describe how they felt after the session were: Grateful and Clear; Encouraged and Comforted; Flustered and Pressed; Naked and Exposed. The responses about the sessions included: “I feel great because I am releasing things that have keep me hostage for most of my life”. “The typically statement really stuck out for me and was an aha moment for me”. (V6) “The discussion of rejection and shame was very powerful for me.” “It is a good thing to be open and assess what you feel and deal with it and not discount it or super spiritualize it”. (V4) “The topic tonight really touched me. I could have spoken more but I type slow and the forum was moving quicker than I.” (V9) “I felt the session was very insightful although it made me feel naked. Learning how to confront your issues and not allow yourself to be stagnated from doing the work God has called you to do, especially in leadership all kinds of issues may arise that you may have felt you were well over or had been healed.” (V10)

There were four participants in session two. All sent a post session response.

Reflection Two

A reflection was emailed to the assigned email on the Wednesday following session two (Appendix 38). The reflection was entitled “Unashamedly Non-Rejecting”. The participants were instructed to reply to the email and place their initials in the subject line to indicate they read it.

Session Three

There was an outline created for facilitating Session Three (Appendix 28). There was also a time outline done for how much time should be spent on each question, and how much time should be allowed for posts to be read and the participants to respond (Appendix 29).

The Moderator opened the session by welcoming the participants collectively and then individually (Appendix 30). The Moderator began the session by asking the participants to write two words that described them in the moment. The words were: Excited and Relaxed; Inquisitive and Curious; Alert and Relaxed; Frustrated and Excited; Tired and Questionable. The Moderator then thanked them all for sharing, and then went straight into the topic; “CIAB Sabotage”. CIAB stands for Crabs-In-A-Barrel. The Moderator began with the non-biblical reading, asking the participants as a Leader, what came up for them.

V4 began the responses with, “How prevalent CIAB is in the church”. V9 said, “In the community in which I grew up, I’ve always heard that the blacks in the area were like crabs in a barrel so you must keep your business to yourself and don’t share with anyone else” “In every area of business and church, I was taught the CIAB motto and watch my back”. Volunteer 8

(V8) added, “I have heard that term all my life. I did not believe it referred to just blacks. Just anyone who should be for you but is envious or jealous of your success”.

The Moderator referred to a comment by V4 and asked the participants what they thought the root of the fear was that was referenced by V4. V8 responded with, “I have definitely experienced it in the church from others who believe that they are being overlooked and I am getting attention or recognition they would have liked for themselves”. V9 adds that, “The feeling of inadequacy can promote fear”. V4 responded that, “Inadequacy is determined by the environment and the people that are in it”. V9 expounded that, “Church is the place where a blue collar worker can hold a white collar position and others envy the titles, positions or anything that can be seen as higher up”.

The Moderator then asked the participants how to deal with CIAB among Leaders. V9 said, “How we deal as leaders is that must begin with absolute respect for all leadership, not pick and choose whom we will honor”. V4 added that, “If we should focus less on titles and more on building character in people. This will entail setting better standards”.

The Moderator then guided the participants to the second part; an expounded upon idea of sabotage that led to the biblical text, Titus 1:10 – 11 AMP. The Moderator then asked them to share their thoughts about the passage. “Tearing each other down is more about trying to make yourself look bigger more than about whether the other person is right or wrong” (V8). “I think about propheliars and mask wearing people who are teaching the wrong things in order to gain something selfish” (V3). “I see this scripture as those that spread gossip, and yes V3 the prophaliars that really are not speaking what the head of the house is speaking, they are not in one accord with the house” (V9).

The Moderator then proposed a thought about church unity, and asked, “As Leaders how do you see a way of counteracting attempts to break trust and initiate sabotage in the life of another Leader, and therefore accordingly, a ministry?” V8 responded that a Leader must, “know what the vision is” and “don’t stay there and try to divide and conquer”. V3 said, “I think that we need to be accountable and remember our commitment to the church. We must learn to trust one another by getting to know one another, praying together, helping each other, etc.” V4 stated, “To always have integrity, be open to discussion without being in FIGHT mode. Never provide an opportunity for doubt regarding one’s character”.

The Moderator thanked everyone for sharing and then opened the floor for free-flow conversation. The conversation flowed around the idea of respect. “Also, people need to learn to respect themselves and the pastor” (V3). “Respect must go across the board; respect the pastor and the appointments that [the pastor] has placed” (V9). “Respecting doesn’t always mean one agrees with those choices” (V4). “We can squash some of the silliness by valuing and treating every aspect of ministry as equally important to the Kingdom. The ushers when doing their job well can preach a sermon to a visitor without saying a word” (V8).

The Moderator thanked everyone for sharing and then began to close the session. The Moderator asked the participants if they could have spoken to themselves during their perceived time of CIAB or sabotage as a Leader, what were some positive words they would say? “Don’t allow yourself to be hindered by someone else’s insecurities” (V4). “You are a valid and valuable member of this community and you matter. Stay put, this is where God wants you to be” (V8). “Continue to be encouraged no matter what and not allow your fears to get in the way of what God has called you to” (V10).

The Moderator asked the participants to give uplifting words to another Leader in that moment, followed by inquiring as to what they could personally do to assist with not perpetuating CIAB or sabotage. V9 said, “Be an encourager”. V3 said, “Minister to those crabs”. V10 said, “I can encourage others and help by supporting them out of the barrel”.

The Moderator thanked them for their responses and then asked them to write two words that described them in the moment. The words were: Encouraged and Peaceful; Tired and Satisfied; Enlightened and Happy; Yet Inquisitive (of how we can make things better) and Encouraged. The Moderator thanked them again for their responses and then reminded them to check their emails Wednesdays and Fridays, and then asked them to email their one to three sentences on how the session was for them. V3 closed the session with prayer and everyone said good night.

Post Session Three

The responses about the session include: “The session tonight help me to see the need to be more aware of the CIAB in the community and to do my part to not be associated with it in a negative way. We spend too much time attempting to tear each other down in often subtle ways” (V4). “Tonight session made me think about how I impact others as a leader, do I really encourage other to better themselves and if so how successful has your approach been. I was in touch with that feeling of being in that barrel when I was using drugs, when I decided to clean myself up and make a change in my life those that were still in that barrel didn’t want me to leave that barrel” (V10). “I agree with the saying that when mistrust comes in love goes out. After being treated in ways that led to distrust, it is the most difficult to trust that one or any other.” “In

ministry not knowing who genuinely want to serve God or who is just saying what you want to hear is an obstacle for me” (V8).

There were five participants in session three. Two participants did not send their sentence responses.

Reflection Three

A reflection was emailed to the assigned email on the Wednesday following session three (Appendix 39). The reflection was entitled “Overthrowing Undermining”. The participants were instructed to reply to the email and place their initials in the subject line to indicate they read it.

Session Four

There was an outline created for facilitating Session Four (Appendix 31). There was also a time outline done for how much time should be spent on each question, and how much time should be allowed for posts to be read and the participants to respond (Appendix 32).

This is the last session (Appendix 33). The Moderator greeted everyone as they entered the chat room. The Moderator reminded the participants that the wrap-up and feedback session would be on that upcoming Thursday. The Moderator began the session by having them type two words that described them in the moment. The words were: Hurt and Confused; Ravenous and Attentive; Sad and Heavy. The Moderator thanked them for sharing and then began the exact

same breathing exercise as Session One. They were asked to take three deep breaths in and out and then type “Present” when they had done so. After inviting all of their parts to the moment, the Moderator began with the session’s topic. The topic was “Race, Religion & Relationship”.

The Moderator began with the non-biblical reading, and asked the participants what came up for them from the reading. V9 shared that, “Fridays reading made me think of how people behave toward you when you have done nothing to them but because their friends have an issue with you”. V3 shared that, “The reading reminds me of the disappointments that I have come across at work, where they claim to be an equal employment opportunity employer, yet only seem to give promotions and raises to whites”. The Moderator asked for elaboration, but directed the responses to ministry work. V3 responded with, “Ministry wise I have not experienced racism, but I have experience mistrust because of confidential information given to certain leaders, being leaked”. V9 added, “I haven’t experienced racism ministry wise but I will note there is a slight difference in the way I “hear” a leader of another race”. The Moderator attempted to bring the other participants into the conversation, as they had not responded, by rephrasing the question and asking them directly. V6 said, “The reading brings up trust and abuse issues for me”. V10 added, “I have not experience any racism in ministry, however sometimes I question rather or not the truth is always being told”. V9 also responded with, “I believe that church people have acted within confined routines for a long period of time, lending to mistrust of anyone outside their learned norm”.

The Moderator then moved to the second reading, Matthew 9:10-13, and asked for the participant’s thoughts and how they saw the reading relating to the non-biblical reading. V10 stated, “When I look at relationships I look at myself, when I look at leadership I look at myself.

I can't say what I don't like about it if I don't change within myself what I don't like". V6 responded, "I agree with V10 and adding to that when changing the things I don't like within myself not to get upset with those have not reached that point in their lives". V10 added, "I like the position Jesus took here in saying that I don't only attend to one type of people. Here he is clearly saying I'm here to help the sick not the healthy. What healthy person needs healing???"

The Moderator posed a question, "Do you think that we are healthy, whole Leaders?" V3 said, "Also, everyone is "sick" so we must humble ourselves". V9 commented to a previous post of V3 where they talked about not only making room for those who have some type of status and said, "Piggy backing off V3, status is what gets noticed more by church people; Meaning, one would run to aid the pastor but question why they should serve the homeless". The Moderator then asked where they thought the mentality comes from. V6 said, "As a teenager going to the Baptist church at the end of the service the preacher would say something to the effect of going to the highways and byways to reach the people. However I don't see that happening and I didn't see that happening!" V9 added, "I'm unsure; I didn't grow up with that mentality; My family housed the poor and orphans without government assistance".

The Moderator posed a question previously asked again, "Do you think that we are healthy, whole Leaders?" The responses were: "No" (V3). "No; I know there is more work to be done within me" (V9). The Moderator expounded on the biblical reading and asked how they thought Leaders could move beyond surface things and become unified whole Leaders. V3 said, "I think we must be willing and start building trust with ourselves and one another". "We must get the help that we need". V6 stated that, "It has to come from the head being the Pastor".

The Moderator guided the conversation in the direction that the participants appeared to be going and asked what commitment and trust would look like; especially in the face of Leaders resistance to seeking help. V4 said, “We must begin to see the challenges and deal with them honestly. We’ll never grow being in denial”. “We cannot help anyone else until we get help for ourselves” (V3). “The commitment would like the leadership being strong enough to release past hurts and begin to trust with small things” (V9).

The Moderator asked how the participants proposed getting the suppressed stuff to the surface. V4 proposed that, “Leading by example is still key. If the leader is not promoting positive commitment to trust then the followers see that and will unfortunately do likewise.” V6 said, “Leaders as well as the congregation are looking to the pastor for the what’s next or how would are you (pastor) acting towards wholeness and healthiness”.

The Moderator then opened the floor and asked if anyone else wanted to add anything concerning the two readings. V9 said, “Stop denying there are problems within the leadership, within self, deal with them and stop allowing them to festering into a nasty boil that will eventually burst and infect more”. The Moderator thanked everyone for sharing and began to close the session. The Moderator asked what they would say in this moment to the Wounded Leader that sits within them. V6 said, “I would say keep striving towards being whole and healthy and living your life as commanded by god”. V9 said, “You know I don’t know; perhaps simply “hang in there and you have a friend in me””. V4 said, “Find peace in God and direction to people who your Spirit shows you are authentic”. The Moderator then asked what they would say in that moment to their Wounded Leader brother or sister. V3 said, “I

have your back”. V9 said, “All will be well”. V10 said, “What we can’t do alone we can do together. I’m here”.

The Moderator asked the participants to type two words that described them in that moment. The words were: Sleepy and Satisfied; Encouraged and Uplifted; Hungry and Wondering; Uplifted and Satisfied; Peaceful and Empowered. The Moderator thanked them for sharing and reminded them to check their email for the Wednesday reflection, and to sign in on Thursday for the wrap-up and feedback session. The Moderator thanked them for their participation and V9 closed them in prayer. Everyone said good night.

Post Session Four

The responses about the session include: “This session makes me reflect on my journey to become healthy and whole. I felt lonely and afraid because I was taken out of my comfort zone” (V6). “The part of Session 4 that I caught was stirring. Stirring that we have and wounded leaders. People who God has called, equipped and prepared, but who have been hurt and often operate from a hurt perspective” (V4). “These sessions cause me to wonder how effective I am as a leader. This session makes me ask if I am being exclusive to those in need and how more can I show trustworthiness to my fellow wounded leaders” (V9). “I must continue to be openminded and willing to change in order to be an effective leader. My change is giving up my right to hide behind the hurt and pain and expose those things so I can become a better individual who God has call me to be” (V10).

There were five participants in session four. One participant entered the chat room late. One participant did not send their sentence responses.

Reflection Four

A reflection was emailed to the assigned email the Wednesday following session four (Appendix 40). The reflection was entitled “Do It Differently”. The participants were instructed to reply to the email and place their initials in the subject line to indicate they read it.

Wrap-Up and Feedback Session

The Moderator used an outline for the wrap-up session (Appendix 34), but not a time guide. The Moderator greeted everyone in the chat room (Appendix 35), and extended the wait time to begin because it was not a usual session night. Before beginning, the Moderator asked if anyone had not read the Wednesday reflection. No one responded. The Moderator then moved on to pose some questions regarding the group and sessions.

When asked if they like the online chat or the technology, the participants responded with a ‘yes’.

When asked how the online chat worked for them; or did it, they responded that it worked well. Some of the elaborations are that it was convenient and made them feel more comfortable with sharing their thoughts; was able to speak freely; say what wanted to without feeling like they offended someone.

When asked if the anonymity component was helpful, some responses were, “Yes! It made it easier”, “I was able to express myself freely without the fear of being judged” “Yes, I was able to share things that I otherwise not felt comfortable to share in front of some people”. One participant said, “I would have been open to my identity being known and answered openly and honest either way.”

When asked, without being anonymous would they have participated in this particular project, the responses were yes with an added note and agreements with, “but more closely guarded my thoughts”.

When asked if they would do anything differently in conducting this project, the responses were: “I don’t know if I would have done anything different except add more time”; “I liked the format. Maybe provide a script of what was shared during each session via email”; “Nothing”; “All of the topics were powerful and insightful but I believe more time, as in more weeks to adequately flesh out the subjects. In that I would have like to have learned more about what I could do to trust my fellow leaders more and are there exercises to help with shame”.

When asked what was most helpful the participants said, “The readings that accompanied the biblical stories”. “It was most helpful to talk about what was assigned specifically and allowing it to springboard into more; I also liked that you used both scripture and non-religious readings”. “The material was good, if I would have received it in the beginning of the session I would have been able to read more than wait for Wednesday and Friday”. “The points that allowed for unprejudiced conversation. Topics that we think about, but rarely if ever address”. “To see that other felt exactly like I felt”.

The participants were asked what was the least helpful from this project. The participants felt all was helpful.

The participants were asked if anything made the project difficult. Some of the responses include: schedule conflict, juggling with doing the session and participating in other things, and that it wasn't difficult but needing to make a mental note to log into an unfamiliar email. One participant stated that, "The difficulty was that the project ended because it was getting good."

When asked what the most helpful thing was that they gained from the project the participants stated that, "the different perspectives gained from people's stories"; "I gained more insight into the way I truly feel about the leadership and my relationship with the other leaders of my organization. I need to work on be a trusting leader and to be trustworthy"; "Reminded how important it is to be honest with oneself and grow from that experience"; "I gained a better understanding of my self".

The participants were asked if they would do another project with similar topics of interest. All of the participants responded yes.

The participants were asked if they felt heard, accepted, understood and supported within this project. All responded with a yes, with one elaboration that the participant sometimes felt misunderstood.

The Moderator then thanked the participants for answering the questions, and opened the room for additional feedback. Thank yous were given to the Moderator for facilitating the sessions. An additional comment was made about how the sessions have made the participant reconsider how they present themselves as a leader.

The moderator then posted the goal of the project (Appendix 34), and then posed the last question to the group. The question was, “As a participant Leader in my project, would you say my project did what its goal was to do? If so, how; if not, why not? Some of the responses were: “It did provide an opportunity for me as a leader to share, vent, impart and heal without having to reveal my identity”; “I related to not being able to go to a leader on my level and vent without judgment. With this forum, I was able to freely share how I feel without a filter”; “It allowed me opportunity to share how I truly feel, release some stress and learn from others different ways of handling things”; “The online forum definitely allowed for confidentiality, since we were assigned numbers and did not use our own names. I felt comfortable enough to share whatever thoughts I had without the fear of repercussions. I prefer face to face group meetings. Sometimes context is misconstrued online. I noticed that some participants took some of the questions and comments out of context. The cyber space would definitely give more people an opportunity to participate because of their ability to participate from different locations (providing they have a lap top with internet connection). They would also feel safe”; “I must say that you are on your way to getting to the core of the issues that we have as leaders in the church. Yes I believe your project scratched the surface of your goal”.

The Moderator thanked them all again for their responses and left the chat room open a few more minutes for any more comments. It was asked if the anonymous forum would continue. The Moderator reminded them to check their assigned emails for the post project questionnaires. The Moderator thanked them one last time and said good night.

There were three participants in the wrap-up session. The wrap-up questions were emailed to two participants who could not be in the session (Appendix 36). Upon the return of the wrap-up questions, the goal of the project was then sent to those two participants (Appendix 37).

Post Project Questionnaire One

This questionnaire is the same Burnout/Stress self-test that was given as questionnaire two in the beginning. There were four participants who returned the questionnaire. Two fell into the category depicting that they are possibly at risk. One of these two had a five number increase from the pre project questionnaire and the other a one number decrease. One participant's number nearly doubled between their pre and post answers, putting them in a category of being at a very severe risk. One participant's questionnaire was not counted, as they answered yes and no to the questions instead of following the instructions.

Post Project Questionnaire Two

This was the same questionnaire used at the beginning of the project as questionnaire three; the McGraw Hill Propensity to Trust Scale. An individual can score between eight and forty-eight. The higher the score, the closer one's propensity is to trust. The lower the score, the harder it is for the participant to trust in general. The participant's scores were 26, 27, 29 and 31. All of the participants had a moderate propensity to trust. One participant scored the exact same as the pre-session questionnaire. Two participant's number's dropped by one and two digits, while one participant's score rose seven points from their pre-session questionnaire.

Post Project Questionnaire Three

This questionnaire is the same emotional/spiritual inventory that was given as questionnaire four prior to the sessions. There is one difference in the post questionnaire from the pre; all scriptural references that were on the pre are not included on the post, except for in one question (#23), which was an oversight (Appendix 47).

In terms of a score, through the adding and plotting of the results on the graph, the pattern indicates one of the following. The person is either at or between one of four emotional places; emotional infant, emotional child, emotional adolescent or emotional adult. There was no participant who was consistent across the board. Each one had a change from the pre questionnaire and each one had dips across at least two areas of maturity. Two participants show as emotional adults with dips in being emotional adolescents. One participant shows as emotional adult with dips in emotional adolescent and emotional child. One participant shows as an emotional adolescent with dips in emotional child. One participant fluctuated between emotional adult, emotional adolescent and emotional child; no steady pattern in either.

Approach

The best modality for this project was group therapy with integrative models. Some of the pieces from the integrative models come from a strength-based approach. Strength-based allows you to see hope and possibilities for solutions, versus simply focusing on the problems. Strength-based comes with the assumption that individuals, and groups as it pertains to this demonstration project, already embody the power to do something different, bringing forth

change. The goal with strength-based and the group was to work with and facilitate rather than fix. Usage of this model entails that, “Positive change occurs in the context of authentic relationship – people need to know someone cares and will be there unconditionally for them. It is a transactional and facilitating process of supporting change and capacity building – not fixing” (Hammond, 2010, p. 4). This group allowed for authenticity and was a support for change.

Another methodology used can be categorized as a form of psychoeducation. The foundation of psychoeducation is to combat psychological stressors: fear, shame, sadness, anxiety, and poor social network, to name a few. These stressors elicit strong emotional responses and, hence, psychological stress. The rule of thumb with psychoeducation is that offering a greater level of understanding (the readings and reflections from this DMIN project) will create an interest and investment of active participation that will bring about positive change. This change will add to self-efficacy and positive social and self-esteem.

A third model taken from this project is client centered therapy. The confirming of another is, “Fully affirming a person’s potential, the ability to see what he or she “has been created to become””(Butler-Bowdon, 2007, p. 239). This was done by the Moderator as well as between the participants in the project. All persons involved conceptualized all participants as a person in progress. The environment was warm and safe for the group. Not only was there genuine empathy from the Moderator, but also amongst the participants.

Other models from which strategies used within this project derive from include Bibliotherapy (related reading materials) and Internal Family Systems (IFS). The participants were asked to identify and speak to their parts that were present within the sessions, and were asked to provide

a summation in two words of how those parts converged. But no matter the approach, the most important variable is cohesiveness.

Catharsis and universality, for example, are not complete processes. It is not the sheer process of ventilation that is important; it is not only the discovery that others have problems similar to one's own and the ensuing disconfirmation of one's wretched uniqueness that are important. It is the affective sharing of one's inner world and then the acceptance by others that seem of paramount importance (Yalom, 2005, p.56).

This DMIN project also utilized meditation and prayer as models for centering, identifying and closing the sacredness of the group and time spent together.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The implications or results, both anticipated and not anticipated, as reported in Chapter 4

I did not anticipate having personal bouts of internalized doubt and disappointment concerning this DMIN project. I was disappointed that the original group of Leaders (Pastors, Associate Pastors, Bishops & Apostles) either did not commit to being participants, or committed and backed out prior to the start of the project. The internal questioning became whether this was due to the fact that I was the one implementing the project, which in itself was yet quite confusing because one-on-one conversations had taken place concerning there being a need. I was not certain if the reason for the initial non-response (email blast) was because I used a third party to reach out, or because I, perhaps, did not make the inquiry interesting enough to draw interest. After the in-person invites, and there still was a small reply that dwindled down to three, I doubted being able to successfully facilitate this demonstration project. I wondered if I gave too much information when providing details for the project, which in turn turned people off from participating. I contemplated abandoning the project, but felt there really was something to explore and shed light upon, so I did not. I expanded my definition of Leader, and concentrated on one region of individuals and moved forward.

After finally solidifying a committed group, even this group began to dwindle prior to and during the actual project. I questioned if the wording of the confidentiality statement, or the length of the questionnaires, was the issue. Or, perhaps, was it that the sessions were online; was this too complicated for individuals? During the actual sessions, I questioned whether or not participants were really getting anything out of the sessions. The sessions seemed to go by quickly, with not

enough time to really delve into the topics as I would have liked. Knowing each participant, although I did not know who was who, I was able to witness voices being heard around stressors and hurtful matters that I probably would not have been able to be privy to otherwise. When I speak of otherwise I am referring to the anonymity that this demonstration project supported. I was not surprised that almost all of the participants stated they would not have shared at the level or depth they did if the sessions were done face-to-face, without anonymity.

I believe that having the participants do meditation, acknowledge the parts of him/herself that were present in the moments, and using two words to describe how they were feeling, had a greater impact than I expected. When you look at the scores on the pre- questionnaires and then look at the post-, there seems to be an increase in the level of openness and internal reflection and acknowledgment that allowed for truth to come forth. The participants were able to own their feelings, and share them while not losing part of themselves through covering or denying, but through gaining a piece of themselves by truth being spoken, heard and held.

There are limitations with the questionnaires. They were not given for the purpose of making correlations, but simply to assess where the participant was in the time of answering. Giving pre- and post- questionnaires do offer some possibilities that the sessions had some kind of impact on the participants, but no real correlation or causation can be implied.

Contributions of this project to clarifying and expanding the religious principles, chapter 2

When Jesus decided to go through Samaria, he consciously chose to go through a hostile and radical place. Here, he met a woman who was traditionally identified by what she had done. But

what if we look at this meeting in light of what she did not do? As history tells us, women of the time had high family values. They married and bore children. They were committed to their family's good will and growth. This woman, in this radical place, did something that proved to be hostile to the idea of family, as her culture knew it. She abandoned the idea of being a keeper of tradition and self-served herself to be as she pleased. The Bible does not tell us whether or not she bore children, but it does say she had several husbands and a current boyfriend. What a level of audacity she had to beat against society's grain! But here Jesus lets us know that even those who find themselves in hostile situations with radical grace, they too can have access to God. It is not up to us, Leaders, to decide who gets a seat at the King's table, because if we are true to ourselves, we should not be sitting there ourselves. We are able to see the extravagant grace of God through the story of the Samaritan woman, a grace we should extend to every Leader within and out of our affiliations. The same is true for the woman caught in adultery. These women's stories teach us, as Leaders, to not be finger pointers, but mindful forgivers. They teach us to not be accusers, but instead just advocates for our brother's and sister's growth in God. They charge us to not be the one who spills our brother's or sister's blood, but to be the one who protects and honors them, and values their positioned call in the Kingdom.

Hebrews 13:1 says, "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters" (NIV – biblegateway.com, 2011). Cain forgot about the love he had for his brother. The perception of rejection blinded him into taking life instead of giving it. Leaders, particularly of the SGL Christian community, must come to a place where they truly do no harm and turn no blind eye to their brother/sister in the ministry. Whether it is for a moment or for a lifetime, God reminds us that "For whoever does not love their brother or sister, whom they seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen" (NIV – biblegateway.com, 2011). Love is a do word that is communicated

through action. No matter how deeply rooted, culturally generational or family generational, love is not found in shaming or judgment.

Clinical Principles discussed in Chapter 2

My DMIN project speaks to the premise surrounding Erickson's theory of the life cycle. The participants are experiencing arrested development within the cycle. This demonstration project is a step towards mastering the developmental crisis of the arrest. The Leaders should be transitioning between intimacy vs. isolation and the resolution of care stage. However, these Leaders are stuck when it comes to forming relationships amongst each other, and caring for one another. Personalities then become shaped by the arrest, versus them being grown through a healthy process of mastering the stage. I submit that one way to move beyond these internal suspensions is to begin to own the feelings that one is experiencing. These feelings are not only internally motivated but are also externally originated. The system for which this kind of thinking belongs is known as systems thinking (Schwartz, 2001). This is the "process of trying to understand how a person's behavior is connected to relationships with other people or to past events, rather than judging the person solely on the way he or she looks or acts" (Schwartz, 2001, p. 72). It is about exploring the role of what this system calls 'parts' that take center stage within the individual, and how the identified part is connected with other parts within the person. Schwartz (2001) identifies parts as our inner dialogue, or what we generally refer to as 'thinking'. The part that is most often present is the protector part. The protector part manifests itself through what Schwartz calls exiles, managers and firefighters. This group of protectors exists because of accrued pain and shame, and how one has not learned how to heal from them.

“These three groups are polarized such that when one takes over, it tries to dominate your experience for fear that if it gives you access to other parts, you’ll do or think something dangerous”, (Schwartz, 2001, p. 119). The bottom line of this inner dialogue is for survival and keeping one feeling safe and in control.

Erickson’s theory takes into account the environment, hence the external relationships that bind the individual to something or someone else. This demonstration project looked at stressors both historically and generationally, as well as culturally and religiously, that effect how Leaders maneuver through the world. The impact of the experiences of the stressors of shame, trust, sabotage and judgment, perpetuate the internal parts that have not been owned, and the psychosocial stages that are not yet mastered.

As a Pastoral Counselor, it is our job to not only be able to make the psychological connections, but also to tease out the spiritual component as well. Similar to the aforementioned process, within my religious belief, there is a similar spiritual developmental progression that should take place. An individual, who identifies as Christian, is expected to experience a personal spiritual growth process that has highlighted moments dictating that one has moved from a state of spiritual infancy to that of an adult. Hebrews 5: 11- 14 (NIV) tells us:

11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by

constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (Quest Study Bible, 1994).

Although this passage is agreeably fashioned under the idea of order, or warnings against falling away from the faith, what it also depicts is the concept that as “believers” there is a level of proficiency that is expected, as one matures in their spiritual walk or relationship with God. This idea is further supported in 1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 3 (NIV); “Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly —mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready,” (Quest Study Bible, 1994). Indications for missing or having not mastered these spiritual markers are seen through the observance of outward behaviors of internal immaturity. Some of these have the face of the likes of jealousy, quarreling, judgment, divisiveness and things such as low faith or unbelief, doubt and constant worry. Just as Erickson theorizes that the lack of successfully completing psychological growth markers creates an arrest in that stage, phase, or part, so it is with the unsuccessful fulfillment of a marker for spiritual growth. This would be exemplified by one who operates in and of a spirit of brokenness versus a place of being whole. A level of wholeness can be measured by examining how one responds, or reacts, to. But, whether one is monitoring their psychological or spiritual progression, it is inevitable that facing a path journey of having to maneuver through joyous experiences, interrupted by grief, or moments of grief being overcome by joy, will happen. How one processes, goes through it, or faces it will be mirrored by their level of psychological and spiritual growth they have attained.

In witnessing the relationships amongst the Leaders in the sessions, it gives us insight into their emotional life, their inner emotional feelings, and their place of emotional intelligence. The success of interpersonal relationships is a key component to one mastering self, or being self-led. Self-led people relate differently to others, as well as to the parts within them (Schwartz, 2001). “Such a person doesn’t need to be forced by moral or legal rules to do the right things. He or she is naturally compassionate and motivated to improve the human condition in some way because of the awareness that we are all connected” (Schwartz, 2001, p. 31). These emotional reality markers are known as managers (Schwartz, 2001). They protect us within the confines of relationships and environment (Schwartz, 2001). As one becomes self-led, or is able to access inner healing, they will no longer have managers. With such, and based upon review of the sessions, these Leaders’ have not reached a place of self-leadership. These Leader’s managers have the microphone in most of their dealings with one another, as well as in fulfilling duties that fall under clergy responsibilities. Managers control their emotional realities so that they are, “never in a position to be humiliated, abandoned, rejected, attacked, or anything else unexpected and hurtful” (Schwartz, 2001, pp. 103-104). When managers do not work, that is when firefighters kick in to ‘handle’ the emotional effect of what happened. The biggest firefighters amongst these Leaders have been the reactors of judgment, revenge and sabotage. This has delayed them adequately establishing meaningful relatedness amongst each other.

In relation to Klein, and whether there was aggression that happened through interaction with the objects (computer, keys, words) there was, based on the responses given during the story telling in the sessions. It mimics the earlier childhood mechanism of defense, being driven by anxiety. These objects were the vehicles (symbols) for which the projection and interjection displayed the exchange between the participant’s inner world and the outside world the group represented. As

the participants shared stories (expelling their feelings into the outside world) they identified with one another. As new perspectives were shared, the participants spoke about taking on the newly proposed attributes him/herself (integrating). The goal of projection and interjection is connections with others, and the participants achieved this within the sessions. The participants, inwardly, desired exchange and real contact that is similar to what the participants in Klein's 'play' desired. Hence, the participant's before session, untapped unconscious, was uncovered through the interaction, and expressions of unconscious instincts were witnessed. This project considered that because of the untapped unconscious, the participants might exhibit unbalance between what they needed and what they were getting from their relationships with other Leaders. Through their responses within the sessions, this was found to be true. The participants spoke of feeling cut off from, or abandoned by, their peers. The lack of trust and support from other Leaders is at the foundation of the unbalance.

Defenses and Trust

The complete process of the project opened up the opportunity to stimulate defense. The primary internalized defense motivator is the superego. The superego continually transforms throughout development and even life (Tyson & Tyson, 1990). It begins forming as the child desires harmony between receiving from their caregiver, and the child understanding that there is a negotiation that must take place between their and their caregiver's wishes. The mother plays an important role in the superego's development, as it is important for the child to experience empathy and consistency from her. As appropriate nurture does not take place, the child then builds up defenses for protection. "Defensive reaction formations accordingly guard against

instinctual gratification at the same time that they ensure a modicum of self-esteem regulation by warding off the painful affect of shame, an aspect of superego development emphasized...”

(Tyson & Tyson, 1990, p. 214). Although defenses are subjective and involuntary, they have the capability of altering one’s perception of self, others, ideas or feelings. Defenses operate through emotion (e.g., reaction formation), cognition (e.g., rationalization), behavior (e.g., acting out) or any combination of the three (McWilliams, 1999). Some operational processes include withdrawal, denial and idealization. Repression and regression are also seen as defenses. But, defense patterns are as distinctive as fingerprints. “Some people use sadness as a defense against anger, while others get angry to defend against sadness” (McWilliams, 1999, p. 87). However, identifying and understanding one’s defenses are critical to the therapeutic process.

Within the sessions, there were several defenses that presented. One in particular is when a participant made a statement that they ‘just do not trust anyone anymore’. This defense comes as a response to a break of trust. This protector defense is common when trust is broken, because the intra-psychic pain of broken trust is excruciating. Trust, for our purposes, is defined as a psychological contractual expectation that elicits confidence that the other will give what is desired, verses what is feared. When that contract is breached by the seeking individual not receiving what is desired, or actually receiving what is not wanted, trust is ruptured. The referenced individual in the session has at some point felt betrayal at such a level that their ability to trust has completely unraveled. The participant has had some kind of experience where they were left feeling that their best interest was not a priority, only the interest of the other individual, group or organization.

Something else happens to us when we feel let down by persons we rely upon to help us feel good about our self. When we are criticized or disappointed or rejected, we tend to respond by drawing back or by striking out. Injuries to the self lead us to withdraw in hurt or to react with rage. There is a wide range of depressive-withdrawal responses: from mild dismay to deep melancholy marked by grave self-doubts and even suicidal thoughts, for example. There is also a wide range of rage responses: from passive aggressive acts to obsessive efforts for revenge, for example (Cooper & Randall, 2012, p.4).

Another protector against vulnerability that we see from the sessions is when a participant said that ‘trust must be earned not automatically given’. It is reasonable to not trust someone you do not know, but not to trust someone you have any kind of relationship with is a protector. This individual went on to speak of how they believed family trust could be the most deceptive. This participant has the same manager as the previous example that says, ‘never again’. Although, possibly seen as extreme, the mechanism put in place mirrors the degree of rupture of trust that the individual experienced. The defense is to keep the psyche from going through similar, or the same, pain as experienced before.

Earlier Clinical Pastoral Expectations and Actual Outcomes

Before this project began, I thought I was going to create a space for Leaders to simply vent about situations that they encounter as Leaders. I thought the focus was going to be to close the gap, or disconnect, concerning the non-affirmations of their experiences amongst other Leaders.

As I began to research and prepare for the group, I found that what was needed was more than

the ministry of presence, and the “fixer” mentality that is common among pastors. I realized I needed to create a space to discuss underlined stressors that are rooted within generations of culture, religion and race. I discovered that the presence of these stressors were not noticeably apparent, yet they were quite apparent. This demonstration project brought together the African-American cultural experience of oral tradition, and blended it with clinical principles of talk therapy, specifically group therapy. While naming the elephant in the room (Doehring, 2006), I had to also be careful to stay within the narrative and not conceptualize too much. “While in reality we are always conceptually processing what is happening in the moment, too much conceptualizing can disengage the caregiver from the immediacy of their encounter with the careseeker” (Doehring, 2006, p. 66). I functioned as a midwife of sorts, creating a space for something to be birthed that had not had space to be born before (Hanson, 1996; Dykstra, 2005). I assisted with the birth of truth, through oral affirmation, and applied confirmation, and assisted with implementing the healing solves of being heard and being held.

Outcomes to the Needs and Aims discussed in Chapter 1

The overall general need for this DMIN project is still left unfulfilled. I provided so much history because I believe the reason behind Leaders saying they want a safe space, but yet not actually becoming a part of one, is multi-layered. It goes back to ancestral roots of mistrust, beginning with the Caucasian race and then each other, non-religiously and religiously related. When something has perpetuated for such a long time, there is something about making a change, or actually experiencing a form of healing, that can be scary. It takes one to a place of the unknown. Even though it may be what is desired, something better or something different,

consciously, or subconsciously, it can still be scary. Specifically, for SGL African-American Leaders, it can be debilitating to have to fight through so many layers of oppression and discrimination for just being. The participants in this DMIN project are such a small sub-set of the number of Leaders that need this type of ‘elephant in the room’ conversation. If a true conversation would happen, real change could take place, and psychosocial stages could be completely mastered. There would be no question as to whether or not Leaders were each other’s keepers or holders of truth and integrity. These considerations would, eventually, not be part of the discussion, because they would be automatically fulfilled. Leaders would rather readily, and joyfully, discuss how many keepers each of them have. Accordingly, the Black Church still needs to address human sexuality, and then expand that discussion around a thought of John J. McNeill. “The true fact is that there is no such thing as a homosexual, any more than there is such a being as a heterosexual: there are human beings who happen to be, relatively, heterosexually or homosexually inclined” (McNeill, 1993, p.149). Conversations have to start somewhere, so why should they not begin with the biggest elephants in the room of the Black Church, humanity and human sexuality?

Lessons Learned & Changes for Future Group

I learned that doing the group online had both its positives and negatives. Although participants signed up for the project with an understanding that they were to designate the assigned time to be uninterrupted, there was no way to check if this really happened. All participants were great with contributing to the conversations, but we cannot assess facial expressions, voice tone or body language over the computer. There was no close date given to participants for

participating, so we had one session where there was a participant present who had not been in previous sessions. The group responded well, but it could have gone a different way. The questionnaires were not made mandatory to answer, nor were the reflections. Some participants decided not to do them, and this took away from the complete project. The computer allowed for anonymity, but people type at different speeds, so some people may not have been able to fully share all that they wanted. Accordingly, the time frame for each session was too short. As the moderator I not only felt rushed to get through each topic and point, but I felt as if the participants felt rushed to get through their answers. Because of time, the participants also were not able to bring up their own topics of interest to discuss. Therefore, this demonstration project did not uphold the model of topic-oriented group as it was ascribed that it would, in the manner that Corey & Corey (2002) suggested. Furthermore, there was nothing put in place for how to process or proceed after 'bomb shell' statements, that could be triggers for others, were made. For example, one participant mentioned molestation. Nothing was said directly to the participant, nor was the statement acknowledged. The biggest thing I learned about this project is that I really do have a passion for Leaders to be whole. I have an interest in getting to the root of why Leaders, who not only need each other but also a tool of intervention, will not make time to explore positive successful ways of creating change, and redefining self and their relationships with others.

Implications for Future Ministry

We, as African-American, Christian identified people, especially those who are SGL, must have a discourse around inherited formalities that we adhere to on a daily basis. These formalities include discussion around ancestry, race and the generational implications that come along with it. We have to dissect fundamental ideology, and consciously seek to embrace a more welcoming and affirming theology that is radically inclusive. Oppression, at all levels, must be labeled and expelled from our handlings of, and interactions with, each other. Just as this project incorporated encouraging words between the Leaders, we need to be mindful to create space and opportunity to continue this model in whatever arena we find ourselves. Stress cannot be decreased unless there is a means to process and tackle the stressors, whether they are chronic or situational. As Leaders we must validate one another. This validation includes shunning shame, sabotage and rejection. We must make and keep affirmations concerning being our brother's/sister's keeper. We must acknowledge these sore spots and agree to work through them until healing hits our hearts and freedom sets in our minds. The Black Church must reexamine its doctrine and codes as, "The need to appear perfect and to control the world may lead to a certain moral rigidity and legalism" (Pattison, 2000, p. 128), which the Black Church unfortunately already exhibits. The Black Church has set in place an, "unattractive sense of moral superiority and worth from strict adherence to a set of rules" (Pattison, 2000, p. 128), which has led to the Black Church, and specifically Black Church Leaders, being "unsympathetic to the foibles and exigencies of others because they need to reinforce their own sense of goodness and value" (Pattison, 2000, p. 128). Christ came so that we all may be free,

and that includes freedom from any and all points of shame and oppression. When Jesus showed up at the well, shame was dispelled, and when he bent down to write on the ground (the adulterous woman) shame was immediately lifted. God has searched us and He knows us.

There is nothing we can hide, and nothing that He wants hidden. He said,

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11: 28-30; NIV – biblegateway.com, 2011).

Learning from God and taking from God, will always lead to a road of wholeness.

Additional Facts for Clarification

Participants were not pre-screened for this demonstration project. They all are known by me, and all know each other, and they each meet the basic requirement of being a Leader as defined by this DMIN project. Although they know each other, no participant is aware of who was a part of the project. The ideology behind not pre-screening is that there was an understanding that all those who would participate would have prior exposure to the premise of the group, the stressors addressed in the sessions. These underlined stressors cause Leaders to not be able to clearly assess their own place of spiritual health and growth. Leaders simply avoid them as if they do not exist, yet they are at the foundation of their daily functions. In terms of the actual sessions, I do not feel that preserving anonymity gratified any fears regarding shame. As per the conversations within the sessions and, particularly, the wrap-up session, it did the opposite. The conversations

allowed for the participants to openly discuss issues that they were ashamed of addressing. We can see the importance of a space for truth in the outcome of the questionnaires taken by the participants. There were shifts in the pre- and post- questionnaires, for which I propose come from truth being uncovered and healing beginning to take place.

Some of the Leaders have had formal training and some of them have not. However, all of them have had some type of theological training offered through their local church. Although Leaders expressed not having a safe space to go, no congregant, to my knowledge, expressed ever feeling the same way about not being able to go to a Leader. This DMIN project did not explore this dynamic.

Internet versus Face-to-Face

The question that has repeatedly presented itself, prior to beginning this project and after, is does the model that was used give way to people's lack of trust? My answer is no. This project meets its participants where they are. One of the most important factors for therapy is why the person is seeking help now, and not before (Gray & Zide, 2008). I believe this project leads to an answer for why this internet model works. Part of that answer is because the participants could not identify, by themselves, the root reasons for why they could not commit to a face-to-face session. It took offering an anonymous space for them to be able to make the connection. This anonymous space is simply viewed as another level of privacy. Privacy is the most important factor in group sessions (Corey & Corey, 2002). The internet assures that the participants will not be overheard. Although participants were not able to see each other's physical beings, they were able to see each other on a deeper level that they previously did not have awareness of or

access to. This deeper level is sheer authenticity, which is something they could not bring into the group face-to-face.

The question has also arisen concerning if there was really relationship building done through this project. Although the participants did not know who was a part of the project, they were aware that the Leaders were colleagues they know. The relational benefit of this is that it does support obliterating the idea that other Leaders have not experienced, or are not experiencing, the trust, sabotage, judgment, etc issues that they are facing. This begins the ground work for reshaping and redefining their Leadership community, and reevaluating and reinstating a different level of trust. Being a part of the group has raised awareness for the participants, and guided these Leaders to be more thoughtful and open to their colleagues in general. Therefore, I project the relationship building will extend beyond the parameters of the sessions into the daily lives of the Leaders, if even at the smallest degree.

As the moderator, the internet sessions were more challenging than face-to-face. One of the main reasons is because of lack of being able to establish complete assessment and, what I call, rhythm. Rhythm is the flow between what is said by a participant, how that person's body responds, how the hearers respond non-verbally, and how the responder replies, both verbally and non-verbally. I was unable to see non-verbal language, or assess whether the participant's responses matched their body language. I was not able to look at interaction, or how close one sat to another or if particular people sat by certain people each session, or if certain people avoided particular individuals. These things cannot be taken into account without face-to-face interaction. Without them, a thorough assessment cannot be made; only a partial one.

The Determination

Talk therapy, whether verbal or written, offers the power of insight to an individual. It offers a sound space to explore feelings that the individual is comfortable with, while simultaneously offering a safe space to explore feelings that make them uncomfortable. Formulating language helps one begin to see and understand noticeable, as well as subtle, emotions and how to handle them more effectively. The telling of one's story is powerful because it allows for there to be identification of recurring patterns, discussion of past experiences, examination of avoidances, and even focus for relationships. Psychotherapy sets in position the possibility to bring relief to the psyche. Whether its focus is to face exiles or to work through pain and shame to overcome managers and firefighters, it assists with working towards solutions. When there has been fragmenting that has taken place, we begin to operate from an internal space where we try to do all that we can to feel reassured inside. It may be allowing a manager to kick in as we listen to its story of how good of a person we are. It may be the manifestation of subconscious work of a firefighter, providing an impulse to lash out. No matter how it shows up, the goal is to protect the psyche from any hurt or pain. What talk therapy does for the individual is set them on a road to centeredness and cohesion. This is what this DMIN project did for its participants, it set them on this path. It gave them a safe space to explore emotions, and to use language to express them. When the fragmented parts were shown, there was time for reassurance that began healing the fragments origin.

Many of these fragments, or suspensions, date back generations for these Leaders. Dr. Joy DeGruy (2005) devised a theory that speaks to this phenomenon called Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome. She proposes that African-Americans carry with them residual impacts of slavery,

from its inception, through generations. She speaks of adaptive survival behaviors that exist as a consequence of multigenerational oppression (DeGruy, 2005). This theory is applicable to the Leaders of this study as they continually fight cultural and religious oppression that comes from the African-American mainline churches. In consequence, they have internalized this oppression, and inadvertently used it against one another in the forms of judgment, shame and sabotage. These are the main three components utilized by Caucasian Americans, to keep African-Americans oppressed through psychological injury, in order to have power over them. These perpetuated trust disruptions have been passed down to these Leaders creating suspensions of negative motivation amongst their Leader colleagues. This is how we could bear witness to a participant's testimony of having trusted those in authority (in the African-American church) who had blatantly deceived them, and how this destroyed trust not just towards them, but Leaders in general. Dr.DeGruy asserts that such intra-racial dysfunction is transmitted as a result of the syndrome.

Trauma, specifically cultural trauma, is a master narrative in the lives of these Leaders. It fashions the core of their collective identity as African-Americans and African-American SGL Christians.

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves an indelible mark upon their group consciousness marking their memory forever and changing their future identity in fundamental irrevocable ways, (Lazar & Litvak-Hirsche, 2009, p. 183).

Traditional psychology leans more towards framing trauma around personal experiences of an individual. This is where I believe psychology is lacking when it comes to properly assessing

and treating those within the African-American community, and particularly the SGL African-American community. For the African-American SGL community, there is double trauma taking place through double rejection, culturally and religiously. However, with either identification, I assert that there has to be a deeper root than projection and interjection taking place. Certainly individual impingements and non-mastery of stages play a part, but with this population it extends beyond person centered effect. For this group, there is yet to be a solid and substantial formation of identity adequately and appropriately encapsulating and honoring who they are. The lack of has an affect on the group's role in political power, wealth, influence and social movements to name a few (Washington, 2002). Furthermore, regardless, validation sets the tone for individual self-esteem, self-worth and ego strength. All of which the participants exhibited at least a slight lack of, because of shame and stigmatization, and the painful emotions associated with them.

We see managers in operation within the sessions through statements like, 'You have to just trust God', because of ruptures in human trust. But in this trusting of God, religion has also precipitated an unreasonable expectation being placed upon Leaders. This ideology sets up yet another possibility for a trauma to be experienced and trust to be disrupted. As seen within the sessions, Leaders carry with them wounds that yet need healing. These wounds manifest in superego, managerial action. This is one of the main reasons being a Leader is so stressful. They are constantly in protective mode more often than not. Atop of that, their biggest occupational hazard reveals itself in the form of caregiver parts. In the sessions, one of the participants spoke of how they constantly put themselves out there to be as helpful as they possibly can. This is a caregiver part that has taken on the responsibility of the well-being of others. Leaders are constantly placing themselves in a position to be overwhelmed by their commitments. Their

managers have a need for control of things and being seen as pleasing to others.

The most important thing about experiences is the meaning that we attach to them. We tell stories of our experiences from schemas we have accepted and feelings we are able to identify. Participants were able to examine how they had been looking at their experiences and avoiding emotions that were painful. They took advantage of the opportunity to use talk therapy to express ruptures of trust within their relationships with other Leaders. They reframed their stories and became open to acknowledging and owning feelings that previously made them uncomfortable. They were suspended concerning trust because of judgment, sabotage and shame. Through discussion, they were able to begin to heal from the ruptures, and reclaim parts of themselves that they previously were not even able to identify. They left the project feeling heard, understood, accepted and supported by others in the group and within themselves. This was the goal of the project.

12 Steps To Radical Inclusivity

A Model for Recovery from Oppressive and Exclusive Theologies and Religions

ONE

Radical Inclusivity is and must be radical.

Inclusivity, with love for all of God's creation, challenges major fundamental, deep-seated Christian beliefs, doctrines and theologies at the center of society which characterize people who do not fit the definition of the acceptable social norm as enemies of God and routinely mistreats, oppresses and excludes people from the community of faith and its institutions.

TWO

Radical Inclusivity, recognizes, values, loves and celebrates people on the margin.

Jesus was himself from the edge of society with a ministry to those who were considered least. Jesus' public ministry and associations were primarily with the poor, weak, outcast, foreigners and prostitutes.

THREE

Radical Inclusivity recognizes harm done in the name of God.

Many people rejected by the Church got their burns from Bible believing Christian flame-throwers. Contempt for the Church and all things religious often stems from exposure to oppressive theology, self-serving biblical literalism and unyielding tradition. It is neither Christ-like nor spiritual to be oppressive. No human being is born with a destiny to be oppressed or to oppress others.

FOUR

Radical Inclusivity is intentional and creates ministry on the margin.

"On Purpose" because of the radically inclusive love of Jesus Christ. The inclusive community deliberately makes a conscious and unapologetic decision to love and celebrate the Creator's diversity welcoming all persons regardless to race, color, ancestry, age, gender and sexual or affectional orientation. Radical Inclusivity practices and celebrates the Christian community outside of the dominant culture believing that the Kingdom (Kindom) of God includes the margin of society and is a perfect place for ministry. Marginalized people, now as in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, respond to a community of openness and extravagant grace, where other people from the edge gather. Such an atmosphere welcomes people to feel it is safer to be who they are.

FIVE

The primary goal of Radical Inclusivity is not to imitate or change the mainline church, but rather to be Church.

The Church belongs to God and is the Body of Jesus Christ. It is not the sole property of any denomination, person or group. There are systemic wrongs in organized church due to oppressive theology, bibliolatry and traditional beliefs, which prevent freedom for all people that we can never fully right. Radical inclusivity however, is ministry rooted in restoration believing that God has given the church the work and ministry of reconciliation. It is for freedom that Christ has made us free (Gal. 5:1). Although, radical inclusivity believes and celebrates the kinship and fellowship of all believers of Jesus Christ it does not seek to change the mainline church but it uses its power of love to model and demonstrate the radically inclusive love of Jesus Christ.

SIX

Radical Inclusivity requires a new way of seeing and a new way of being.

“...from this day forward, we regard no one from a strictly human point of view, not even Jesus.” (II Cor. 5:16) This scripture passage implies that we can celebrate one another in some new and powerful way in Christian community - some way that both accepts who each of us is in a human sense and transcends our humanity allowing us to see each other as God sees us. Christian community can truly be celebrated when we realize the Church is a spiritual, mystical, faith community and we relate best when we make the two-foot drop from head to heart.

SEVEN

Radical Inclusivity requires awareness, information and understanding.

The creation of Christian community among people marginalized by the Church requires that the community be prepared and maintain a presence of cultural familiarity through education and training which equips the community to understand, actively fight and overcome oppressive and exclusive theology and practices. Sustaining and eventually celebrating community on the margin requires the Church to re-examine sexual and relational ethics, develop a theology of welcome and de-stigmatize its view of any group of people.

EIGHT

Radical Inclusivity does not hide and works to undo shame and fear.

The radically inclusive ministry of Jesus does not encourage people to hide their ‘unacceptable’ realities (based upon the dominant culture’ point of view or faith) in order to be embraced. True community comes when marginalized people take back the right to fully “be.” People must celebrate not in spite of who they are, but because of who their Creator has made them. In order for marginalized people to have community they must develop community “naked” with their “marginality” in full view while often celebrating the very thing that separates them from the dominant culture.

NINE

Radical Inclusivity recognizes diversity on the margin.

People live and are located on the various margins of society for many different reasons. Most people live on the margin because the dominant culture and/or faith communities have forced them outside their boundaries to a margin. Not all marginalized people are poor, uneducated or visible. Because many marginalized people are together on the margin does not mean that each affirms the other or that their common marginality will hold the community together. People on the margins are challenged to find the inter-connectedness of their marginalities.

TEN

Radical Inclusivity must be linked to preaching and teaching.

The creation of Christian community among people marginalized by the Church requires preaching and teaching that defines and strengthens the essence of the community through a theology of radical inclusivity. Preaching and teaching clarifies, reinforces and supports the collective theology of the community and gives voice to its emergence and evolution.

ELEVEN

Radical Inclusivity demands hospitality.

Marginalized people experience hospitality where they have neither to defend nor to deny their place or their humanness. Henri Nouwen, author of *Reaching Out*, says, “Hospitality...means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by a dividing line. It is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment. It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening of an opportunity to others to find their God and their way. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of chance for the guest to find his/her own.”

TWELVE

Radical Inclusivity is best sustained and celebrated when everyone in the community is responsible and accountable.

Sustaining Christian community requires an intentional effort to design a framework that includes everyone in the life of the Church. The dissemination of duties and chores insure that all members share in and contribute to the welfare of the community. It is often difficult for people who have not had continuity in life to understand that freedom without responsibility and accountability is as detrimental as slavery. Freedom cannot be an end unto itself. Freedom from something must flow into freedom to be something else or it is not truly freedom. The object of getting free is being free: the object of being free is living free.

Appendix 2

Original Letter

“Burnout is not the same as depression, but they are closely related, and burnout is a common precursor of depression.”

Dear Leader:

Stress is something that we all experience everyday of our lives. The difference in how we maneuver through it can be found by assessing how much stress we’re already bearing, and the level or intensity of stress that we’re currently facing.

A study done amongst Pentecostal clergy by Krause, Ellison, and Wulff (1998) reports that, “Clergy have a limited supply of emotional resources and often find them depleted by stressful occupational demands”. In a study of Roman Catholic Priests, Knox, Virginia, and Lombardo (2002) it was discovered that, “priests who had support from both peers and superiors reported less psychological stress”.

In the wake of conversations with Leaders like you, for my DMIN project and the completion of my DMIN degree, I have chosen to embark upon creating a safe space for Leaders to de-stress. For this project, when Leader is referenced I am speaking of a Senior or Associate Pastor, a Bishop or an Apostle. This space has been created so that anonymity can be upheld and a space of grace and uplifting communal exchanges can take place. The project will be run from a psycho/spiritual perspective, with clinical and spiritual principles at its foundation.

If you think you would like to be a participant in this project, please read the attachment.

I thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to your expeditious response, as there are a limited number of slots for participation in this project.

Blessings,
Rev Katrina T. Marsh, MSSW
Associate Pastor, Rivers@Rehoboth

Appendix 3

Initial Project Explanation

Dear Leader:

I want to personally thank you for your interest in my project. The following is going to seem like a lot of information, so I will be sending a condensed version in a calendar format before the initial meeting to participants. Here is how the project is going to go. You will have the opportunity to be part of an online chat group that I will facilitate. This group's conversational focus will be to provide a space for Leaders to mentally and spiritually de-stress among colleagues in a non-judgmental, non-critical safe space. Two ways we will maintain a safe atmosphere is that I will control the flow of the conversations, yet they will be structured and free-flow. The other is that if you decide to be a participant in the project, you must agree to keep your identity anonymous by not using any readily identifiable information and no names. Doing so will call for an immediate termination of your participation in the project. Another expectation of you as a participant is that I will anticipate you agreeing to be a part to mean that you will attend all sessions, unless there is an emergency. You will also be expected to complete any homework given. Upon you agreeing to participate, the first item you will be sent is a confidentiality statement to sign, stating that you agree to honor confidentiality with the understanding that whatever is heard within the group will not go beyond the group. Please note that only the first ten respondents will be able to participate. Once those slots are filled a waiting list will be created in case the need for replacement before the first day for the group to assemble arises.

How Your Identifying Information Will Be Handled

Once you show interest in being a participant by replying to this email to ktm-2007@hotmail.com, and copying and pasting into its body, “I have read the guidelines of the DMIN project that will be facilitated by Rev Katrina Marsh, and would like to be a participant”, you will be notified as to whether you have filled one of the ten slots or have been placed on a wait list. If you are one of the ten, your email will then be forwarded to my assistant. Committed to confidentiality per the signing of a confidentiality statement, my assistant will email you from a Rivers@Rehoboth email account, and randomly assign to you a participant email and participant number, and instructions on how to access the email account. I will not have knowledge of what email code or number you will be assigned, but I will be given your coded email. I will send all correspondence pertaining to the project to this coded email ONLY. This is the only part of the project where my assistant will assist me.

What Next?

Once you have been assigned an email, a confidentiality statement, followed by a demographical questionnaire will be sent. Three days before the first session, a baseline questionnaire will be given. This same questionnaire will be used at the end of the project as well.

The Schedule and The Environment

This project will span four Mondays over July and August, with a fifth Monday for the final point of contact and feedback. I have chosen Mondays because it is typically a non-workday for Leaders. The time of the session is non-conventional, as it will be from 10PM to 11PM/EST. The room will open three minutes to the set start time, and will start on time. Each session will

begin with a greeting by me, and then each participant being asked to type two words that describe them in that moment. Afterward the topic for the evening will be introduced.

Discussion on the topic will last for approximately twenty-five minutes. The discussion will then shift for the next twenty-five minutes to a free-flow conversation. I will facilitate the conversations and set the direction as needed, but it is the participants' responsibility to set the tone for the latter section. The next three minutes will allow for positive affirmations or words of encouragement to be shared amongst the participants. The next one minute will be allowed for any proposed topic(s) for the next week. The last minute will consist of a prayer being typed by a participant who is randomly chosen by the facilitator. In terms of ambiance and atmosphere, I do ask that you dedicate this time as focused, un-interrupted time. Also, please note that all conversations that take place in the session will be appended to the final report of the project.

Homework

Each participant will be asked to do a written reflection immediately following each session.

The reflection includes two words that describe how they feel in that moment; and one to three sentences on how they feel the session went; what stuck out, what was helpful, etc. These are to be emailed to me no later than twenty minutes after a session ends.

Correspondence In-between Group Meetings

I will send encouraging words or reflections two days after a group session. This will be pertaining to something that was discussed or a rippled touch point that may have come up during the previous session. Your agreement to the project assures me that you are committed to reading what is sent. You will reply with your coded handle/ID in the subject line to indicate you have read the material.

Session Readings

It is my desire that this group runs organically. I will provide short biblical or spiritual readings three days prior to each session that will be incorporated into that upcoming session's discussion. The only one that will be pre-selected is the initial reading. The next three will be selected based upon the issues that arise from the previous session.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns at any time throughout the project, please feel free to make contact with me. Thank you again for your participation!

Appendix 4

Assistant

Consent to Confidentiality

As an assistant to Rev Katrina Marsh for the completion of her DMIN Project, I agree to keep all information attained in the upmost confidence before, during and after the completion of the project. I understand that all content of and pertaining to her project is confidential and should not be released to any individual, under no circumstance. All names and any identifying information will be held by me and me alone in sheer confidence. I understand that violation of this statement may constitute grounds for loss of my title and position with the church, Rivers@Rehoboth and the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries.

Print name and Title

Signature and Title

Date

Appendix 5

Original Demographic

Questionnaire

- 1.) How do you identify your gender? _____
- 2.) How do you identify your race? _____
- 3.) How do you identify your ethnicity? _____
- 4.) What is your age? _____
- 5.) What is the highest level of education you have completed? _____
- 6.) What is your current intimate relationship status? Single, Partnered, Married, Widowed,
Other (please explain) _____
- 7.) What is your leadership title? _____
- 8.) How long have you served under this title? _____
- 9.) How do you define your current religious/spiritual affiliation?

- 10.) How do you define the religious/spiritual affiliation for which you grew up under?

- 11.) In what region of the US do you reside: North, South, East or West? _____

Appendix 6

Questionnaire: Stress

Instructions: For each question, write one of the five options at the end. Here are the options:

Not at All Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

Do you feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy?

Do you find that you are prone to negative thinking about your position in Leadership?

Do you find that you are harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve?

Do you find yourself getting easily irritated by small problems, or by those working alongside you?

Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by those you serve?

Do you feel that you have no-one to talk to?

Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should?

Do you feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed?

Do you feel that you are not getting what you want out of your position?

Do you feel that you are with the wrong organization or in the wrong profession?

Are you becoming frustrated with parts of your Leadership position?

Do you feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate your ability to do a good job?

Do you feel that there is more work to do than you practically have the ability to do?

Do you feel that you do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job in carrying out the duties of your Leadership position?

Do you find that you do not have time to plan as much as you would like to?

**The following is the scale that goes along with the questionnaire. It is to assess a level of stress the Leader is feeling. Note this is a modified questionnaire in relation to word choice and value placed upon the responses. The original questionnaire was created by mindtools.com.

Not at All =0 Rarely =1 Sometimes =3 Often =5 Very Often =7

| Score | Comment |
|---------|---|
| 15 – 18 | Little sign of stress here |
| 19 – 32 | Little sign of stress here, unless some factors are particularly severe |
| 33 – 49 | Be careful - you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high |
| 50 – 59 | You may be at severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently |
| 60 - 75 | You may be at very severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently |

Adapted from:
Mindtools, (1996-2014). Burnout Self-test. Retrieved from
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm

Appendix 7

Participants

Consent to Confidentiality

As a participant in the DMIN project facilitated by Rev Katrina Marsh, I agree to keep all information heard during group times in the upmost confidence during and after the completion of the project. I understand that all content of and pertaining to Rev Katrina Marsh's project are confidential and should not be released to any individual, under no circumstance. I myself will not share names or any identifying information during the time of the project. I understand that violation of this statement will constitute immediate dismissal from the project.

Print name and Title

Signature and Title

Date

Appendix 8

TFAM solicitation

Seeking participants for a project:

AN EXPLORATION OF SAFE SPACE AND ANONYMITY FOSTERING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY AND STRESS REDUCTION

The project provides the opportunity for a safe and enriching environment for leaders (Senior and Associate Pastors, Bishops and Apostles) to de-stress and receive encouragement from their colleagues. This space has been created so that anonymity can be upheld and a space of grace and uplifting communal exchanges can be experienced. The aim of the project is to offer a moderated (cyber) dialogue. The project will run from a psycho/spiritual perspective, with clinical and spiritual principles at its foundation.

**I will be approaching individuals offering further information and an opportunity to sign-up.

Appendix 9

Adapted Original Letter

“Burnout is not the same as depression, but they are closely related, and burnout is a common precursor of depression.”

Dear Leader:

Stress is something that we all experience everyday of our lives. The difference in how we maneuver through it can be found by assessing how much stress we’re already bearing, and the level or intensity of stress that we’re currently facing.

In the wake of conversations with Leaders like you, for my DMIN project and the completion of my DMIN degree, I have chosen to embark upon creating a safe space for Leaders to de-stress. For this project, when Leader is referenced I am speaking of a Senior or Associate Pastor, a Bishop or an Apostle. This space has been created so that anonymity can be upheld and a space of grace and uplifting communal exchanges can take place. The aim of my project is to offer a chat (cyber) space that will be moderated. The project will be run from a psycho/spiritual perspective, with clinical and spiritual principles at its foundation. It will run for four Mondays, with a fifth Monday for wrap-up and feedback.

If you would like to be a participant in this project, please provide your name and email below. You will be provided with further information.

Blessings,
Rev Katrina T. Marsh, MSSW
Associate Pastor, Rivers@Rehoboth

I, _____, am interested in being a participant in the project for leaders. My email address is: _____.

Appendix 10

Reach Out to Interested I

Rev Katrina's DMIN Project

Greetings :

I want to thank you again for your interest in participating in my project titled: An Exploration of Safe Space And Anonymity Fostering Spiritual Community and Stress Reduction. Although there has been a great response of interest, reply time has been slow to confirm participation. Therefore I have shifted and set the following in place.

- 1) If you know any Leader who may be interested, please have them email me.
- 2) The project will run in September and October: Monday, Sept 23rd, Sept 30th, Oct 7th, Oct 14th with a wrap-up Thursday, Oct 17th. If you confirmed your participation with the initial request, you do NOT need to reconfirm if these dates work for you. However, if these dates have shifted your ability to participate, please respond.
- 3) The time for each session is still 10pm EST, as some participants are on the west coast.
- 4) If you have not yet responded to any of the emails and you would like to participate, please reply to this one.

Thank you again, and I look forward to making a mark in history with you!

Blessings,
Rev Katrina T. Marsh, MSSW
Associate Pastor, Rivers@Rehoboth

Appendix 11

Project Description II

Dear Leader:

I want to thank you again for your interest in my project. The following is going to seem like a lot of information, so I will be sending a condensed version in a calendar format before the initial meeting to participants. Here is how the project is going to go. You will have the opportunity to be part of an online chat group that I will facilitate. This group's conversational focus will be to provide a space for Leaders to mentally and spiritually de-stress among colleagues in a non-judgmental, non-critical safe space. Two ways we will maintain a safe atmosphere is that I will control the flow of the conversations, as they will be structured and free-flow. The other is that if you decide to be a participant in the project, you must agree to keep your identity anonymous by not using any readily identifiable information and no names. Doing so will call for an immediate termination of your participation in the project. Another expectation of you as a participant is that I will anticipate you agreeing to be a part to mean that you will attend all sessions, unless there is an emergency. Upon you agreeing to participate, the first item you will be sent is a confidentiality statement to sign, stating that you agree to honor confidentiality with the understanding that whatever is heard within the group will not go beyond the group. Please note that only the first ten respondents will be able to participate. Once those slots are filled, a waiting list will be created in case the need for replacement before the first day for the group to assemble arises.

How Your Identifying Information Will Be Handled

Once you show interest in being a participant by replying to this email to ktm-2007@hotmail.com, and copying and pasting into its body, “I have read the guidelines of the DMIN project that will be facilitated by Rev Katrina Marsh, and would like to be a participant”, you will be notified as to whether you have filled one of the ten slots or have been placed on a waiting list. If you are one of the ten, your email will then be forwarded to my assistant.

Committed to confidentiality per the signing of a confidentiality statement, my assistant will email you from a Rivers@Rehoboth email account, and randomly assign to you a participant email and participant number, along with instructions on how to access the email account. I will not have knowledge of what email code or number you will be assigned, but I will be given your coded email. I will send all correspondence pertaining to the project to this coded email ONLY. This is the only part of the project where my assistant will assist me.

What's Next?

Once you have been assigned an email, a confidentiality statement, followed by a demographical questionnaire will be sent. Three days before the first session, a baseline questionnaire will be emailed. This same questionnaire will be used at the end of the project as well.

The Schedule and The Environment

This project will span four Mondays over August and the first Thursday in September for the final point of contact. I have chosen Mondays because it is typically a non-workday for Leaders. The time of the session is non-conventional, as it will be from 10PM to 11PM/EST. The room will open three minutes to the set start time, and will start on time. Each session will begin with a greeting by me, and then each participant being asked to type two words that describe them in

that moment. Afterward the topic for the evening will be introduced. Discussion on the topic will last for approximately twenty-five minutes. The discussion will then shift for the next twenty-five minutes to a free-flow conversation. I will facilitate the conversations and set the direction as needed, but it's really on the participants to set the tone for the latter section. The next three minutes will allow for positive affirmations or words of encouragement to be shared amongst the participants. The next one minute will be allowed for any proposed topic(s) for the next week. The last minute will consist of a prayer being typed by a participant who is randomly chosen by the facilitator. In terms of ambiance and atmosphere, I do ask that you dedicate this time as focused, un-interrupted time. Also, please note that all conversations that take place in the session will be appended to the final report of the project.

Homework

Each participant will be asked to do a written reflection immediately following each session. The reflection includes two words that describe how they feel in that moment; and one to three sentences on how they feel the session went; what stuck out, what was helpful, etc. These are to be emailed to me no later than twenty minutes after a session ends.

Correspondence In-between Group Meetings

I will send encouraging words or reflections two days after a group session. This will be pertaining to something that was discussed or a rippled touch point that may have come up during the previous session. Your agreement to the project assures me that you are committed to reading what is sent. You will reply with your coded handle/ID in the subject line to indicate you have read the material.

Session Readings

It is my desire that this group runs organically. I will provide **short** biblical or spiritual readings three days prior to each session that will be incorporated into that upcoming session's discussion. The only one that will be pre-selected is the initial reading. The next three will be selected based upon the issues that arise from the previous session.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns at any time throughout the project, please feel free to make contact with me. Thank you again for your interest, and I look forward to your participation!

Appendix 12

Change of Target Population

Dear Leader:

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in my project. Due to a lack of follow-up responses with the target population, I have decided to change the target population for my project. I do apologize, as I was looking forward to what you could bring to this historical process. If possible, I would like to keep you in consideration for any other projects I may run in the future. Thank you again.

Blessings,
Rev Katrina Marsh, MSSW
Associate Pastor, Rivers@Rehoboth

Reach out for New Target Participants

Greetings Leaders:

Stress is something that we all experience everyday of our lives. The difference in how we maneuver through it can be found by assessing how much stress we're already bearing, and the level or intensity of stress that we're currently facing.

I am seeking participants for my doctorate project titled: An Exploration of Safe Space And Anonymity Fostering Spiritual Community and Stress Reduction.

The project provides the opportunity for a safe and enriching environment for Leaders (Licensed and Ordained Clergy and Ministers-In-Training: MIT's) to de-stress and receive encouragement. This space has been created so that anonymity can be upheld and a space of grace and uplifting communal exchange can be expressed. The aim of the project is to offer a moderated (cyber) dialogue. The project will run from a psycho/spiritual perspective, with clinical and spiritual principles at its foundation.

The project will be in September and October: Monday, Sept 23rd, Sept 30th, Oct 7th, Oct 14th with wrap-up & feedback Thursday, Oct 17th. The sessions will be one hour long, beginning at 8:30pm. You must have internet access, as the sessions will take place online. If you are interested and would like further information about participation, please reply to this email. Please note, there are a limited number of spots for this project.

Thank you in advance for your interest, and I look forward to making a mark in history with you!

Blessings,
Rev Katrina T. Marsh, MSSW
Associate Pastor, Rivers@Rehoboth

Appendix 14

Project Description III

Dear Leader:

I want to thank you for your interest in my project. The following is going to seem like a lot of information, so I will be sending a condensed version in a calendar format before the initial meeting to participants. Here is how the project is going to go. You will have the opportunity to be part of an online chat group that I will facilitate. This group's conversational focus will be to provide a space for Leaders to mentally and spiritually de-stress among colleagues in a non-judgmental, non-critical safe space. Two ways we will maintain a safe atmosphere is that I will control the flow of the conversations, as they will be structured and free-flow. The other is that if you decide to be a participant in the project, you must agree to keep your identity anonymous by not using any readily identifiable information and no names. Doing so will call for an immediate termination of your participation in the project. Another expectation of you as a participant is that I will anticipate you agreeing to be a part to mean that you will attend all sessions, unless there is an emergency. Upon you agreeing to participate, the first item you will be sent is a confidentiality statement to sign, stating that you agree to honor confidentiality with the understanding that whatever is heard within the group will not go beyond the group. Please note that there are limited slots for participation. Once all slots are filled, a waiting list will be created in case the need for replacement before the first day for the group to assemble arises.

How Your Identifying Information Will Be Handled

Once you show interest in being a participant by replying to this email to ktm-2007@hotmail.com, and copying and pasting into its body, "I have read the guidelines of the

DMIN project that will be facilitated by Rev Katrina Marsh, and would like to be a participant”, you will be notified as to whether you have filled one of the ten slots or have been placed on a waiting list. If you are one of the ten, your email will then be forwarded to my assistant.

Committed to confidentiality per the signing of a confidentiality statement, my assistant will email you from a Rivers@Rehoboth email account, and randomly assign to you a participant email and participant number, along with instructions on how to access the email account. I will not have knowledge of what email code or number you will be assigned, but I will be given your coded email. I will send all correspondence pertaining to the project to this coded email ONLY. This is the only part of the project where my assistant will assist me.

What's Next?

Once you have been assigned an email, a confidentiality statement, followed by a demographical questionnaire will be sent. Three days before the first session, a baseline questionnaire will be emailed. This same questionnaire will be used at the end of the project as well.

The Schedule and The Environment

This project will span four Mondays over September and October and one Thursday in October for the final point of contact. The time of the session will be from 8:30PM to 9:30PM/EST. The room will open three minutes to the set start time, and will start on time. Each session will begin with a greeting by me, and then each participant being asked to type two words that describe them in that moment. Afterward the topic for the evening will be introduced. Discussion on the topic will last for approximately twenty-five minutes. The discussion will then shift for the next twenty-five minutes to a free-flow conversation. I will facilitate the conversations and set the direction as needed, but it's really on the participants to set the tone for the latter section. The

next three minutes will allow for positive affirmations or words of encouragement to be shared amongst the participants. The next one minute will be allowed for any proposed topic(s) for the next week. The last minute will consist of a prayer being typed by a participant who is randomly chosen by the facilitator. In terms of ambiance and atmosphere, I do ask that you dedicate this time as focused, un-interrupted time. Also, please note that all conversations that take place in the session will be appended to the final report of the project.

Homework

Each participant will be asked to do a written reflection immediately following each session. The reflection includes two words that describe how they feel in that moment; and one to three sentences on how they feel the session went; what stuck out, what was helpful, etc. These are to be emailed to me no later than twenty minutes after a session ends.

Correspondence In-between Group Meetings

I will send encouraging words or reflections two days after a group session. This will be pertaining to something that was discussed or a rippled touch point that may have come up during the previous session. Your agreement to the project assures me that you are committed to reading what is sent. You will reply with your coded handle/ID in the subject line to indicate you have read the material.

Session Readings

It is my desire that this group runs organically. I will provide **short** biblical or spiritual readings three days prior to each session that will be incorporated into that upcoming session's discussion. The only one that will be pre-selected is the initial reading. The next three will be selected based upon the issues that arise from the previous session.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns at any time throughout the project, please feel free to make contact with me. Thank you again for your interest, and I look forward to your participation!

Appendix 15

Propensity to Trust Scale

Questionnaire 3

Read each statement and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. Write your answer from the following six choices:

- Strongly agree Moderately agree Slightly agree**
Slightly disagree Moderately disagree Strongly disagree

- 1) Most people can be counted on to do what they say they will do.

- 2) I tend to trust people, even those whom I have just met for the first time.

- 3.) Unless you remain alert, someone will soon take advantage of you.

- 4.) Most people would tell a lie if they could gain by it. _____
- 5.) My typical approach is to be cautious with people until they have demonstrated their trustworthiness.

- 6.) I usually give acquaintances the benefit of the doubt if they do something that seems selfish.

- 7.) Most people pretend to be more honest than they really are. _____
- 8.) I believe that most people are generally trustworthy. _____

Adapted from:
Hill, McGraw (2009). Self-Assessment 7.4: Propensity to trust scale. (n.d.). *Self-Assessment 7.4: Propensity to Trust Scale*. Retrieved from http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073381225/student_view0/chapter7/self-assessment_7_4.html

Emotionally and Spiritually Healthy Assessment

Questionnaire 4

Answer the following as truthful as possible. Try to be as vulnerable and open as you can. Place the number 1, 2, 3 or 4 beside the answer that best fits you. There are 40 questions.

1=Not Very True 2=Sometimes True 3=Mostly True 4=Very True

Part A:

1. I feel confident of my adoption as God's son/daughter and rarely, if ever, question God's acceptance of me. _____
2. I love to worship God by myself as well as with others. _____
3. I spend regular quality time in the Word of God and in prayer. _____
4. I sense the unique ways God has gifted me individually and am actively using my spiritual gifts for God's service. _____
5. I am a vital participant in a community with other believers. _____
6. It is clear that my money, gifts, time, and abilities are completely at God's disposal and not my own. _____
7. I consistently integrate my faith in the marketplace and the world. _____

Part B: Section 1

1. It's easy for me to identify what I am feeling inside (Luke 19:41 – 44; John 11:33 – 35). _____
2. I am willing to explore previously unknown or unacceptable parts of myself, allowing Christ to transform me more fully (Rom. 7:21 – 25; Col.3:5 – 17). _____
3. I enjoy being alone in quiet reflection with God and myself (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). _____
4. I can share freely about my emotions, sexuality, joy, and pain (Ps. 22; Prov. 5:18 – 19; Luke 10:21). _____
5. I am able to experience and deal with anger in a way that leads to growth in others and myself (Eph. 4:25 – 32). _____
6. I am honest with myself (and a few significant others) about the feelings, beliefs, doubts, pains, and hurts beneath the surface of my life (Ps. 73; 88; Jer. 20:7 – 18). _____

Section 2

7. I resolve conflict in a clear, direct, and respectful way, not what I might have learned growing up, or adopted sometime along my journey, such as painful putdowns, avoidance, escalating tensions, or going to a third party rather than to the person directly (Matt. 18:15 – 18). _____

8. I am intentional at working through the impact of significant “earthquake” events that shaped my present, such as the death of a family member, an unexpected pregnancy, divorce, addiction, loss of employment or a major financial disaster (Gen. 50:20; Ps. 51). _____

9. I am able to thank God for all my past life experiences, seeing how (s)he has used them to uniquely shape me into who I am (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28 – 30). _____

10. I can see how certain “generational sins” have been passed down to me through my family history, including character flaws, lies, secrets, ways of coping with pain, and unhealthy tendencies in relating to others (Ex. 20:5; cf. Gen. 20:2; 26:7; 27:19; 37:1 – 33). _____

11. I don’t need approval from others to feel good about myself (Prov. 29:25; Gal. 1:10). _____

12. I take responsibility and ownership for my past life rather than blame others (John 5:5 – 7). _____

Section 3

13. I often admit when I’m wrong, readily asking forgiveness from others (Matt. 5:23 – 24). _____

14. I am able to speak freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes (2 Cor. 12:7 – 12). _____

15. Others would easily describe me as approachable, gentle, open, and transparent (Gal. 5:22 – 23; 1 Cor. 13:1 – 6). _____

16. Those close to me would say that I am not easily offended or hurt (Matt. 5:39 – 42, 1 Cor. 13:5). _____

17. I am consistently open to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me (Prov. 10:17; 17:10; 25:12). _____

18. I am rarely judgmental or critical of others (Matt. 7:1 – 5). _____

19. Others would say that I am slow to speak, quick to listen, and good at seeing things from their perspective (James 1:19 – 20). _____

Section 4

20. I’ve never been accused of “trying to do it all” or of biting off more than I could chew (Matt. 4:1 – 11). _____

21. I am regularly able to say no to requests and opportunities rather than risk overextending myself (Mark 6:30 – 32). _____

22. I recognize the different situations where my unique, God-given personality can be either a help or hindrance in responding appropriately (Ps. 139; Rom. 12:3; 1 Peter 4:10). _____

23. It’s easy for me to distinguish the difference between when to help carry someone else’s

burden (Gal. 6:2) and when to let it go so they can carry their own burden (Gal. 6:5). _____

24. I have a good sense of my emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual capacities, intentionally pulling back to rest and fill my “gas tank” again (Mark 1:21 – 39). _____

25. Those close to me would say that I am good at balancing family, rest, work, and play in a biblical way (Ex. 20:8). _____

Section 5

26. I openly admit my losses and disappointments (Ps. 3; 5). _____

27. When I go through a disappointment or a loss, I reflect on how I’m feeling rather than pretend that nothing is wrong (2 Sam. 1:4, 17 – 27; Ps.51:1 – 17). _____

28. I take time to grieve my losses as David (Ps. 69) and Jesus did (Matt. 26:39; John 11:35; 12:27). _____

29. People who are in great pain and sorrow tend to seek me out because it’s clear to them that I am in touch with the losses and sorrows in my own life (2 Cor. 1:3 – 7). _____

30. I am able to cry and experience depression or sadness, explore the reasons behind it, seek outside help if needed and allow God to work in me through it (Ps. 42; Matt. 26:36 – 46). _____

Section 6:

31. I am regularly able to enter into other people’s worlds and feelings, connecting deeply with them and taking time to imagine what it feels like to live in their shoes (John 1:1 – 14; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:3 – 5). _____

32. People close to me would describe me as a responsive listener (Prov. 10:19; 29:11; James 1:19). _____

33. When I confront someone who has hurt or wronged me, I speak more in the first person (“I” and “me”) about how I am feeling rather than speak in blaming tones (“you” or “they”) about what was done (Prov. 25:11; Eph. 4:29 – 32). _____

34. I have little interest in judging other people or quickly giving opinions about them (Matt.7:1 – 5). _____

35. People would describe me as someone who makes “loving well” my number one aim (John 13:34 – 35; 1 Cor. 13). _____

Section 7

36. I spend sufficient time alone with God to sustain my work for God. _____

37. I regularly take a 24-hour period each week for Sabbath-keeping — to stop, to rest, to delight, and to contemplate God. _____

38. Those closest to me would say that my family takes priority over church ministry and others. _____

39. I am not afraid to ask difficult, uncomfortable questions, to myself or to others, when needed.

40. I do not divide my leadership into sacred/secular categories. I treat the executive/planning functions and ecclesiastical duties of leadership as meaningful as prayer and preparing sermons.

Adapted from:

Scazzero, P., & Bird, W. (2003). The emotionally healthy church. Inventory of Emotional/Spiritual maturity. *Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 19*. Retrieved from
http://www.preachitheatit.org/uploads/tx_wecsermons/EHSAssessmentTool.pdf

Appendix 17

First Email and Reading

Dear Leader:

Welcome to An Exploration of Safe Space And Anonymity Fostering Spiritual Community And Stress Reduction project! As we are three days away from our first session, please find pertinent information below, as well as consent, three short questionnaires and one long questionnaire attached. Please return **the consent** through your **normal, personal email**. Please send **all other completed questionnaires through your assigned email**. This is to uphold anonymity.

I thank you again for your participation! The link for the sessions will be sent to your assigned email.

Blessings,
Rev Katrina T. Marsh, MSSW
Associate Pastor, Rivers@Rehoboth

Highlights

- You have been randomly assigned the handle ID, Volunteer , and therefore the email you will use is . Please see instructions at the end of this email concerning access.
- Your readings for this first session are below. As you read, please keep in mind that the focus of all discussions moving forward is pertaining to Leaders only (Licensed & Ordained Clergy and MIT's).

1) Genesis 4: 1- 16

2) It has long been recognized that the way a person behaves towards others is, to some extent, a function of whether they trust the other person, organization or institution. Trust is linked to an individual's belief or perspective of automatic safety and security. The litmus for this is whether or not there has been any previous level of betrayal or exploit. Disloyalty or disappointments of hopeful expectations have become a readily semi-undetectable filter subconsciously set-up within minorities psyche.

Email

The password to your assigned email account is: rehoboth. If you desire to change it, please go to settings once you get into the email.

Email Access:

Workspace Webmail provides access to your email account from any Web browser.

To Access Workspace Webmail

1. Go to email.secureserver.net.
2. Enter your full **Email Address** and **Password**, and then click **Log in**.

Appendix 18

Guide for Session One ****Highlighted means didn't get to**

Hello Everyone! Welcome to our first session! Please identify yourself as V and your number.

To begin our time today, I'd like for us to take this moment and invite every part of you into this time. I ask that you close your eyes and take in a slow, deep breath through your nose, exhaling through your mouth THREE times. Type "Present" once done.

Now, please type two words that describe you in this moment.

As we embody all of our parts, all of Self, we will experience a sense of connectedness to all the Selves around us. Let us begin with our topic. (Schwartz)

Our topic for tonight is "A Trustworthy Keeper".

I'd like to hear what came up for you concerning the readings, beginning with the one sent to you on trust. As a Leader and the experiences you have had, what came up for you? It reads: It has long been recognized that the way a person behaves towards others is, to some extent, a function of whether they trust the other person, organization or institution. Trust is linked to an individual's belief or perspective of automatic safety and security. The litmus for this is whether or not there has been any previous level of betrayal or exploit. Disloyalty or disappointments of hopeful expectations have become a readily semi-undetectable filter subconsciously set-up within minorities psyche.

Tell me your thoughts about the passage read in Genesis 4:1-16

I want to propose a parallel perspective. Cain works the position of tending to the land under the title of farmer, while Abel carries out the duties of tending to the animals upholding the title of shepherd. In overseeing anything, modern or traditionally, there is typically a form of accountability that one must uphold. With this, and the fact that you've read the story, God in His response to Cain indirectly let him know that certainly he was his brother's keeper. The livelihood of them both was connected and dependent on each other as leaders in the positions they were given. God, in Her own way, even said to Cain that because he (Cain) had not grasped the importance of what serving within the confines of a relationship mean to Him (God), Cain's position and title would be revoked. As leaders, how do you see a correlation for sustainability and multiplicity of carrying out the call of God on your life, in relation to your brother/sister being your keeper?

As leaders how do you see the level of trust or distrust you have in your brother/sister being a hindrance or delay in your work for the Kingdom?

I want to now open the room for any free-flow conversation that anyone might want to have. Is there something you would like to share, get feedback about from the participants, concerning a trust issue that you have?

I want to close by switching how we think about this brother/sister keeper concept. I want us to think along the terms of “My brother/sister is my keeper”. Say this out loud. What doing this and seeing it this way does is that it opens up a space for real trust to begin to be established or grown. In spite of any mishaps or mishandlings of the past, allow yourself to sit with the thought that your brother/sister really does have your back. Your brother/sister has the best intentions of you in mind. Your brother/sister is really no different from you; you all need the same basic things. God has connected you to their life because without them, without something from them, the call of God on your life cannot completely bloom to the place of which it has been ordained. Your brother/sister is your keeper of affirmation, confirmation, validation, support, honor and respect. Being each other’s keeper comes with the positional territory of being Leaders; Leaders who are charged to attend to each other’s affairs as they are presented, and to store for each other the things that only we, other Leaders, can hold. We are called to be each others preventers of harm to good names and sometimes weary, but strong, souls. If we do not uphold this type of relationship, we are essentially carrying out the crime of Cain, speaking his language of turning a blind eye to that which God has entrusted us to do; be our brother’s/sister’s guard. So I want you to, silently, answer the question, “Am I a Trustworthy Keeper?”

This concludes our first session. Each session will end with a positive thought. What is something affirming or encouraging you would say to yourself, if you could have spoken to yourself during the recalled time where you experienced mistrust?

With all that has been shared, what encouraging or affirming words can you give in this moment to someone from this session?

Thank you all for your participation in this first session. Are there any proposed topics that you would like considered for session two?

Thank you.

Before V6 closes us with a typed prayer, please remember you have 20 minutes to email the following after this session has ended. 1) two words that describe how you feel in this moment 2) One to three sentences on how the session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, etc. Also, please remember to check your assigned email every Wednesday and Friday.

V6 go ahead and close us out.

Original Propensity to Trust Scale

Self-Assessment 7.4: Propensity to Trust Scale

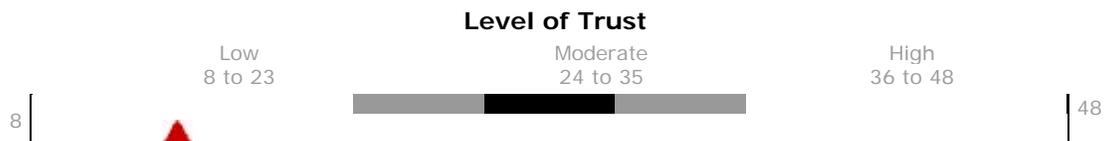
Self-Assessment 7.4: Propensity to Trust Scale

The source of this scale is: Steven L. McShane. Some items are derived from existing scales.

Some people have a tendency to trust others, even if they never met them before, whereas others take a long time to develop a comfortable level of trust. This Propensity to Trust Scale estimates your general willingness to trust other people.

Read each statement in this self-assessment and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. This instrument has 8 statements.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <input type="text"/> | Most people can be counted on to do what they say they will do. |
| <input type="text"/> | I tend to trust people, even those whom I have just met for the first time. |
| <input type="text"/> | Unless you remain alert, someone will soon take advantage of you. |
| <input type="text"/> | Most people would tell a lie if they could gain by it. |
| <input type="text"/> | My typical approach is to be cautious with people until they have demonstrated their trustworthiness. |
| <input type="text"/> | I usually give acquaintances the benefit of the doubt if they do something that seems selfish. |
| <input type="text"/> | Most people pretend to be more honest than they really are. |
| <input type="text"/> | I believe that most people are generally trustworthy. |



Understanding Your Scores on the Propensity to Trust Scale

Some people are inherently more willing than others to trust others, even if they are meeting them for the first time. This propensity to trust is due to each individual's personality, values, and socialization

experiences.

This Propensity to Trust Scale estimates your general willingness to trust other people. Your actual propensity to trust will vary to some extent with the situation, whereas this scale provides a broad indication of your initial level of trust as well as willingness to maintain trust when violations occur.

Scores range from 8 to 48 with higher scores indicating a high propensity to trust. The following graph allows you to compare your propensity to trust score to the general population. These norms are estimates based on results of several studies using similar instruments.

Hill, McGraw (2009). Self-Assessment 7.4: Propensity to trust scale. (n.d.). *Self-Assessment 7.4: Propensity to Trust Scale*. Retrieved from http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073381225/student_view0/chapter7/self-assessment_7_4.html

Appendix 21

Original Mind tools Burnout Questionnaire

| 15 Statements to Answer | Not at All | Rarely | Some times | Often | Very Often |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Do you feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Do you find that you are prone to negative thinking about your job? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Do you find that you are harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Do you find yourself getting easily irritated by small problems, or by your co-workers and team? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by your co-workers? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Do you feel that you have no one to talk to? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7 Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8 Do you feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9 Do you feel that you are not getting what you want out of your job? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10 Do you feel that you are in the wrong organization or the wrong profession? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11 Are you becoming frustrated with parts of your job? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12 Do you feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate your ability to do a good job? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13 Do you feel that there is more work to do than you practically have the ability to do? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14 Do you feel that you do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15 Do you find that you do not have time to plan as much as you would like to? | <input type="radio"/> |

- See more at: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm#sthash.wlV9l6g0.dpuf

Score Comment

15-18 No sign of burnout here

19-32 Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe.

33-49 Be careful – you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high.

50-59 You are at severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently.

60-75 You are at very severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently

Mindtools, (1996-2014). Burnout Self-test. Retrieved from
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm

Appendix 22

Original Inventory of Emotional/Spiritual Maturity

PART A:

General Formation and Discipleship

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|---|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. I feel confident of my adoption as God's son/daughter and rarely, if ever, question his acceptance of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I love to worship God by myself as well as with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I spend regular quality time in the Word of God and in prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I sense the unique ways God has gifted me individually and am actively using my spiritual gifts for his service. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I am a vital participant in a community with other believers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. It is clear that my money, gifts, time, and abilities are completely at God's disposal and not my own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I consistently integrate my faith in the marketplace and the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

PART B:

Emotional Components of Discipleship

Principle 1: *Look beneath the Surface*

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. It's easy for me to identify what I am feeling inside (Luke 19:41–44; John 11:33–35). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I am willing to explore previously unknown or unacceptable parts of myself, allowing Christ to transform me more fully (Rom. 7:21–25; Col. 3:5–17). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I enjoy being alone in quiet reflection with God and myself (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I can share freely about my emotions, sexuality, joy, and pain (Ps. 22; Prov. 5:18–19; Luke 10:21). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I am able to experience and deal with anger in a way that leads to growth in others and myself (Eph. 4:25–32). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I am honest with myself (and a few significant others) about the feelings, beliefs, doubts, pains, and hurts beneath the surface of my life (Ps. 73; Jer. 20:7–18). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Principle 2: Break the Power of the Past | | | | |
| 7. I resolve conflict in a clear, direct, and respectful way, not what I might have learned growing up in my family, such as painful putdowns, avoidance, escalating tensions, or going to a third party rather than to the person directly (Matt. 18:15–18). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I am intentional at working through the impact of significant “earthquake” events that shaped my present, such as the death of a family member, an unexpected pregnancy, divorce, addiction, or major financial disaster (Gen. 50:20; Ps. 51). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I am able to thank God for all my past life experiences, seeing how he has used them to uniquely shape me into who I am (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28–30). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I can see how certain “generational sins” have been passed down to me through my family history, including character flaws, lies, secrets, ways of coping with pain, and unhealthy tendencies in relating to others (Ex. 20:5; cf. Gen. 20:2; 26:7; 27:19; 37:1–33). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I don’t need approval from others to feel good about myself (Prov. 29:25; Gal. 1:10). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I take responsibility and ownership for my past life rather than blame others (John 5:5–7). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL _____ | | | | |

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|---|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Principle 3: Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability | | | | |
| 13. I often admit when I’m wrong, readily asking forgiveness from others (Matt. 5:23–24). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I am able to speak freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes (2 Cor. 12:7–12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Others would easily describe me as approachable, gentle, open, and transparent (Gal. 5:22–23; 1 Cor. 13:1–6). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. Those close to me would say that I am not easily offended or hurt (Matt. 5:39–42, 1 Cor. 13:5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I am consistently open to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me (Prov. 10:17; 17:10; 25:12). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I am rarely judgmental or critical of others (Matt. 7:1–5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Others would say that I am slow to speak, quick to listen, and good at seeing things from their perspective (James 1:19–20). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL _____ | | | | |

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|---|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Principle 4: Receive the Gift of Limits | | | | |
| 20. I’ve never been accused of “trying to do it all” or of biting off more than I could chew (Matt. 4:1–11). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. I am regularly able to say no to requests and opportunities rather than risk overextending myself (Mark 6:30–32). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. I recognize the different situations where my unique, God-given personality can be either a help or hindrance in responding appropriately (Ps. 139; Rom. 12:3; 1 Peter 4:10). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. It’s easy for me to distinguish the difference between when to help carry someone else’s burden (Gal. 6:2) and when to let it go so they can carry their own burden (Gal. 6:5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. I have a good sense of my emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual capacities, intentionally pulling back to rest and fill my “gas tank” again (Mark 1:21–39). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. Those close to me would say that I am good at balancing family, rest, work, and play in a biblical way (Ex. 20:8). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL _____ | | | | |

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Principle 5: Embrace Grieving and Loss | | | | |
| 26. I openly admit my losses and disappointments (Ps. 3; 5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. When I go through a disappointment or a loss, I reflect on how I’m feeling rather than pretend that nothing is wrong (2 Sam. 1:4, 17–27; Ps. 51:1–17). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. I take time to grieve my losses as David (Ps. 69) and Jesus did (Matt. 26:39; John 11:35; 12:27). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. People who are in great pain and sorrow tend to seek me out because it’s clear to them that I am in touch with the losses and sorrows in my own life (2 Cor. 1:3–7). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. I am able to cry and experience depression or sadness, explore the reasons behind it, and allow God to work in me through it (Ps. 42; Matt. 26:36–46). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| TOTAL _____ | | | | |

Principle 6: Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 31. I am regularly able to enter into other people's worlds and feelings, connecting deeply with them and taking time to imagine what it feels like to live in their shoes (John 1:1–14; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:3–5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. People close to me would describe me as a responsive listener (Prov. 10:19; 29:11; James 1:19). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. When I confront someone who has hurt or wronged me, I speak more in the first person ("I" and "me") about how I am feeling rather than speak in blaming tones ("you" or "they") about what was done (Prov. 25:11; Eph. 4:29–32). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. I have little interest in judging other people or quickly giving opinions about them (Matt. 7:1–5). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35. People would describe me as someone who makes "loving well" my number one aim (John 13:34–35; 1 Cor. 13). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

Principle 7: Slow Down to Lead with Integrity

| | Not very true | Sometimes true | Mostly true | Very true |
|---|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 36. I spend sufficient time alone with God to sustain my work for God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. I regularly take a 24-hour period each week for Sabbath-keeping—to stop, to rest, to delight, and to contemplate God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38. Those closest to me would say that my marriage and children take priority over church ministry and others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39. I am not afraid to ask difficult, uncomfortable questions, to myself or to others, when needed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40. I do not divide my leadership into sacred/secular categories. I treat the executive/planning functions of leadership as meaningful as prayer and preparing sermons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

TOTAL _____

Inventory Results

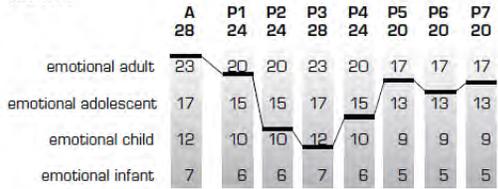
For each group of questions on pages 76–83:

- Add your answers to get the total for that group. Write your totals on the top portion of page 85, as the sample on the next page illustrates.
- Next, plot your answers and connect the dots to create a graph on the bottom portion of page 85, again following the sample.
- Finally, see pages 86 and 87 for interpretations of your level of emotional health in each area. What patterns do you discern?

SAMPLE

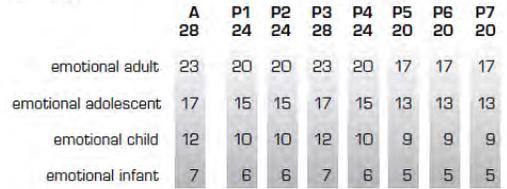
| PART A | Questions | Total |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| <i>General Formation and Discipleship</i> | 1–7 | <u>24</u> /28 |
| PART B | | |
| Principle 1 <i>Look beneath the Surface</i> | 1–6 | <u>20</u> /24 |
| Principle 2 <i>Break the Power of the Past</i> | 7–12 | <u>11</u> /24 |
| Principle 3 <i>Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability</i> | 13–19 | <u>12</u> /28 |
| Principle 4 <i>Receive the Gift of Limits</i> | 20–25 | <u>14</u> /24 |
| Principle 5 <i>Embrace Grieving and Loss</i> | 26–30 | <u>16</u> /20 |
| Principle 6 <i>Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well</i> | 31–35 | <u>14</u> /20 |
| Principle 7 <i>Slow Down to Lead with Integrity</i> | 36–40 | <u>15</u> /20 |

GRAPH



| PART A | Questions | Total |
|--|-----------|--------|
| <i>General Formation and Discipline</i> | 1–7 | ___/28 |
| PART B | | |
| Principle 1 <i>Look beneath the Surface</i> | 1–6 | ___/24 |
| Principle 2 <i>Break the Power of the Past</i> | 7–12 | ___/24 |
| Principle 3 <i>Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability</i> | 13–19 | ___/28 |
| Principle 4 <i>Receive the Gift of Limits</i> | 20–25 | ___/24 |
| Principle 5 <i>Embrace Grieving and Loss</i> | 26–30 | ___/20 |
| Principle 6 <i>Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well</i> | 31–35 | ___/20 |
| Principle 7 <i>Slow Down to Lead with Integrity</i> | 36–40 | ___/20 |

GRAPH



INTERPRETATION GUIDE: LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Emotional infants. I look for other people to take care of me emotionally and spiritually. I often have difficulty in describing and experiencing my feelings in healthy ways and rarely enter the emotional world of others. I am consistently driven by a need for instant gratification, often using others as objects to meet my needs. People sometimes perceive me as inconsiderate and insensitive. I am uncomfortable with silence or being alone. When trials, hardships, or difficulties come, I want to quit God and the Christian life. I sometimes experience God at church and when I am with other Christians, but rarely when I am at work or home.

Emotional children. When life is going my way, I am content. However, as soon as disappointment or stress enter the picture, I quickly unravel inside. I often take things personally, interpreting disagreements or criticism as a personal offense. When I don't get my way, I often complain, throw an emotional tantrum, withdraw, manipulate, drag my feet, become sarcastic, or take revenge. I often end up living off the spirituality of other people because I am so overloaded and distracted. My prayer life is primarily talking to God, telling him what to do and how to fix my problems. Prayer is a duty, not a delight.

Emotional adolescents. I don't like it when others question me. I often make quick judgments and interpretations of people's behavior. I withhold forgiveness to those who sin against me, avoiding or cutting them off when they do something to hurt me. I subconsciously keep records on the love I give out. I have trouble really listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs without becoming preoccupied with myself. I sometimes find myself too busy to spend adequate time nourishing my spiritual life.

I attend church and serve others but enjoy few delights in Christ. My Christian life is still primarily about doing, not being with him. Prayer continues to be mostly me talking with little silence, solitude, or listening to God.

Emotional adults. I respect and love others without having to change them or becoming judgmental. I value people for who they are, not for what they can give me or how they behave. I take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions. I can state my own beliefs and values to those who disagree with me—without becoming adversarial. I am able to accurately self-assess my limits, strengths, and weaknesses. I am deeply convinced that I am absolutely loved by Christ and, as a result, do not look to others to tell me I'm okay. I am able to integrate *doing* for God and *being* with him (Mary and Martha). My Christian life has moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.

Permission is granted for any purchaser of this book to make copies of this inventory as long as it is not changed or sold for a profit, and this credit is included: Taken from Peter Scazzero with Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: Updated and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010). For more information and further resources, contact www.emotionallyhealthy.org.

Scazzero, P., & Bird, W. (2003). The emotionally healthy church. Inventory of Emotional/Spiritual maturity. *Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 19*. Retrieved from http://www.preachitheatit.org/uploads/tx_wecsermons/EHSAssessmentTool.pdf

Appendix 23

Session One Conversation ***This session ONLY, read from the bottom up for each page of the session, reading the pages in numerical order.

9/23/13 Chatzy

Welcome V6.

volunteer6: v6 20:37

volunteer4 joined the chat 20:37

volunteer6 joined the chat 20:37

Volunteer 9 joined the chat 20:36

Moderator left this message: 20:35

Being that this is our first session, we will give everyone a few moments. Thank you for your patience.

volunteer3: Thank you 20:33

Moderator left this message: 20:33

Hello V3. Welcome.

volunteer3: V3 20:32

volunteer3 joined the chat 20:32

Moderator left this message: 20:30

Hello Everyone! Welcome to our first session! Please identify yourself as V and your number.

Moderator cleared the room 10:46

- V4, how do you see someone earning trust?
- volunteer6:** It's a sore spot for me as I am learning to get in touch with what I am feeling at the moment. I am having to search how I am feeling and where the feeling is coming from at the time. 20:49
- volunteer4:** trust is seems to be something that is earned and is not automatically given. 20:48
- Moderator** left this message: 20:46
- The Reading: It has long been recognized that the way a person behaves towards others is, to some extent, a function of whether they trust the other person, organization or institution. Trust is linked to an individual's belief or perspective of automatic safety and security. The litmus for this is whether or not there has been any previous level of betrayal or exploit. Disloyalty or disappointments of hopeful expectations have become a readily semi-undetectable filter subconsciously set-up within minorities psyche.
- Moderator** left this message: 20:45
- I'd like to hear what came up for you concerning the readings, beginning with the one sent to you on trust. As a Leader and the experiences you have had, what came up for you?
- Moderator** left this message: 20:45
- Our topic for tonight is "A Trustworthy Keeper".
- Moderator** left this message: 20:45
- As we embody all of our parts, all of Self, we will experience a sense of connectedness to all the Selves around us. Let us begin with our topic.
- Volunteer 9:** pain and angst 20:44
- volunteer4:** conscious and peaceful 20:44
- volunteer6:** comfortable & clear 20:44
- volunteer3:** free and calm 20:43
- Moderator** left this message: 20:43
- Now, please type two words that describe you in this moment.
- volunteer4:** present 20:42
- volunteer3:** present 20:42
- Volunteer 9:** present 20:42
- volunteer6:** present 20:42
- Volunteer 9:** Hello I'm V9 20:41
- Moderator** left this message: 20:41
- To begin our time today, I'd like for us to take this moment and invite every part of you into this time. I ask that you close your eyes and take in a slow, deep breath through your nose, exhaling through your mouth THREE times. Type "Present" once done.
- Moderator** left this message: 20:41
- I want to first thank each of you for your participation.
- Volunteer 9:** Hello 20:41
- Moderator** left this message: 20:40
- Okay. Let's begin.
- Moderator** left this message: 20:39
- I am going to wait another minute, to give some time. Thank you for your patience.
- Moderator** left this message: 20:37
- Welcome V9 & V4.
- volunteer4:** V4 20:37
- Moderator** left this message: 20:37

- ministry.
- volunteer3:** Sometimes the word "family" is loosely used to mean relationship, but it doesn't mean that necessarily. People get jealous and sabotage your life. 21:03
- Volunteer 9:** Those closest to you can hurt you the most 21:02
- volunteer4:** it seems there is an expectation for relational trust in families. Even though family trust (Cain & Abel) can be the most deceptive. 21:02
- volunteer3:** Cain could not be trusted to protect his brother. He let jealousy get in the way, and because he was disobedient and scolded for it, killed his brother. 21:01
- volunteer6:** No one can be trusted not even your family. Also I understood the statement about where family curses ! 20:59
- Moderator** left this message: 20:59
- Clarifying, not in relation to relationship with God, but the brothers.
- Moderator** left this message: 20:58
- Concerning relational trust and the second reading, tell me your thoughts about the passage read in Genesis 4:1-16
- Volunteer 9:** I believe in forgiveness, but trust doesn't come easy a 2nd and third time around 20:57
- Moderator** left this message: 20:56
- I want to look at trust from a different perspective. And note, you are always allowed to respond or comment to each other.
- volunteer4:** I agree V9, but I believe in forgiveness..... Trust is a gradual process 20:56
- Moderator** left this message: 20:56
- You are all making good insightful points.
- Volunteer 9:** I believe the more time invested in someone and the trust is broken, the harder it is for me to bounce back 20:55
- volunteer3:** We are both working on building trust. I believe that it is possible to regain trust. 20:55
- Volunteer 9:** In my younger years, I was more forgiving I think but as I have gotten older and have trusted more people that were in authority that have just flat out lied and deceived me, forgiveness does not come easy 20:54
- Moderator** left this message: 20:53
- V3, are you able to currently see a way to regain trust with the individual?
- volunteer4:** Because we often have pre-judgements about individuals based on previous experiences others. We have to invest some time and have some experiences with a person before we can openly trust 20:52
- Moderator** left this message: 20:52
- V9, have you identified what keeps you from crossing back to trust after it's lost?
- volunteer3:** I have been dealing with issues of trust with an individual with whom i associate on a professional level. In a meeting, I was helped to realize that our relationship is sour because of the lack of trust. 20:51
- Moderator** left this message: 20:51
- V3, do you feel the same as V4 concerning trust?
- Volunteer 9:** Once the trust has been broken it is harder for me to regain trust again 20:51
- volunteer6:** Yes I am learning to trust me in order to trust others 20:51
- Moderator** left this message: 20:50
- V6, for clarity, are you stating that you are learning to trust?
- Moderator** left this message: 20:49

- Volunteer 9:** Yes, familiarity breeds contempt 21:15
- Moderator** left this message: 21:14
- But are we not to just trust people who serve with us? And if not, how do we get to that place?
- volunteer3:** I agree v9 21:14
- Volunteer 9:** I feel like people want to save face, don't want to ruffle feathers, and foolishness is allowed to continue until it hits the wrong (house) 21:14
- volunteer4:** I agree. Unfortunately, that often comes from being too familiar with one another 21:14
- Volunteer 9:** I agree V3. 21:13
- volunteer6:** I agree v3 21:13
- volunteer3:** I believe that people are not as open and honest. Even in closed meetings with leaders, information is leaked sometimes. You don't know who to trust. 21:12
- volunteer6:** opps-Dont feel the same 21:12
- volunteer6:** I am my brothers/sister keeper with out a doubt, however I feel like my brother/sisters feel the same towards me. I've become more dependent on god because I don't feel like I can trust my peers. I feel like given an opportunity to hurt me, throw me under the bus or just not be supportive in the church he/she would hurt me. 21:12
- volunteer3:** I would have to be cautious while gaining someone's trust. Since we are human, trust may be broken at times. I will not forsake them, but trust would have to be regained. I would have to test their honesty. 21:11
- Moderator** left this message: 21:10
- And anyone else please chime in on that statement.
- Moderator** left this message: 21:09
- V3, can you elaborate on "but i would not turn a blind eye to anyone's negativity"
- volunteer3:** I believe that I certainly am my brother's/ sister's keeper. I am here for them. I will love them and help them as much as possible. We would help one another to grow, but i would not turn a blind eye to anyone's negativity. 21:08
- volunteer4:** LEARNING to value the people in our relationships regardless to our role. 21:07
- Volunteer 9:** I understand the concept that we all must work together for kingdom work, but I'm not sure that all in the work understand that everyone is equally valuable, 21:07
- Moderator** left this message: 21:07
- As leaders, how do you see a correlation for sustainability and multiplicity of carrying out the call of God on your life, in relation to your brother/sister being your keeper?
- Moderator** left this message: 21:04
- I want to propose a parallel perspective. Cain works the position of tending to the land under the title of farmer, while Abel carries out the duties of tending to the animals upholding the title of shepherd. In overseeing anything, modern or traditionally, there is typically a form of accountability that one must uphold. With this, and the fact that you've read the story, God in His response to Cain indirectly let him know that certainly he was his brother's keeper. The livelihood of them both was connected and dependent on each other as leaders in the positions they were given. God, in Her own way, even said to Cain that because he (Cain) had not grasped the importance of what serving within the confines of a relationship mean to Him (God), Cain's position and title would be revoked. As leaders, how do you see a correlation for sustainability and multiplicity of carrying out the call of God on your life, in relation to your brother/sister being your keeper?
- volunteer4:** I think those closest to us seem to hurt us the most because we have a different expectation of what they will or will not do. 21:04
- Moderator** left this message: 21:04
- Yes, but the bottom line is that people have to be trusted in every part of our lives, especially working in

- Have the loving mercy on your brothers/ sisters that God has on us. We can grow together. 21:25
- volunteer4:** The process to 'Trust' begins with me and you 21:25
- Moderator** left this message: 21:24
- With all that has been shared, what encouraging or affirming words can you give in this moment to someone from this session?
- Volunteer 9:** I am God's child and this is not meant for me 21:23
- volunteer4:** My hope and faith is in God alone and I will not be hindered by man's shortfalls 21:23
- Moderator** left this message: 21:23
- V4? V9?
- volunteer3:** God is merciful, loving and kind. Just love openly and keep working on building trust. 21:22
- volunteer6:** I am not worthy of this behavior and not allow it to sit with me longer than the encounter. 21:21
- Moderator** left this message: 21:20
- This concludes our first session. Each session will end with a positive thought. What is something affirming or encouraging you would say to yourself, if you could have spoken to yourself during the recalled time where you experienced mistrust?
- Moderator** left this message: 21:18
- I want to close by switching how we think about this brother/sister keeper concept. I want us to think along the terms of "My brother/sister is my keeper". Say this out loud. What doing this and seeing it this way does is that it opens up a space for real trust to begin to be established or grown. In spite of any mishaps or mishandlings of the past, allow yourself to sit with the thought that your brother/sister really does have your back. Your brother/sister has the best intentions of you in mind. Your brother/sister is really no different from you; you all need the same basic things. God has connected you to their life because without them, without something from them, the call of God on your life cannot completely bloom to the place of which it has been ordained. Your brother/sister is your keeper of affirmation, confirmation, validation, support, honor and respect. Being each other's keeper comes with the positional territory of being Leaders; Leaders who are charged to attend to each other's affairs as they are presented, and to store for each other the things that only we, other Leaders, can hold. We are called to be each others preventers of harm to good names and sometimes weary, but strong, souls. If we do not uphold this type of relationship, we are essentially carrying out the crime of Cain, speaking his language of turning a blind eye to that which God has entrusted us to do; be our brother's/sister's guard. So I want you to, silently, answer the question, "Am I a Trustworthy Keeper?"
- volunteer3:** I agree as well 21:18
- Moderator** left this message: 21:18
- You have to really answer the question, can you be trusted.
- volunteer6:** yes I agree moderator 21:18
- Moderator** left this message: 21:18
- The first place to begin is with the self.
- Moderator** left this message: 21:17
- Thank you all for your responses. Lack of trust is one of the foundation destroyers of much that is attempted to be built.
- Volunteer 9:** NO! All must earn trust! 21:16
- volunteer3:** We have to have open dialogues, to invite in authenticity. Dialogues where people know to leave the masks off, as well as the spirit of gossip and nosey-ness. 21:16
- volunteer4:** I believe when each one of us takes responsibility of truly being a keeper seriously 21:16
- Moderator** left this message: 21:16
- Yes, it does. But it not also lay a foundation for trust?

»Spiritual Community And Stress Reduction«

Chatzy

Visible contents as of 23 Sep 2013 21:34 UTC-04:00 (24 KB)

Page 1 of 1 · From 0 to 25450 · Newest posts at the top

Volunteer 9: night 21:32

Volunteer 9: good night 21:32

volunteer4: good night 21:32

volunteer3: good night all 21:31

volunteer6: good night 21:31

volunteer3: you too 21:31

Moderator left this message: 21:31
Everyone have a great night!!

volunteer4: thanks 21:31

volunteer3: ok 21:30

Moderator left this message: 21:30
Amen. Remember to check your emails

volunteer4: AMEN 21:30

Volunteer 9: amen 21:30

volunteer3: Amen 21:30

volunteer6: amen 21:30

volunteer6: thank you for allowing us to come together in a safe place 21:30

volunteer3: Amen 21:30

volunteer6: Thank you mother father god for this opportunity to heal and be healed 21:29

Moderator left this message: 21:29
Thank you. I am noting them.

Moderator left this message: 21:29
V6 go ahead and close us out.

volunteer3: Effective communication between leaders 21:29

volunteer6: forgiveness, Vulnerability 21:28

Moderator left this message: 21:28
Before V6 closes us with a typed prayer, please remember you have 20 minutes to email the following after this session has ended. 1) two words that describe how you feel in this moment 2) One to three sentences on how the session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, etc. Also, please remember to check your assigned email every Wednesday and Friday.

Moderator left this message: 21:28
Thank you.

volunteer6: God is a sovereign god and will help us through together. God forgave us and we should forgive ourselves and other for all things. 21:27

Moderator left this message: 21:27
As v6 is writing, Thank you all for your participation in this first session. Are there any proposed topics that you would like considered for session two?

Volunteer 9: Look in the mirror and tell yourself "I am trustworthy", then be it! 21:26

volunteer3: God made us all in his image and likeness. While we may have flaws, God is yet working on us.

Appendix 24

Guide for Session Two

Hello Everyone! Welcome to our second session!

We will give people a couple of minutes. Thank you for your patience.

Okay. Let's begin.

I want to start by reminding you to please give your reflections after each session, and remember to check your assigned email Wednesdays and Fridays.

Now, I'd like for us to take this moment and invite every part of ourselves into this time. I ask that you take a slow deep breath in through your nose, exhaling slowly through your mouth. As you focus on this screen and continue to breathe deep, take note of the thoughts that are going through your mind. Continue the deep breaths.

Now, take note of how your body feels. Your neck, your arms, your legs, your fingers; what is your body saying? Listen as you continue to take deep breaths.

Now begin to calm your thoughts, while taking deep breaths.

Your thoughts have been calmed.

Now let your arms drop to your side, while you continue deep breaths, and shake them lightly.

Now shake your whole body lightly, as you continue with deep breaths.

Take a deep breath in, as you let it out feel all tension leaving your body.

Take another deep breath in, this time let your shoulder relax as you exhale.

Type two words that describe you in this moment.

Thank you for sharing.

Last week our topic was "A Trustworthy Keeper". You were sent a reflection to read on Wednesday that spoke to rebuilding trust. Friday you were sent two readings on Shame and Rejection. Our topic for tonight is "Shameful Rejection".

As a Leader and reflecting upon how you have encountered these two things in your serving, I'd like to hear your thoughts about the readings. I'd like to begin with the reading from Exodus 2:11-14. The floor is open.

As this pertains to you, looking beyond reasoning or justification, how have you handled rejection from your peers, as it relates to the place in God that God has graced you to?

Now let's add shame to this. The reading reads: Shame prompts disconnection; and disconnection is, itself, experienced as shameful. Shame is the concealment power and enforcer of repression and dissociation. If we are able to recognize shame and pride to exist in relation to each other, as two parts of the same dynamic, we can begin to consider the dynamics that operate between them, and as variations of each other. Shame regulates by its power to create a very painful emotion, and it is this emotion that is usually called to mind by the word shame. This operates as an enforcer of self-valuation and social order. The pain of exposure and the reflexive construction of identify, for example, exhibit two sides of shame. This suggests that self-consciousness is itself a shame phenomenon. Personal appearance does not mean a body image, but means, rather, the appearance of oneself to oneself through the eyes and power of the other. With this being so, shame is seen as the emotion of self-consciousness, and therefore the boundary between self and other, like the boundary of the self's relationship with itself, that is regulated by shame. Just as with infants and children, relationships serve a multitude of crucial functions for adults. They exist not just for safety and security, but also for continual cognitive development, self-awareness, self-cohesion, intersubjectivity, identity and emotional growth. A lack of connectedness may be psycho-physiologically equated to dying, or at the very least a loss of vital energy. Therefore shame is a mechanism of the self that has the specific connotation of being disapproved, rejected, and cut off. As an active process, shame is an "admission of failure".

As a Leader in ministry, what did this bring up for you?

I want to open the floor for open discussion. You may talk about something from last week's session, from Wednesday's reflection, from today's discussion or whatever is on your heart.

I want to close with this, from the Amplified Bible, Acts 7:35 reads: "It was this very Moses whom they had denied (disowned and rejected), saying, Who made you our ruler (referee) and judge? whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer *and* redeemer, by *and* with the [protecting and helping] hand of the Angel that appeared to him in the bramblebush." Rejection is one of the most common and most neglected wounds of the soul. This wound can occur at any age or stage in life. How we REACT to the hurt that comes with it can either further complicate our journey, our ability to appropriately serve as a whole leader, or give us another space for growth and affirmation. Defeating rejection first begins with overcoming rejecting one's self. This is overcoming any part of yourself that has already been confirmed and validated by God. This is getting beyond YOUR disapproval of who God has already deemed you to be. All of who you are wanted and NEEDED, but you have to need, want and honor all of you FIRST. Moses knew who he was, in spite of any and all rejection he received. Accepting rejection assigns blame, and with blame comes manifested shame. Shame then becomes an unnecessary weight of your soul. Lay

aside every weight and RESPOND with patience as you walk out your Leadership journey with your brother's and sisters.

This concludes our second session. What is something affirming or encouraging you would say to yourself if you could go back to that moment when you felt rejected or shamed?

What uplifting words can you give to all in this moment?

Thank each of you for sharing.

As XXX prepares to type us out in prayer, please remember you have 20 minutes to email the following from your assigned email after this session has ended. 1) two words that describe how you feel in that moment 2) One to three sentences on how the session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, etc. In this email you can also submit a topic that you would like to suggest we use for one of the remaining sessions. Also, please remember to check your assigned email every Wednesday and Friday.

Have a great week!!

Appendix 25

Session Two Time Guide

8:30pm – Welcome

8:36 – Waiting

8:37pm – Begin

8:37pm – Breathing

8:42pm – Intro to new topic

9:08pm – Second reading

9:24pm – Closing

9:27pm – The Closing (self) Affirmation

9:28pm – All affirmation

9:29pm – Prayer

9:30pm – Have a great night

Wednesday reflection from First Session

Happy Wednesday:

After reading, please reply and place your ID in the subject line. Example: A Reflection - V1

Rebuilding Trust

I suspect many of us can relate to the feeling of clinging to a grievance. We've felt angry and indignant, and despite wanting to trust again, we just couldn't.

It's not easy to forget when someone breaks your trust, especially if you fear it might be broken again, but holding onto doubt is a surefire way to suffer.

Little mistrusts have a way of hurting worse than the suspicion that someone else might break their trust with you.

But the thing about mistrust is that it isn't the kind of thing you can just brush off through positive thinking. You can't make yourself feel trusting by telling yourself you should be, or rationalizing away your feelings.

The reality is it takes time and effort to trust again. To trust is a conscious choice. It takes courage to acknowledge how you feel and the willingness from the other person to hear and honor it. It takes a mutual commitment to move beyond what happened instead of reliving and rehashing.

But most importantly, it requires you to believe in the goodness and positive intentions of not only the person who lost trust with you, but also those who you come in contact with and work with in ministry.

YOU have to **believe** that person **can** treat you with respect and consideration, or else you'll never let your guard down. That's a painful place to be, and an unfruitful place to be stuck.

The thing about being defensive is that everything becomes a battle, and no one ever wins.

Of course this doesn't mean we can ever know for certain that someone won't hurt us again. The only way we can know if we're able to trust someone is by **first** giving them trust, not having them earn it.

That means we need to ask ourselves: Is this relationship worth that risk? Is it worth feeling vulnerable? Is it worth letting go of the story? And if it's worth it, what would it look like to give trust, starting right now?

There is an Irish saying, "**When mistrust comes in, love goes out.**"

You **CAN** extend that trust again. You owe it to yourself!!

Appendix 27

Reading for Second Session

Greetings,

Please forgive the lateness. All other Wednesday/Friday emails will be sent out in the mornings.

Best!

Reading one => Exodus 2: 11- 14

Reading two => Shame prompts disconnection; and disconnection is, itself, experienced as shameful. Shame is the concealment power and enforcer of repression and dissociation. If we are able to recognize shame and pride to exist in relation to each other, as two parts of the same dynamic, we can begin to consider the dynamics that operate between them, and as variations of each other. Shame regulates by its power to create a very painful emotion, and it is this emotion that is usually called to mind by the word shame. This operates as an enforcer of self-valuation and social order. The pain of exposure and the reflexive construction of identity, for example, exhibit two sides of shame. This suggests that self-consciousness is itself a shame phenomenon. Personal appearance does not mean a body image, but means, rather, the appearance of oneself to oneself through the eyes and power of the other. With this being so, shame is seen as the emotion of self-consciousness, and therefore the boundary between self and other, like the boundary of the self's relationship with itself, that is regulated by shame. Just as with infants and children, relationships serve a multitude of crucial functions for adults. They exist not just for safety and security, but also for continual cognitive development, self-awareness, self-cohesion, intersubjectivity, identity and emotional growth. A lack of connectedness may be psycho-physiologically equated to dying, or at the very least a loss of vital energy. Therefore shame is a mechanism of the self that has the specific connotation of being disapproved, rejected, and cut off. As an active process, shame is an "admission of failure".

Guide for Session Three

10/7/13

Hello Everyone! Welcome to our third session!

Let's wait a couple of minutes for people to enter. Thank you for your patience.

Let's begin.

Please type two words that describe how you feel in this moment.

Thank you for sharing.

Our topic for tonight is "CIAB Sabotage". CIAB stands for Crabs-In-A-Barrel

We'd like to hear what came up for you concerning the readings, beginning with the non-biblical one. Please feel free to respond to each others comments or ask each other questions based on comments given. Concerning the reading, as a Leader and the experiences you have had, what came up for you?

Sabotage, ultimately, is slowing something down. It takes place when a person deliberately tries to weaken another person, organization, or thing through being rebellious, a stumbling block, difficult, troublesome, out of order, or destructive. A seed of both CIAB and sabotage is insecurity. Conscious or sub-conscious insecurity manifests itself in many different ways in our lives. But no matter what way it shows up, it ultimately slows the progress of something down that's pertaining to our quest to be whole Leaders. This stands true whether we are the crab trying to escape the barrel or if we're the one being pulled back.

Share with us your thoughts about the passage read in Titus 1: 10 – 11. ¹⁰For there are many disorderly *and* unruly men who are idle (vain, empty) *and* misleading talkers and self-deceivers *and* deceivers of others. [This is true] especially of those of the circumcision party [who have come over from Judaism].

¹¹Their mouths must be stopped, for they are mentally distressing *and* subverting whole families by teaching what they ought not to teach, for the purpose of getting base advantage *and* disreputable gain. (AMP)

I'd like to propose the thought that although I believe this passage speaks directly about church unity, it also speaks to the attempts of distraction and derailment of Leaders. I believe that in order to create a space for dissention, there only needs to be one hint of questionability of a Leader.

As Leaders how do you see a way of counteracting attempts to break trust and initiate sabotage in the life of another Leader, and therefore accordingly, a ministry?

Thank each of you for sharing.

I want to now open the room for any free-flow conversation that anyone might want to have. Is there something you would like to share or get feedback about concerning anything we have discussed up to this point?

Thank you all for sharing.

This concludes our third session. If you could have spoken to yourself during your perceived time of CIAB or sabotage as a Leader, what are some positive words you would say to yourself?

What uplifting words can you give to another Leader, in this moment, concerning their experience(s) with CIAB or sabotage?

What can you personally do to assist with not perpetuating CIAB or sabotage?

These are great. Thank you.

Please type two words that describe how you feel in this moment.

Thank you for sharing.

Please give us one to three sentences on how this session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, unsettling, etc.

Thank you for sharing.

As we prepare to close, V3 please prepare to write us out in prayer.

Remember to check your assigned email Wednesday and Friday.

Thank each of your for your participation! Please give us one to three sentences on how this session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, unsettling, etc.

V3 please go ahead and close us out.

Appendix 29

Time Guide for Session Three

8:30pm – Welcome

8:33pm – Begin

8:33pm – Two words

8:35pm – Topic

8:36pm – Non-Biblical

8:47pm – Sabotage reading

8:49pm – Titus

9:00pm – Propose

9:01pm – Question

9:05pm – Free Flow

9:17pm – Conclude

9:18pm – Word to Self

9:20pm – Word to others

9:22pm – Two words

9:24pm – One to three sentences

9:29pm – Remind to check email

9:30pm – Prayer

Session Three

10/7/13

Chatzy

»Spiritual Community And Stress Reduction«

Chatzy

Visible contents as of 7 Oct 2013 21:34 UTC-04:00 (29 KB)
Page 1 of 1 · From 0 to 29820 · Newest posts at the bottom

Moderator cleared the room 20:25
Moderator left this message: 20:28
Good evening! Welcome to our third session. We're going to wait a few minutes for others. Thank you for your patience.
Volunteer 9: Good evening 20:28
volunteer8: Hello 20:30
Moderator left this message: 20:31
Welcome V9 & V8.
volunteer4 joined the chat 20:31
volunteer4: Hello 20:31
Moderator left this message: 20:31
Welcome V4.
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth joined the chat 20:32
Moderator left this message: 20:32
Welcome V10.
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: good evening everyone 20:33
Moderator left this message: 20:33
Let's wait a couple of minutes for people to enter. Thank you for your patience.
volunteer8: Hello Volunteer 10 20:34
volunteer8: Hello V10 20:34
volunteer3 joined the chat 20:34
Moderator left this message: 20:34
Okay. Let's begin.
Moderator left this message: 20:34
Welcome V3
Moderator left this message: 20:35
Please type two words that describe how you feel in this moment.
volunteer4: excited and relaxed 20:35
Volunteer 9: inquisitive and curious 20:35
volunteer8: alert and relaxed 20:36
volunteer3 joined the chat 20:36
volunteer3: Good Evening 20:37
volunteer3: Frustrated and Excited 20:37
Moderator left this message: 20:37

us12.chatzy.com/66631660173064

1/7

Good evening V3. We are typing our two words. 20:37

Moderator left this message: 20:37
and V10

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: tired questionable 20:38

Moderator left this message: 20:38
Thank you all for sharing.

Moderator left this message: 20:38
Our topic for tonight is "CIAB Sabotage". CIAB stands for Crabs-In-A-Barrel

Moderator left this message: 20:38
We'd like to hear what came up for you concerning the readings, beginning with the non-biblical one. Please feel free to respond to each others comments or ask each other questions based on comments given. Concerning the reading, as a Leader and the experiences you have had, what came up for you?

volunteer4: How prevalent CIAB is in the church. 20:40

Volunteer 9: In the community in which I grew up, I've always heard that the blacks in the area were like crabs in a barrel so you must keep your business to yourself and dont share with anyone else 20:40

Volunteer 9: In every area of business and church, I was taught the CIAB motto and watch my back 20:41

Moderator left this message: 20:41
V4, can you expound a little bit? What makes you make that statement?

volunteer3: I have experienced discouragement by others who don't want to see me succeed, particularly those who are afraid to make a change in their own lives. 20:41

volunteer4: Everyone wants to succeed, but is fearful of others succeeding. I agree V9The idea was If others succeed it makes one look weak, inadequate or lazy 20:42

volunteer8: I have heard that term all my life. I did not believe it refered to just blacks. Just anyone who should be for you but is envious or jealous of your success 20:42

Moderator left this message: 20:44
V3 how have you seen your desire to succeed become a challenge to others?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I alway heard that saying that people will always try to keep you down, especially if they are not doing anything productive for themselves. 20:44

Moderator left this message: 20:45
Pertaining to V4's comment, what do you think is at the root of this fear?

Volunteer 9: True V10 20:45

volunteer8: I have definitely experenced it in the church from others who believe that they are being overlook and I am getting attention or recognition they would have .iked for themself 20:45

Volunteer 9: The feeling of inadequcy can promote fear 20:45

Moderator left this message: 20:46
Excellent point V8. Do you think that is not more prevalent within the African-American community, or the Af-Am church?

volunteer3: When I have shared my plans to apply to different schools or to move, people responded with negative scenarios that could occur. For example, they would say that only certain people are allowed in certain school, and they would say a host of negative things about certain cities I thought about moving to. 20:47

Moderator left this message: 20:47
Good point V9. But who determines what inadequacy looks like?

volunteer8: I have noticed it in my work as well. Internal romotion within industry can often lead to bitter infighting 20:47

volunteer4: Inadequacy is determined by the environment and the people that are in it. 20:48

Volunteer 9: Church is the place where a blue collar worker can hold a white collar position and others envy the titles, positions, or anything that can be seen as higher up 20:48

volunteer4: I Agree V9. 20:49

Volunteer 9: V8 yes, ive worked in a system where internal promotions were given to obviously favored candidates that caused terribles striffe 20:49

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I think it happen in both the community and in the church, sometimes it fear of one moving on to the next level and you being left or feeling left behind 20:49

volunteer8: V9, according to the reading church is the place in the Af Am community where we can in fact be validated within our community irresective of what white America or "mainstream culture" say about you 20:50

Moderator left this message: 20:51

Exactly, but in terms of the church, that can change and set 'standards' how do we deal with this among Leaders?

volunteer3: Sometimes people are upset because of the fact that people are favored for some reason other than because they deserved the promotions. Some people where a title and don't do much of anything. In that case, I don't think that the person envious would be a crab in a barrel. 20:51

Volunteer 9: how we deal as leaders is that must begin with absolute respect for all leadership, not pick and choose whom we will honor 20:52

volunteer8: Bishop Flunder has said it this way. "it's not a promotion it is more responsibility. We often envy the title but would never do the work it requires 20:52

volunteer4: I feel we should focus less on titles and more on building character in people. This will entail set better standards. 20:53

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Yes V8 I agree 20:53

volunteer3: It's more responsibility, but some people carry the title, but not their responsibilities. 20:53

Volunteer 9: On any given level of leadership, there is work to do and what can make it hard is someone being envious over the fact you stay late to sweep the pastors office! It's silliness that must be squashed 20:54

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: how do we then change that? 20:54

Moderator left this message: 20:54

Hold that question.

Moderator left this message: 20:55

We're going to come back to it.

Moderator left this message: 20:55

Let's move to the second part.

Moderator left this message: 20:55

Sabotage, ultimately, is slowing something down. It takes place when a person deliberately tries to weaken another person, organization, or thing through being rebellious, a stumbling block, difficult, troublesome, out of order, or destructive. A seed of both CIAB and sabotage is insecurity. Conscious or sub-conscious insecurity manifests itself in many different ways in our lives. But no matter what way it shows up, it ultimately slows the progress of something down that's pertaining to our quest to be whole Leaders. This stands true whether we are the crab trying to escape the barrel or if we're the one being pulled back.

Moderator left this message: 20:56

Share with us your thoughts about the passage read in Titus 1: 10 – 11. 10 For there are many disorderly and unruly men who are idle (vain, empty) and misleading talkers and self-deceivers and deceivers of others. [This is true] especially of those of the circumcision party [who have come over from Judaism].

11 Their mouths must be stopped, for they are mentally distressing and subverting whole families by teaching what they ought not to teach, for the purpose of getting base advantage and disreputable gain. (AMP)

Volunteer 9: The scripture is much like what I said earlier, silliness and foolish talk must be squashed because it slows the progress of the work 20:59

volunteer8: Learning to disagree without tearing each other down is a skill that would do great good in this instance. Tearing each other down is more about trying to make yourself look bigger more than about whether the other person is right or wrong 21:00

Moderator left this message: 21:00

Not everyone at once. 😊

volunteer3: I am thinking about propheliars and mask wearing people who are teaching the wrong things in order to gain something selfish. 21:01

volunteer4: The scripture points out that in our culture we have to be conscious of those who speak words that entice us, but break one down. On one hand they encourage, but on the other hand they work to destroy 21:02

Moderator left this message: 21:02

How do you propose implementing that skill/

Volunteer 9: I see this scripture as those that spread gossip, and yes V9 the prophaliars that really are not speaking what the head of the house is speaking, they are not in one accord with the house 21:03

Moderator left this message: 21:04

I'd like to propose the thought that although I believe this passage speaks directly about church unity, it also speaks to the attempts of distraction and derailment of Leaders. I believe that in order to create a space for dissention, there only needs to be one hint of questionability of a Leader.

volunteer3: You're V9 21:04

Moderator left this message: 21:04

As Leaders how do you see a way of counteracting attempts to break trust and initiate sabotage in the life of another Leader, and therefore accordingly, a ministry?

volunteer8: To imlement that skill would first require that the leaders know what the vision is and either buy into the vision of that house or move on to another lace where you can share in and work toward achieving that vision. DOn't stay there and try to divide and conquer 21:05

Moderator left this message: 21:07

Repost:

I'd like to propose the thought that although I believe this passage speaks directly about church unity, it also speaks to the attempts of distraction and derailment of Leaders. I believe that in order to create a space for dissention, there only needs to be one hint of questionability of a Leader.

As Leaders how do you see a way of counteracting attempts to break trust and initiate sabotage in the life of another Leader, and therefore accordingly, a ministry?

Volunteer 9: Yes, V8, we must ALL buy into the vision, One church, One Voice, One Vision 21:07

volunteer8: First we must make room for each others humanity. Leaders are those who stand up and decide to ut themself on the line. Often times we judge our leaders too harshly. On the other hand, if the leaders cannot embrace their own humanity and retend to be demigods then... 21:08

volunteer3: I think that we need to be accountable and remember our commitment to the church. We must learn to trust one another by getting to know one another, praying together, helping eachother, etc. 21:09

volunteer4: to always have integrity, be open to discussion without being in FIGHT mode. Never provide an opportunity for doubt regarding one's character. 21:09

volunteer4: Connect spiritually 21:10

volunteer3: It is important for leaders to get to know another better, not just the cliques that they associate with. 21:10

Moderator left this message: 21:10
Thank each of you for sharing.

Volunteer 9: V3 that sounds too much like right; the issue i see in your scenario goes back to a matter of trusting another to pray together 21:11

Moderator left this message: 21:11
I want to now open the room for any free-flow conversation that anyone might want to have. Is there something you would like to share or get feedback about concerning anything we have discussed up to this point? We can now go back to the question that was asked by V10, I believe.

volunteer8: We and the other leaders with us are human. We will fail at some things. Being transarent with each other (using discretion) allows others to see the grace of God manifested in us. 21:12

volunteer3: Also, people need to learn to respect themselves and the pastor, particularly those who have inside scoop. Some people are like water faucets. 21:13

Volunteer 9: Respect must go across the board; respect the pastor and the appointments that she has placed 21:14

volunteer4: Respecting doesn't always mean one agrees with those choices. 21:15

volunteer3: Yes, but the people with the appointments need to honor the pastor by not spreading the pastor's business. 21:15

Volunteer 9: Everyone has a place where you are needed and hold value, stay in your lane and stop trying to figure out what every other dept is doing 21:15

volunteer8: In response to V10's question: we can squash some of the silliness by valuing and treating every asect of ministry as equally imortant to the Kingdom. The ushers when doing their job well can reach a sermon to a visitor without saying a word. Many of us will stand ten times to cheer each time we say the astor's name but will ass a deacon without saying hello 21:15

volunteer8: my "p" seem to not working well. please excuse me 21:17

Volunteer 9: I never said that you must agree 100% but your actions must be of respect nevertheless 21:18

Moderator left this message: 21:18
Thank you all for sharing.

volunteer3: you're welcome 21:18

Volunteer 9: V8 I have seen it happen many times where many are passed over without a word of acknowledgement 21:18

Moderator left this message: 21:18
This concludes our third session. If you could have spoken to yourself during your perceived time of CIAB or sabotage as a Leader, what are some positive words you would say to yourself?

Volunteer 9: relax; its not about me; release 21:19

volunteer8: "you are a valid and valuable member of this community and you matter. Stay put, this is where God wants you to be. 21:20

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: continue to be encourage no matter what and not allow your fears to get in the way of what God has called you too. 21:20

volunteer4: don't allow yourself to be hindered by someone else's insecurities. 21:20

volunteer3: I must trust in God to lead me. God will never leave me nor forsake me." 21:21

volunteer8: V10 Yes!! 21:21

Moderator left this message: 21:21
What uplifting words can you give to another Leader, in this moment, concerning their experience(s) with CIAB or sabotage?

volunteer3: Don't give up. Do your best and be the example. 21:22

volunteer4: Stay in the race and remain focused on what GOD has for you to do. 21:22

Volunteer 9: Be not weary in your well doing 21:22

volunteer8: Do what God has called you to do. In the end you win! 21:22

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: remain focused and be a positive example. 21:23

Moderator left this message: 21:23

What can you personally do to assist with not perpetuating CIAB or sabotage?

volunteer4: always be encouraging to others and be mindful of those who attempting to sabotage. 21:24

Volunteer 9: Be an encourager 21:24

volunteer3: minister to those crabs 21:25

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I can encourage others and help by supporting them out of the barrel. 21:25

volunteer8: remembering that it will take all of us to do this work. 21:25

Moderator left this message: 21:25

These are great. Thank you.

volunteer3: You're welcome! 21:26

Moderator left this message: 21:26

Please type two words that describe how you feel in this moment.

volunteer8: encouraged and eaceful 21:26

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: also identified with those that are still in the barrel to let them know their not alone but can make it out. 21:26

volunteer8: encouraged and peaceful 21:26

volunteer3: tired and satisfied 21:27

volunteer4: enlightened and happy 21:27

Volunteer 9: yet inquisitive (of how we can make things better) and encouraged 21:27

Moderator left this message: 21:28

Thank you for sharing.

volunteer3: 😊 21:28

Moderator left this message: 21:28

As we prepare to close, V3 please prepare to write us out in prayer.

volunteer8: V9 keep encouraging yourself and others 21:28

Moderator left this message: 21:29

Remember to check your assigned email Wednesday and Friday.

Volunteer 9: I will; this will make me think beyond this forum 21:29

Moderator left this message: 21:30

Thank each of your for your participation! Please give us one to three sentences on how this session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, unsettling, etc. in an email no more than 20 minutes after this session.

Moderator left this message: 21:30

V3 please go ahead and close us out.

volunteer3: Lord God thank you for allowing us to come together to discuss ways to improve ourselves and to build up your Kingdom. Help us to love one another, be patient with one another and help each other. Let us remember what the focus should be on, which is your will. In the mighty and matchless name of Jesus, Amen! 21:30

10/7/13

Chatzy

| | |
|--|-------|
| volunteer8 : amen | 21:31 |
| volunteer4 : Amen | 21:31 |
| Moderator left this message: Amen! Everyone have a great night and week. | 21:31 |
| volunteer3 : You as well | 21:31 |
| volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth : amen | 21:31 |
| volunteer4 : youu too | 21:31 |
| volunteer8 joined the chat | 21:32 |
| volunteer8 : thank you. You too | 21:32 |
| volunteer4 left the chat | 21:32 |
| Volunteer 9 : amen and good night | 21:34 |

Appendix 31

Guide for Session Four

10/15/13

Hello Everyone! Welcome to our last session!

Remember Thursday, Oct 17th, will be the wrap-up and feedback day; same time.

To begin our time today, I'd like for us to start with our two words. Please type two words that describe you in this moment.

Now I'd like to take this moment and invite every part of you into this time. I ask that you close your eyes and take in a slow, deep breath through your nose, exhaling through your mouth THREE times. Type "Present" once done.

As we embody all of our parts, all of Self, we will experience a sense of connectedness to all the Selves around us. Let us begin with our topic.

Our topic for tonight is "Race, Religion & Relationship"

Please share with us what came up for you from the readings. Let's begin with the non-biblical reading. As a Leader and the experiences you have had, what came up for you?

Tell us your thoughts about the passage read in Matthew 9:10-13, as well as how you see it relating to the non-biblical reading we just discussed. (The Message) 10-11 Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew's house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. "What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riffraff?" 12-13 Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."

This passage is known as part of the call of Matthew, but I believe it also speaks to other things. Leaders are God's gifts to the church and their ministry. Their ability for it is God's gift to them. (Matthew Henry Commentary) Matthew quickly understood that although he was holding a Leadership position, of sorts, the real assignment was to serve in a way that brought people to Christ. The same stands applicable for Leaders today. Even if this means breaking some passed down traditions that have marginalized those WITHIN the same leadership positions that you were graced to hold; particularly those who have adopted a Pharisee (conceited, I'm better than) mentality. Furthermore, aside from associating 'sin' to represent a sickness, this passage refers to these people, the Pharisees, as 'sick' as well. However I'd like to propose that 'sick' goes beyond these traditionally identified things, and although sick is traditionally associated with a

non-positive thing, it is in fact the greatest opportunity when acknowledged and identified. I propose that sick also speaks to one that is experiencing some type of unpleasant feeling from which they may even find themselves operating from. The feeling and operation coincide with the presence of emotions that are disordered or unsettled. This is how we have a form of what is called Wounded Healers, i.e. Wounded Leaders. How then, do you propose as Leaders we begin to move beyond the surface things (company kept by our brothers/sisters, who serves where) and get to the main thing of being our brother/sister's keeper, upholder, confidant? How do we get beyond the mistrust, rejection, sabotage attempts and become truly unified in Spirit as Unwounded Leaders doing Kingdom building? For the reality is that even Leaders need a doctor, and that doctor is one another, and the medicine is mercy.

This concludes our fourth session. What would you say to the Wounded Leader that sits within you at this moment?

What would you say to your Wounded Leader brother or sister in this moment?

These are great. Thank you.

Please type two words that describe how you feel in this moment.

Thank you for sharing.

As we prepare to close, V9 please prepare to write us out in prayer.

Remember to check your email tomorrow, Wednesday, for the reflection. Also, please remember to sign into the chat on Thursday (8:30pm), for our wrap-up and feedback. This probably won't take the entire hour.

Lastly, PLEASE go to your email after this session, give one to three sentences on how this session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, unsettling, etc.

I thank each of you again for your participation.

V9 please go ahead and close us out.

Appendix 32

Time Guide for Session Four

8:30pm – Welcome

8:33pm – Begin

8:33pm – Two words

8:35pm – Breaths

8:36pm – Self

8:37pm – Topic

8:37pm – First reading

8:52pm – Second reading

9:07pm – Expound second reading

9:10pm – Repost questions from expound

9:20pm – Conclude; self encourage

9:22pm – Other encourage

9:24pm – Thank you

9:24pm – Two words

9:26pm – Thank you

9:26pm – Prepare prayer

9:27pm – Reminder

9:28pm – Lastly

9:28pm – Thank you

9:29pm – Prayer

Appendix 33

Session Four

10/15/13

Chatzy

»Spiritual Community And Stress Reduction«

Chatzy

Visible contents as of 15 Oct 2013 21:34 UTC-04:00 (29 KB)
Page 1 of 1 · From 0 to 30276 · Newest posts at the bottom

Moderator cleared the room 20:11
Volunteer 9 joined the chat 20:27
Moderator left this message: 20:27
Welcome V9.
Volunteer 9: Good evening 20:28
volunteer6 joined the chat 20:29
Moderator left this message: 20:29
Welcome V6.
volunteer6: Good evening 20:29
Moderator left this message: 20:30
We're going to wait a few minutes. Thank you for your patience.
Moderator left this message: 20:34
Two more minutes, and we'll begin.
Moderator left this message: 20:36
Hello Everyone! Welcome to our last session!
Moderator left this message: 20:36
Remember Thursday, Oct 17th, will be the wrap-up and feedback day; same time.
Moderator left this message: 20:37
To begin our time today, I'd like for us to start with our two words. Please type two words that describe you in this moment.
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth joined the chat 20:37
Moderator left this message: 20:37
Welcome V10.
Moderator left this message: 20:37
To begin our time today, I'd like for us to start with our two words. Please type two words that describe you in this moment.
volunteer6: hurt confused 20:38
Volunteer 9: ravenous and attentive 20:38
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: sad heavy 20:38
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Greets everyone. 20:38
Moderator left this message: 20:39
Thank you for sharing.
Moderator left this message: 20:39
Now I'd like to take this moment and invite every part of you into this time. I ask that you close your eyes and take in a slow, deep breath through your nose, exhaling through your mouth THREE times. Type "Present" once done.
Volunteer 9: greeting 10 20:39
Volunteer 9: present 20:40
volunteer6: present 20:41

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1/7

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Present 20:41

Moderator left this message: 20:41
 As we embody all of our parts, all of Self, we will experience a sense of connectedness to all the Selves around us. Let us begin with our topic.

volunteer3 joined the chat 20:41

Moderator left this message: 20:42
 Welcome V3.

volunteer3: Thank you 20:42

Moderator left this message: 20:42
 V3 before we move forward, can you please type two words that describe you in this moment.

volunteer3: hopeful healthy 20:42

volunteer3: Present 20:42

Moderator left this message: 20:43
 Thank you.

Moderator left this message: 20:43
 Our topic for tonight is "Race, Religion & Relationship"

Moderator left this message: 20:43
 Please share with us what came up for you from the readings. Let's begin with the non-biblical reading. As a Leader and the experiences you have had, what came up for you?

Volunteer 9: Fridays reading made me think of how people behave toward you when you have done nothing to them but because their friends have an issue with you 20:46

Moderator left this message: 20:47
 v9, what do you mean by behave towards you?

volunteer3: The reading reminds me of the disappointments that I have come across at work, where they claim to be an equal employment opportunity employer, yet only seem to give promotions and raises to whites. 20:47

Volunteer 9: I have experienced negative experiences from people I barely know because someone else may have clashed with me 20:47

Moderator left this message: 20:48
 V3, can you say a little more and relate it to ministry? Have you witnessed an overlap of any sort?

Moderator left this message: 20:49
 V9, are these people Leaders or non-Leaders, and how has it effected your ability to uphold your duties as a Leader?

Volunteer 9: You asked a question that if our fellow leaders are a part of us; I know the answer should be yes but sometimes it feels like a NO 20:49

volunteer3: Ministry wise i have not experienced racism, but i have experience mistrust because of confidential information given to certain leaders, being leaked. 20:50

Volunteer 9: I havent experienced racism ministry wise but I will note there is a slight difference in the way I "hear" a leader of another race 20:51

Moderator left this message: 20:51
 V3, or anyone else, do you think that the frameworks of religion has any effect on this? Meaning, how we are taught to operate within its confines?

Moderator left this message: 20:52
 V6, V10, do you have any input on this reading?

- Volunteer 9:** I dont quite understand? 20:54
- Moderator** left this message: 20:54
- Okay. Let's move one.
- volunteer3:** I think that it may be human nature. I think that when we are confined to something as humans, it leads us to act out. 20:54
- volunteer6:** The reading brings up trust and abuse issues for me 20:54
- volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth:** I have not experience any racism in ministry, however sometimes i question rather or not the truth is always being told. 20:55
- Moderator** left this message: 20:55
- Sorry, V9, what is it that you don't understand?
- Volunteer 9:** I believe i have better understanding with the answers given 20:55
- Moderator** left this message: 20:56
- V6 is that general trust and abuse issues or within ministry?
- Moderator** left this message: 20:56
- Okay, V9.
- Volunteer 9:** I believe that churchd people have acted within confined routines for a long period of time, lending to mistrust of anyone outside their learned norm 20:57
- Moderator** left this message: 20:57
- Tell us your thoughts about the passage read in Matthew 9:10-13, as well as how you see it relating to the non-biblical reading we just discussed. (The Message) 10-11 Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew's house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. "What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riffraff?" 12-13 Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."
- volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth:** when i look at relationships i look at myself, when I look at leadership i look at myself. I can't say what i dont like about it if i don't change within myself what i don't like. 20:57
- Moderator** left this message: 20:58
- Excellent point V10.
- Moderator** left this message: 21:00
- Anyone else?
- Volunteer 9:** I liked the message version; It shows that we can not be hypocrites 21:00
- volunteer3:** We must accept and love people just as they are., not only make room for those who have some type of status. 21:01
- Volunteer 9:** We can not stick with just those like us, already have an understanding but reach beyond our norms 21:01
- volunteer6:** I agree with v10 and adding to that when changing the things I dont like with in myself not to get upset with those have not reached that point in their lives. 21:02
- volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth:** i like the position Jesus took here in saying that I don't only attend to one type of people. here he is clearly saying I'm here to help the sick not the healthily. what healthy person needs healing???
- Moderator** left this message: 21:04
- Do you think that we are healthy, whole Leaders?
- volunteer3:** Also, everyone is "sick" so we must humble ourselves. 21:04
- Volunteer 9:** Piggybacking off V3, status is what gets noticed more by churchd people; Meaining, one would run to aid the pastor but question why they should serve the homeless 21:04

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I will translate that into I won't only serve the healthy and rich. I will serve and be amongst the sick and poor. 21:04

Moderator left this message: 21:05

V9, or anyone else, where do you think that mentality comes from?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I agree v3 21:05

volunteer6: As a teenager going to the baptist church at the end of service the preacher would say something to the effect of going to highways and by ways to reach the people. However I don't see that happening and I didn't see that happening ! 21:06

Volunteer 9: I'm unsure; I didn't grow up with that mentality; My family housed the poor and orphans without government assistance 21:06

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I will never be to big to not serve those who are less fortune. 21:06

volunteer3: Amen 21:07

Moderator left this message: 21:07

I'd like to pose this question again, do you think that we are healthy, whole Leaders?

volunteer3: No 21:07

Volunteer 9: no; i know there is more work to be done within me 21:08

volunteer3: I believe that we all have issues that need to be worked out. 21:08

Moderator left this message: 21:08

I'd like to expound on the this.

Moderator left this message: 21:09

This passage is known as part of the call of Matthew, but I believe it also speaks to other things. Leaders are God's gifts to the church and their ministry. Their ability for it is God's gift to them. (Matthew Henry Commentary) Matthew quickly understood that although he was holding a Leadership position, of sorts, the real assignment was to serve in a way that brought people to Christ. The same stands applicable for Leaders today. Even if this means breaking some passed down traditions that have marginalized those WITHIN the same leadership positions that you were graced to hold; particularly those who have adopted a Pharisee (conceited, I'm better than) mentality. Furthermore, aside from associating 'sin' to represent a sickness, this passage refers to these people, the Pharisees, as 'sick' as well. However I'd like to propose that 'sick' goes beyond these traditionally identified things, and although sick is traditionally associated with a non-positive thing, it is in fact the greatest opportunity when acknowledged and identified. I propose that sick also speaks to one that is experiencing some type of unpleasant feeling from which they may even find themselves operating from. The feeling and operation coincide with the presence of emotions that are disordered or unsettled. This is how we have a form of what is called Wounded Healers, i.e. Wounded Leaders. How then, do you propose as Leaders we begin to move beyond the surface things (company kept by our brothers/sisters, who serves where) and get to the main thing of being our brother/sister's keeper, upholder, confidant? How do we get beyond the mistrust, rejection, sabotage attempts and become truly unified in Spirit as Unwounded Leaders doing Kingdom building? For the reality is that even Leaders need a doctor, and that doctor is one another, and the medicine is mercy.

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: speaking for myself, I believe that I'm growing in that area. I wont say completely whole. 21:09

volunteer6: Some of us may be healthy and whole as individuals but not as a leadership body. We have to be whole and healthy for us/we to be whole and healthy 21:09

Moderator left this message: 21:10

Great points.

volunteer3: I think we must be willing and start building trust with ourselves and one another. 21:11

volunteer4 joined the chat 21:11

Moderator left this message: 21:12

Welcome V4. 21:12

volunteer4: Good Evening 21:12

volunteer3: we must get the help that we need 21:12

volunteer6: it has to come from the head being the pastor 21:12

Moderator left this message: 21:12

V4, please read the expounded upon above from the biblical reading and join in.

Volunteer 9: I believe healthy and whole are not exclusive individuals, able to see their wrongs and not be arrogant with their rights; they are trustworthy and trusting, they build up others rather than tearing down 21:13

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: step out on faith and allow God to be our protector, be willing to grow in areas that we have close down. 21:13

volunteer3: It takes a commitment and challenge to begin to trust ourselves and one another 21:14

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: amen 21:14

volunteer6: whole and healthiness has to be promoted as a good thing in the church 21:14

Moderator left this message: 21:14

V10, and anyone else, how do you suggest opening areas we've closed down, being that many Leaders are resistant to seeking help, due to trust issues?

Moderator left this message: 21:15

What would this commitment and trust look like?

volunteer4: We must begin to see the challenges and deal with them honestly. we'll never grow being in denial 21:16

volunteer6: starting with self and one other person that you not normally trust or speak with 21:16

Moderator left this message: 21:16

V6, why do you see it as the Pastor's responsibility?

volunteer3: we cannot help anyone else until we get help for ourselves. 21:16

Volunteer 9: The commitment would look like the leadership being strong enough to release past hurts and begin to trust with small things 21:17

Moderator left this message: 21:17

V4, but if we're suppressing, how do you propose we get them to the surface?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: as leaders it all starts with us, action speaks louder than words. by showing that i will to trust again and if it means going public to share where i was and what i willing to do to start over again. my past is just that my past, if i continue to allow it to dictate my future than i don't see where or how i will grow spiritually 21:17

volunteer4: leading by example is still key. if the leader is not promoting positive commitment to trust then the followers see that and will unfortunately do likewise. 21:18

volunteer4: agree V10. 21:19

Volunteer 9: Reading back to to a comment from V4 "we'll never grow being in denial"! How true!! 21:19

Moderator left this message: 21:19

Excellent point v4.

volunteer6: Leaders as well and the congregation are looking to the pastor for the what's next or how would are you (pastor) acting towards wholeness and healthiness. 21:19

Moderator left this message: 21:20

Is there anything anyone wants to add about either reading and how they spoke to them?

Volunteer 9: Stop denying there are problems within the leadership, within self, deal with them and stop allowing them to festering into a nasty boil that will eventually burst and infect more 21:20

Moderator left this message: 21:20
Got it. Thank you V6.

Moderator left this message: 21:22
Thank you all for sharing.

Moderator left this message: 21:22
This concludes our fourth session. What would you say to the Wounded Leader that sits within you at this moment?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Free yourselves 21:23

Volunteer 9: You know I dont know; perhaps simply "hang in there and you have a friend in me" 21:23

volunteer6: I would say keep striving towards being whole and healthy and living your life as commanded by god. 21:24

volunteer3: God is with you 21:25

Moderator left this message: 21:25
V3, V4?

volunteer4: Find peace in God and direction to people who your Spirit shows you are authentic 21:25

Moderator left this message: 21:25
What would you say to your Wounded Leader brother or sister in this moment?

volunteer4: I love you and will support you in deed and not just in words. 21:26

volunteer3: I have your back 21:27

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: what we can't do alone we can do together. I'm here 21:27

Volunteer 9: All will be well 21:27

volunteer6: I remember being where you are and if you allow me i can share with you what i been through to help you through and over 21:27

Moderator left this message: 21:27
v6?

Moderator left this message: 21:28
These are great. Thank you.

Moderator left this message: 21:28
Please type two words that describe how you feel in this moment.

volunteer3: You're welcome. 21:28

volunteer3: sleepy satisfied 21:28

volunteer6: encouraged uplifted 21:28

Volunteer 9: hungry and wondering 21:29

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: uplifted satisfied 21:29

volunteer4: peaceful and empowered 21:29

Moderator left this message: 21:29
Thank you for sharing.

Moderator left this message: 21:30
As we prepare to close, V9 please prepare to write us out in prayer.

Moderator left this message: 21:30
Remember to check your email tomorrow, Wednesday, for the reflection. Also, please remember to sign into the chat on Thursday (8:30pm), for our wrap-up and feedback. This probably won't take the entire hour.

Moderator left this message: 21:30

Lastly, PLEASE go to your email after this session, give one to three sentences on how this session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, unsettling, etc.

Moderator left this message: 21:31

I thank each of you again for your participation.

Moderator left this message: 21:31

V9 please go ahead and close us out.

Volunteer 9: Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that we can live in Your light and walk in Your truth. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen. 21:32

volunteer3: Amen! 21:32

volunteer6: amen 21:32

volunteer4: amen 21:32

Moderator left this message: 21:33

Amen, and good night to each of you.

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: amen 21:33

volunteer4: GN 21:33

volunteer3: Good Night! 21:33

volunteer6: gn 21:33

Wrap-up Guide

10/17/13

I'd like to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedule to assist me with completing my project.

Before I ask for feedback, who HAS NOT read the last Wednesday reflection?

Thank you for your honesty. Please do so and send your initials as soon as possible.

Now, I'd like for you to give me some feedback of your experience with the group sessions. I will first ask some questions. Then you will have a space to speak freely. Lastly I will inform you as to what the hopeful outcome was for the project. As much as possible, I would like an answer from each person, please. Your answers don't need to be long, only truthful.

- 1) Did you like the online chat; the technology of it? Yes or No
- 2) How did the online chat work for you? Or, did it not; how not?
- 3) Was the anonymity component helpful for you?
- 4) Without being anonymous, would you have participated in this particular project?
- 5) What, if anything, would you do differently in conducting this same project?
- 6) What was most helpful in the content/material from this project?
- 7) What was the least helpful in the content/material from this project?
- 8) What, if anything, made this project difficult?
- 9) What is the most helpful thing you gained from this project?
- 10) Would you do a project again with similar topics of interest?

11) What did you like most about the entire project?

12) What did you like least about the entire project?

13) Within this project, did you feel heard, accepted, understood and supported by the other Leaders?

Thank each of you for taking the time to answer each of these questions!

I'd like to open the room for any additional feedback you would like to share. Does anyone have anything else they'd like to add?

Thank YOU. This was great.

Now I will inform you of what my goal was for this project.

If there is anything you'd like to say or ask after reading, please feel free to do so; I welcome your comments. Also, please do not copy, replicate or share any material that has been given, I am about to give, or writings shared within any part of the emails or the chat sessions. All must be kept confidential unless you are given direct permission by me to use it prior to conferment of my degree.

In working in my position as the Pastor of Counseling and Mental Health, I have had the opportunity to have conversations with Senior Pastors, Bishops, Elders, Associate Pastors, Ordained Clergy, Licensed Clergy, Ministers In Training and the like (all referred to moving forward as Leaders) on various topics concerning their church or personal life. With this privilege, it has been communicated that there is no space where Leaders feel comfortable speaking openly and candidly with their colleagues about the struggles they face as Leaders. They have shared that as a result, they are left feeling as if they are the only Leader facing the personal, emotional and spiritual challenges that arise. It has also been communicated that there is no space where they feel they can talk about the stressors in their life, amongst other colleagues, without fear of the response being laden with judgment, and therefore guilt and shame. Through these encounters I have discovered that trust issues call for a need for anonymity, at least until individual trust issues can be worked through. This individual healing process will take some time; time that these busy Leaders will most likely not devote themselves to, for several reasons. These reasons have foundations rooted in cultural/ethnic and religious formalities that have proven to haunt them, even as Radically Inclusive and Open and Affirming representatives and Leaders.

I have previously suggested that a type of support group be established as a safe space for de-stressing and tackling some of the inherited formalities (Culture: African-American's tend to shun structures akin to therapy or counseling; Background in fundamentalist denominations: Pentecostal, Apostolic, Church of God in Christ (COGIC) or Holiness; identifying as SGL and Christian: internalized levels of oppression and non-acceptance) that have followed these Leaders into leadership positions. This idea was previously rejected, as there was no way a group with colleagues could be established while upholding anonymity. My Project, however, offers a space for my local church's mantra, "Church Unusual" to be operational in meeting a need.

The thread or tie that binds humans together, no matter their spiritual or religious identification, is relationship. Having a good solid relationship with another human being can be the difference between physical and spiritual life and death. Leaders need these bonds with each other, in order to be mentally and spiritually fruitful and whole. Receipt of who a Leader is, with all of the flaws and mishaps that happen within a Leader's journey, is paramount for evading burnout,

severe depression and the like. The key to upholding each other in a vein of listening, understanding and support is realizing and modeling the age old adage of being our brother's/sister's keeper. The need to be closely related to others is as basic as any biological need and is, in the light of the prolonged period of helpless infancy, equally necessary to survival". (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, pg. 21) This concept is applicable to SGL Leaders that will participate in my project.

SGL Leaders feel they cannot come to each other with their mess ups or mishaps and continue to be honored and respected. Although they should be able to be naked and not ashamed, so to speak, they cannot. One would think that they could come freely to those who hold the same level of position, have similar or the same religious backgrounds and therefore possibly struggles, for understanding, encouragement or just an ear, but they cannot. Experience has led them to believe that if one does, they will have subjected themselves to not only be rejected by their brother or sister in the Lord, but they will also be unfairly judged.

Meaningful relatedness is not something we ever outgrow, but is instead a process that is constructed on a continuum. This therapeutic group process will allow for emotional shifts to be made, as the group develops its own cohesive yet organic process. As trust is established, previously fractured stages of development will begin to solidify and internal suspensions will begin to change. Just as play interaction decreased the inner aggressive feelings that manifest in interactions (Klein), so shall the content and process of this group allow for safe space of emotional development along the lines of being heard and being held (Winnicott).

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14) As a participant Leader in my project, would you say my project did what its goal was to do? If so, how; if not, why not?

Thank you all, again, for your participation. Please check your assigned email one last time between the end of this session and Monday. Please fill out and send back the post project questionnaires by midnight Monday. I thank you all once more!! You made my project a success!!

Appendix 35

Wrap-up Session

10/17/13

Chatzy

»Spiritual Community And Stress Reduction«

Chatzy

Visible contents as of 17 Oct 2013 21:32 UTC-04:00 (23 KB)

Page 1 of 1 · From 0 to 24090 · Newest posts at the bottom

Moderator cleared the room 20:02

Volunteer 9 joined the chat 20:28

Moderator left this message: 20:29
Welcome V9.

Volunteer 9: Good evening moderator 20:29

Moderator left this message: 20:31
We'll wait a few minutes.

Moderator left this message: 20:36
Thank you for your patience. I will give five more minutes, since this is not our usual night.

volunteer4 joined the chat 20:37

Moderator left this message: 20:37
Welcome V4.

volunteer4: Good evening 20:37

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth joined the chat 20:38

Moderator left this message: 20:38
Welcome V10.

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Good evening everyone 20:38

volunteer4: good evening 20:39

Moderator left this message: 20:40
Thank you all for your patience. Let's go ahead and begin.

Moderator left this message: 20:40
I'd like to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedule to assist me with completing my project.

Moderator left this message: 20:41
Before I ask for feedback, who HAS NOT read the last Wednesday reflection?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth joined the chat 20:42

Moderator left this message: 20:42
Okay. So everyone here has. Great!

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: me 20:42

Moderator left this message: 20:42
Now, I'd like for you to give me some feedback of your experience with the group sessions. I will first ask some questions. Then you will have a space to speak freely. Lastly I will inform you as to what the hopeful outcome was for the project. As much as possible, I would like an answer from each person, please. Your answer don't need to be long, only truthful.

Moderator left this message: 20:43
That's does not. 😊

Moderator left this message: 20:43
1) Did you like the online chat; the technology of it? Yes or No

us12.chatzy.com/66631660173064

1/6

volunteer4: Yes 20:44

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Yes 20:44

Volunteer 9: yes 20:44

Moderator left this message: 20:44

2) How did the online chat work for you? Or, did it not; how not?

volunteer4: It worked well for me. it provided an opportunity to speak freely and hear others' thoughts via chat 20:45

Volunteer 9: It worked out really good for me. I was able to be free with what wanted to say without feeling like I offended another. 20:46

Moderator left this message: 20:47

3) Was the anonymity component helpful for you?

Volunteer 9: YES!!! It made it easier 20:47

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: it worked out well for me. i was able to express myself freely without the fear of being judged. 20:47

volunteer4: YES..indeed 20:47

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: YES!!! 20:48

Moderator left this message: 20:48

4) Without being anonymous, would you have participated in this particular project?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I was more comfortable with sharing. 20:48

Volunteer 9: Yes, but more closely gaurded my thoughts 20:49

volunteer4: yes 20:49

volunteer4: I agree v9 20:49

Moderator left this message: 20:50

V10?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: yes 20:50

Moderator left this message: 20:51

5) What, if anything, would you do differently in conducting this same project?

Volunteer 9: All of the topics were powerful and insightful but I believe more time, as in more weeks to adequately flesh out the subjects 20:53

volunteer4: I liked the format. Maybe provide a script of what was shared during each session via e-mail. 20:54

Volunteer 9: In that I would like to have learned more about what I could do to trust my fellow leaders more and are there excercises to help with shame 20:54

Moderator left this message: 20:55

6) What was most helpful in the content/material from this project?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I don't know if I would have done anything different except to add more time to the project, and like v4 said send out a email with a format. 20:56

Volunteer 9: It was most helpful to talk about what was assigned specifically and allowing it to springboard into more; I also liked that you used both scripture and non-religious readings 20:58

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: the material was good, if i would have received it in the beginning of the session i would have been able to read more then wait for wednesday and fird 20:58

volunteer4: the points that allowed for unprejudiced conversation. topics that we think about, but rarely if every address 20:58

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: sorry,friday because i would sometime forget. 20:58

Moderator left this message: 20:59

We're almost done with the questions. 😊

Moderator left this message: 20:59

7) What was the least helpful in the content/material from this project?

volunteer4: I felt it was all helpful. 21:00

Volunteer 9: I don't have an answer for this; all was helpful 21:00

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: all was helpful 21:00

Moderator left this message: 21:01

8) What, if anything, made this project difficult?

volunteer4: having to do this session while participating in other activities 😊 But it was worth the extra effort 21:02

Volunteer 9: It wasn't difficult, just needed a mental note to log into an unfamiliar email to get the readings 21:03

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: schedule conflict but it was worth it. 21:03

Moderator left this message: 21:03

9) What is the most helpful thing you gained from this project?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: reminded how important it is to be honest with oneself and grow from that experience. 21:05

volunteer4: to hear others perspectives about "issues" and "ideas". This helped to bring me to another level of understanding 21:05

Volunteer 9: I gained more insight into the way I truly feel about the leadership and my relationship with the other leaders of my organization. I need to work on be a trusting leader and to be trustworthy. 21:07

Moderator left this message: 21:07

10) Would you do a project again with similar topics of interest?

Volunteer 9: Yes 21:07

volunteer4: Yes 21:07

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: yes 21:08

Moderator left this message: 21:08

13) Within this project, did you feel heard, accepted, understood and supported by the other Leaders?

volunteer4: yes 21:08

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: yes 21:08

Volunteer 9: yes 21:09

Moderator left this message: 21:09

Thank each of you for taking the time to answer each of these questions!

Moderator left this message: 21:09

I'd like to open the room for any additional feedback you would like to share. Does anyone have anything else they'd like to add?

volunteer4: thank you for facilitating these sessions. it has been a great blessing 21:10

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for facilitating this session. 21:11

Moderator left this message: 21:11

Thank YOU for your participation.

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: May God continue to bless you. 21:11

Moderator left this message: 21:11

Thank you.

Now I will inform you of what my goal was for this project.

Volunteer 9: I enjoyed the sessions greatly. It really has made reconsider how I present myself and evaluating myself as a leader. Good luck with your research and thank you the sessions. 21:12

Moderator left this message: 21:12

Thank you.

Moderator left this message: 21:13

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Moderator left this message: 21:13

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Moderator left this message: 21:14

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Moderator left this message: 21:15

The thread or tie that binds humans together, no matter their spiritual or religious identification, is relationship. Having a good solid relationship with another human being can be the difference between physical and spiritual life and death. Leaders need these bonds with each other, in order to be mentally and spiritually fruitful and whole. Receipt of who a Leader is, with all of the flaws and mishaps that happen within a Leader's journey, is paramount for evading burnout, severe depression and the like. The key to upholding each other in a vein of listening, understanding and support is realizing and modeling the age old adage of being our brother's/sister's keeper. The need to be closely related to others is as basic as any biological need and is, in the light of the prolonged period of helpless infancy, equally necessary to survival". (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, pg. 21) This concept is applicable to SGL Leaders that will participate in my project.

Moderator left this message: 21:16

SGL Leaders feel they cannot come to each other with their mess ups or mishaps and continue to be honored and respected. Although they should be able to be naked and not ashamed, so to speak, they cannot. One would think that they could come freely to those who hold the same level of position, have similar or the same religious backgrounds and therefore possibly struggles, for understanding,

encouragement or just an ear, but they cannot. Experience has led them to believe that if one does, they will have subjected themselves to not only be rejected by their brother or sister in the Lord, but they will also be unfairly judged.

Moderator left this message:

21:17

Meaningful relatedness is not something we ever outgrow, but is instead a process that is constructed on a continuum. This therapeutic group process will allow for emotional shifts to be made, as the group develops its own cohesive yet organic process. As trust is established, previously fractured stages of development will begin to solidify and internal suspensions will begin to change. Just as play interaction decreased the inner aggressive feelings that manifest in interactions (Klein), so shall the content and process of this group allow for safe space of emotional development along the lines of being heard and being held (Winnicott).

Moderator left this message:

21:18

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Moderator left this message:

21:19

The closing and last question for the wrap-up.

14) As a participant Leader in my project, would you say my project did what its goal was to do? If so, how; if not, why not?

volunteer4: Yes. It did provide an opportunity for me as a leader to share, vent, impart and heal without having to reveal my identity

21:20

Volunteer 9: I related to not being able to go to a leader on my level and vent without judgement. And even if I sought out a leader that I felt would be able to hear me, I would guard certain things because I fear things being misunderstood in a moment of distress. With this forum, I was able to freely share how I feel without a filter. So yes, you succeeded reaching your goal in my opinion

21:24

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Yes, it allowed me opportunity to share how I truly felt, release some stress and learn from others different ways of handling things.

21:25

Moderator left this message:

21:25

I will leave the room open a few more minutes for any more comments that might be forthcoming.

Thank you all, again, for your participation. Please check your assigned email one last time between the end of this session and Monday. Please fill out and send back the post project questionnaires by midnight Monday. I thank you all once more!! You made my project a success!!

Good Night!!

volunteer4: Good night....

21:26

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: good night

21:26

Volunteer 9: Will you continue to have an anonymous forum?

21:27

Moderator left this message:

21:28

I am not certain. I would like to continue and broaden what we have already done, but that will depend upon individuals interest.

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: sounds GREAT

21:29

Volunteer 9: I would be interested in further discussing some of the topics we have already shared and others that arise for leaders

21:30

Moderator left this message:

21:30

Thank you V9 for your interest. I will certainly be in contact if a decision is made to explore this further.

10/17/13

Chatzy

Moderator left this message:

Thank you all again!!

Volunteer 9: Thank you good night

21:31

21:31

Appendix 36

Wrap-up email to V6 & V3

I'd like to thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedule to assist me with completing my project.

Now, I'd like for you to give me some feedback of your experience with the group sessions. Your answers don't need to be long, only truthful.

- 1) Did you like the online chat; the technology of it? Yes or No
- 2) How did the online chat work for you? Or, did it not; how not?
- 3) Was the anonymity component helpful for you?
- 4) Without being anonymous, would you have participated in this particular project?
- 5) What, if anything, would you do differently in conducting this same project?
- 6) What was most helpful in the content/material from this project?
- 7) What was the least helpful in the content/material from this project?
- 8) What, if anything, made this project difficult?
- 9) What is the most helpful thing you gained from this project?
- 10) Would you do a project again with similar topics of interest?
- 13) Within this project, did you feel heard, accepted, understood and supported by the other Leaders?

Thank each of you for taking the time to answer each of these questions!

If you have an additional feedback you would like to share, please feel free to.

Goal of Project sent to V6 & V3

Greetings,

You will find information below and a question at the end. Please reply to the question after reading all that has been presented.

Blessings,
Pastor Katrina

Now I will inform you of what my goal was for this project.

If there is anything you'd like to say or ask after reading, please feel free to do so; I welcome your comments. Also, please do not copy, replicate or share any material that has been given, I am about to give, or writings shared within any part of the emails or the chat sessions. All must be kept confidential unless you are given direct permission by me to use it prior to conferment of my degree.

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14) As a participant Leader in my project, would you say my project did what its goal was to do? If so, how; if not, why not?

Second Wednesday Reflection

Happy Wednesday:

After reading, please REPLY and place your ID in the SUBJECT LINE. Example: 2nd Wednesday Reflection - V1

Unashamedly Non-Rejecting

African-Americans are known to naturally be communal people. This is true even after having been taken from their environments and sold into one that was completely unfamiliar. When Jim Crow set the standard for separate but equal, there is about a three year time span that began to set-up an internal mistrust within the African-American community. At its pinnacle, the 50's and 60's, the church had fully become the, "principle source of sanctuary, education, socialization, information and community for people of African descent in this country". The church, as it was fashioned by the reinterpretation of by blacks for blacks, became the space where power and status was given and validated. FEAR; False Evidence Appearing Real, became the filter for many within the African-American community, even within the church. This fear was not only the fear of being left straggling behind ones counterpart economically, academically or even spiritually, but also the fear that wiped away a natural communal trust that was once evident within this culture. Invisible but alive and operative systems of vying for positions and status reigned within the church's structure and outside of it in everyday life. The culture no longer stood in solid agreement about being its brother's/sister's keeper. Rejection became common. Accepting rejection assigned blame, and with blame comes manifested shame. Shame, being the mechanism of the self, has specific connotation for being disapproved and cut off. This in turn operates as an enforcer of self-valuation and social order. Moving forward from this corporal mentality will take embracing and enacting accountability. This entails not only the acknowledgment of our current operational conditions of rejection and shame within the race, but especially within the religious community, and specifically within ourselves. Taking on responsibility is simply empowering oneself with the power to create change. But note, taking responsibility or being accountable does not interpret taking the blame. It does, however, communicate vision and concern for personal success and communal achievement.

Third Wednesday Reflection

Overthrowing Undermining

Being afraid is sometimes thought to be involuntary; something beyond our control. However, the manifestation of its presence shows that something has been internalized, and it has settled beyond the mind and into behavior. In correlation, there then comes responsibility. One may believe that they are responsible for what they do, but not for what they think. The truth is that you are responsible for what you think, because it is at this processing level that you exercise choice. What you do, therefore, comes from what you think. Accordingly, how you treat your fellow Leader will come from what you think about him or her. Is your brother or sister Leader not a part of you? Will you not accept them? They can teach you who you are, for your learning is the result of what you have taught them. What you call upon in them, you also call upon in yourself. Fore wholeness is indivisible. You cannot fully learn of your wholeness until you see it in your sister or brother Leader; until you see it everywhere. Your part is not to necessarily heal, but to let healing be.

Appendix 40

Fourth Wednesday Reflection

Please reply with your initials in the Subject line to verify that you have read the reflection.
Thank you.

Do It Differently

Civilization is a heritage/culture of beliefs, customs, and knowledge slowly accumulated in the course of centuries. Over these years, elements are difficult at time to justify by logic, but yet they justify themselves as paths when they lead somewhere, since they open up for us an inner distance. For it is not the honor that we take with us from things handed down, but the heritage/culture that we leave behind that is not relevant. Life is lived forwards, but understood by looking back. Like branches on a tree, our lives may grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one, from one, for we are one. And because of this, if we are together, a unified body, nothing is impossible. But if we are divided, we are destined for it all to fail. We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face, for we MUST do that which we think we cannot. We must trust, we must reject the sting of rejection and light up the darkness of shame. We must sabotage display and support of sabotaging, and pull each other up, hold each other up and not push each other down, ever. The heart of the problem is a problem with the heart. But the answer to the problem is found in the same place. It is okay to be angry, upset and even disappointed, but it is never okay to be cruel to one another. Be the brother or sister that you want to have, and surely what you seek will come and find you.

Appendix 41

Reading for Third Session

Reading one: Titus 1: 10 – 11

Reading two: The Urban Dictionary describes the crabs-in-a-barrel syndrome as “A syndrome where a group of like situated people hurt those in their community attempting to get ahead.” This hurt is not necessarily physical hurt, but more so emotional, mental or spiritual inflictions, which then dominoes into economic stability. Jealousy of another’s attempt at or achievement of success dispels trust, imprinting that once that person rises they will treat me like others dominant over me have treated me; me as in my ancestral past and my self-experienced past or present. If one had not heard of stories of betrayal or exploitation, one had experienced it themselves.

Phillip Aaron and Errol Smith speak about the unseemly behavior of apparent sabotage of one another within the African-American community. They believe that the gap that slows the breaching is that the unspoken, sub-conscious desire that “we must all live or perish together” has been misinterpreted. Aaron and Smith assert that such an idea should communicate that there is an “internal cohesiveness that assures unity and devotion to each other”, but instead has created, “tremendous disunity”, fostering “resentment, anger and bitterness among African-Americans”. Because of such, fear has set in and this fear that is being played out is based upon a false belief of threatened or endangered ‘believed-security’. Alongside this they believe that another false belief is that the progress of a community must come before any individual of the community succeeds. The truth, however, is that when you have such an extensive existence of oppression, individuals must rise in order for the whole community to be able to move forward as a community. Aaron and Smith put it this way, “If you were to invite a group of people to your house for dinner, but yet you turn away each individual when he comes to your door, then you can see how you will never get the group in the house”. These two false beliefs that insight fear are what can be found as the basis of the crab syndrome that has infiltrated the African-American community and the African-American religious experience.

Reading for Fourth Session

Reading 1 => Matthew 9: 10-13 (The Message) 10-11 Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew's house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. "What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riffraff?" 12-13 Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."

Reading 2 => "It has long been recognized that the way a person behaves towards others is, to some extent, a function of whether they trust the other person, organization or institution". Disloyalty or disappointments of hopeful expectations have become a readily semi-undetected filter subconsciously set-up within the psyche of those who have been betrayed or exploited. With racism being the anchor that holds the ships of time passed at the current docks of minds, mistrust not only becomes rooted in the psyche, but has also become reflectors depicting part of culture, even amongst those who are alike. Hence a framework of mistrust is constructed, due to perceived or practiced culture operations that are derived from a mold that depicts unjust and unethical treatment of personal identifiers. But, in spite of, the need to be closely related to others is as basic as any biological need. Meaningful relatedness is not something that's ever outgrown, but is instead a process that is constructed on a continuum. Religion, and its beliefs, has been found to be a strong factor in how Leaders perceive these distresses. African-Americans are even the more likely to conceptualize them using a religious framework. Oftentimes a clash can be found in one's personal identifiers, religious upbringings and internal conversations concerning themselves and those who serve alongside of them. The press is that it takes making a conscious decision to identify, change and replant for a different harvest in a life's new season.

Appendix 43

Session One Time Guide

8:27pm – Open

8:30pm – First post

8:30pm – 8:33pm – Responses

8:48pm – Religious reading

9:02pm – Free flow

9:17pm – First encouragement

9:22pm – Second encouragement

9:27pm – Proposed topics

9:28pm – Prayer being typed

Appendix 44

Session Two

| | |
|--|-------|
| Moderator cleared the room | 20:27 |
| volunteer4 joined the chat | 20:30 |
| Moderator left this message: Welcome V4. | 20:31 |
| volunteer4 : Good Evening | 20:31 |
| volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth joined the chat | 20:31 |
| Moderator left this message: Welcome V10 | 20:31 |
| volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth : Good evening | 20:32 |
| Moderator left this message: We will give people a couple of minutes. Thank you for your patience. | 20:32 |
| Volunteer 9 joined the chat | 20:34 |
| Moderator left this message: Welcome V9 | 20:34 |
| Volunteer 9 : Hello All | 20:35 |
| volunteer4 : good evening | 20:35 |
| Moderator left this message: I want to give one more minute. | 20:35 |
| volunteer6 joined the chat | 20:35 |
| volunteer6 : good evening | 20:36 |
| Moderator left this message: Welcome V6 | 20:36 |
| Moderator left this message: Welcome to our second session! | 20:36 |
| Moderator left this message: Let's begin. | 20:37 |
| Moderator left this message: I want to start by reminding you to please give your reflections after each session, and remember to check your assigned email Wednesdays and Fridays. | 20:37 |
| Moderator left this message: Now, I'd like for us to take this moment and invite every part of ourselves into this time. I ask that you take a slow deep breath in through your nose, exhaling slowly through your mouth. As you focus on this screen and continue to breathe deep, take note of the thoughts that are going through your mind. Continue the deep breaths. | 20:37 |
| Moderator left this message: Now, take note of how your body feels. Your neck, your arms, your legs, your fingers; what is your body saying? Listen as you continue to take deep breaths. | 20:38 |
| Moderator left this message: Now begin to calm your thoughts, while taking deep breaths. | 20:39 |
| Moderator left this message: Your thoughts have been calmed. | 20:39 |

Moderator left this message: 20:40
Now let your arms drop to your side, while you continue deep breaths, and shake them lightly.

Moderator left this message: 20:40
Now shake your whole body lightly, as you continue with deep breaths.

Moderator left this message: 20:40
Take a deep breath in, as you let it out feel all tension leaving your body.

Moderator left this message: 20:41
Take another deep breath in, this time let your shoulder relax as you exhale.

Moderator left this message: 20:41
Type two words that describe you in this moment.

volunteer6: relaxed free 20:41
Volunteer 9: Warm and hopeful 20:41
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: warm relaxed 20:42
volunteer4: peaceful and happy 20:42
Moderator left this message: 20:42
Thank you for sharing.

Moderator left this message: 20:42
Last week our topic was "A Trustworthy Keeper". You were sent a reflection to read on Wednesday that spoke to rebuilding trust. Friday you were sent two readings on Shame and Rejection. Our topic for tonight is "Shameful Rejection".

Moderator left this message: 20:43
As a Leader and reflecting upon how you have encountered these two things in your serving, I'd like to hear your thoughts about the readings. I'd like to begin with the reading from Exodus 2:11-14. The floor is open.

Volunteer 9 joined the chat 20:43
Moderator left this message: 20:44
Have you ever had any similar experience of rejection as Moses?

Moderator left this message: 20:46
Were you able to read the passage?

Volunteer 9: I've never looked deeply into the story before to put the attribute of shame to it but I could relate. 20:46
Moderator left this message: 20:46
V9, can you tell us a little how you were able to relate? What was familiar for you?

Volunteer 9: I've done things that I hoped wouldn't be found out. 20:46
volunteer6: yes I have had similar experiences of rejection as Moses 20:47
Volunteer 9: But as sure as I tried to hide the more it would come out 20:47
Moderator left this message: 20:47
V9, why was keeping it secretive important to you?

Volunteer 9: Keeping my actions secret made me think I was ok. If I just asked God to forgive me, it would ok. 20:49
Moderator left this message: 20:49
V6, would you like to share one of them?

Moderator left this message: 20:50
V9, keeping the actions secret or not, what was your prompt for the actions not being okay?

Volunteer 9: Also if others found out, I might not be trusted or looked upon as less valued 20:50

volunteer4: Sometimes I believe that GOD is more forgiving than man. 20:50

volunteer6: growing up I helped others out of my own embarrassment 20:51

volunteer6: embarrassment/shame 20:51

Volunteer 9: I agree V4. Humans throw your faults in your face over and over. 20:51

Moderator left this message: 20:51

V4, that's a simplistically, profound statement. How do you see this in your experience with rejection?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: True, I believe at times I find myself worry about what others may think of me and not wanting to be rejected helps me to no share it. 20:52

volunteer6: I agree with v10 20:53

volunteer6: and v4 20:53

volunteer6: I have view being rejected as shameful 20:53

volunteer4: I would attempt to avoid rejection by sometimes not putting myself into situations that would put me at risk of being rejected. 20:53

Volunteer 9: Rejection is a hard thing. I don't like feeling left out. Or others viewing me as different. 20:54

volunteer6: I so agree v4 and v9 20:54

volunteer6: I've been a loner because of not wanting to be rejected/shamed 20:55

volunteer6: growing up I stayed to myself because i was ashamed of not having alot and also the fact that I was being molested 20:56

Moderator left this message: 20:56

How do you see the place that you are with rejection effecting you in Leadership? This is to everyone.

volunteer4: But not taking more risks may border on being a little fearful which I was taught is not what i am to be. 20:56

Volunteer 9: I've been rejected in my social group. It's painful. 20:57

volunteer6: i wont put myself out there to do what i am called to do in fear of rejection. 20:57

volunteer4: It would afect me in leadership by not allowing me to be a free to lead or leade as effective 20:58

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: it sometimes prevent me from becoming more involved or expressing how i truly feel. 20:58

Volunteer 9: I still have some healing to do as a person to be more effective but I can say I've come a long ways 20:59

Moderator left this message: 21:00

As this pertains to you, looking beyond reasoning or justification, how have you handled rejection from your peers, as it relates to the place in God that God has graced you to?

Volunteer 9: V10 I too don't 21:00

Volunteer 9 joined the chat 21:01

volunteer6: I have begin to look on the inside to see why i really feel rejected, and if was really being rejected at that moment. 21:02

Volunteer 9: I avoid those that reject me as much as possible. I don't interact unless I must. 21:03

volunteer6: I then begin to step out and ask god for help with the spirit of rejection and also to be mindful not to make anyone else feel reject. 21:03

volunteer6: sorry for the run ons 21:04

volunteer4: I have tried to focus more on the "call" and responsibility than on the rejection 21:04

Moderator left this message: 21:04

So is it correct that I'm hearing we have no ventured to fully be because, from somewhere, we have internalized that the "it" must fit "something" that has to be "approved"?

Volunteer 9: V6 I wish could say that I do that but not wishing to make waves. Avoidance is my action. 21:05

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Im learning to ask the question why, and how do I continue to do the work without resentment. Praying for forgiveness. 21:05

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: even when I tried to stay to myself God has a way of placing people in life that forces me to challenge myself. 21:06

Moderator left this message: 21:06

Good point V4, but there is a difference between focusing and facing. If we overlook it, it will still be with us at every step God takes us to.

Volunteer 9: That's good v10. I need to pray how I do this work without resentment. 21:07

volunteer6: No moderator I have the willingness and the fight to be better and do better. So no it is not ok 21:07

volunteer4: I guess on some levels..'yes' we all seek some approval. 21:07

Moderator left this message: 21:07

I want to thank everyone who's shared so far.

Moderator left this message: 21:08

Now let's add shame to this. The reading reads: Shame prompts disconnection; and disconnection is, itself, experienced as shameful. Shame is the concealment power and enforcer of repression and dissociation. If we are able to recognize shame and pride to exist in relation to each other, as two parts of the same dynamic, we can begin to consider the dynamics that operate between them, and as variations of each other. Shame regulates by its power to create a very painful emotion, and it is this emotion that is usually called to mind by the word shame. This operates as an enforcer of self-valuation and social order. The pain of exposure and the reflexive construction of identify, for example, exhibit two sides of shame. This suggests that self-consciousness is itself a shame phenomenon. Personal appearance does not mean a body image, but means, rather, the appearance of oneself to oneself through the eyes and power of the other. With this being so, shame is seen as the emotion of self-consciousness, and therefore the boundary between self and other, like the boundary of the self's relationship with itself, that is regulated by shame. Just as with infants and children, relationships serve a multitude of crucial functions for adults. They exist not just for safety and security, but also for continual cognitive development, self-awareness, self-cohesion, intersubjectivity, identity and emotional growth. A lack of connectedness may be psycho-physiologically equated to dying, or at the very least a loss of vital energy. Therefore shame is a mechanism of the self that has the specific connotation of being disapproved, rejected, and cut off. As an active process, shame is an "admission of failure".

volunteer6: I am willing to fully venture in order to get rid of the the it becasue it dont fit 21:08

volunteer6: not does it have to be approved 21:08

volunteer6: I dont have to be approved by man any longer. I am looking for approval from god today 21:09

volunteer6: Thank you for allowing me to share 21:09

Moderator left this message: 21:10

You're welcome V6. That's what this space is for.

Volunteer 9: This piece really cut me. I want to find strength to deal with shame. 21:10

Moderator left this message: 21:10

From the second reading, As a Leader in ministry, what did this bring up for you?

Moderator left this message: 21:10

V9, can you speak a little more about the 'cut'. What do you mean?

volunteer6: The second reading brought up the fact that I ran from ministry for years because of shame. Therefore wanting to disconnect and or disconnecting at times during my journey once I said yes to the call 21:12

Moderator left this message: 21:12

Anyone else have any reactions to the second reading?

Volunteer 9: Not so long ago, someone I loved spread some untruth about me throughout our community. The community rejected me and ashamed. I didn't and had no strength to defend myself. 21:13

volunteer4: Not to allow 'shame' or perceived shame to cause me to de-value myself and disconnect which will cause me to abandon my call 21:13

Volunteer 9: The shame made me say just forget the work I was called to do 21:15

Moderator left this message: 21:16

What do you think of the idea: Abandon because I have been abandoned?

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: wow, i guess the question for me is how do i impact the people in my care if I'm not addressing my own issues as it relates to this. trusting God more than man. browning in order to become more effect in my role. 21:16

Volunteer 9 joined the chat 21:16

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: growing up 21:17

Moderator left this message: 21:17

V10, that is a good question. The reality is, as Leaders, you are going to impact. So looking at the how is important. It's work that is often avoided or overlooked, and not necessarily consciously.

Volunteer 9: I've felt a sense of abandonment within the group I work with. 21:18

Moderator left this message: 21:18

Did this statement not bring up anything for anyone? Abandon because I have been abandoned

volunteer6: I did the opposite of that and instead stayed around people places and things because I was abandoned. There were people, places and things I should not have taken on long than a season, or even at all that because i felt abandon as a child I stayed 21:19

volunteer4: In theory "no" in reality 'yes' it happens. 21:19

volunteer4: I don't think its appropriate to abandon because you've been abandoned. 21:19

volunteer6: I just learning it's ok to say no and that I am not abandoning the person because I said no! 21:20

volunteer4: If anything one should try to make sure that since they have been abandoned that someone else is not. 21:20

volunteer6: Abandonment is a sore spot and space for me 21:20

Moderator left this message: 21:21

What's behind the statement is how we do not do something because something else was not met for us.

Moderator left this message: 21:21

It's typically not intentional.

Moderator left this message: 21:22

It's all a symptom of shame and rejection.

volunteer6: what does that mean typical 21:22

volunteer6: typically 21:22

Moderator left this message: 21:23

Meaning in most cases it's not sought; not the motivation.

Moderator left this message: 21:23

Means generally speaking.

Moderator left this message: 21:24
Thank each of you who have shared.

Moderator left this message: 21:24
I want to close with this, from the Amplified Bible, Acts 7:35 reads: "It was this very Moses whom they had denied (disowned and rejected), saying, Who made you our ruler (referee) and judge? whom God sent to be a ruler and deliverer and redeemer, by and with the [protecting and helping] hand of the Angel that appeared to him in the bramblebush." Rejection is one of the most common and most neglected wounds of the soul. This wound can occur at any age or stage in life. How we REACT to the hurt that comes with it can either further complicate our journey, our ability to appropriately serve as a whole leader, or give us another space for growth and affirmation. Defeating rejection first begins with overcoming rejecting one's self. This is overcoming any part of yourself that has already been confirmed and validated by God. This is getting beyond YOUR disapproval of who God has already deemed you to be. All of who you is wanted and NEEDED, but you have to need, want and honor all of you FIRST. Moses knew who he was, in spite of any and all rejection he received. Accepting rejection assigns blame, and with blame comes manifested shame. Shame then becomes an unnecessary weight of your soul. Lay aside every weight and RESPOND with patience as you walk out your Leadership journey with your brother's and sisters.

Volunteer 9: I believe because I've been abandoned that I tend to hold on probably longer than I should 21:25

Moderator left this message: 21:25
V9, that's a great observation.

Moderator left this message: 21:26
This concludes our second session. What is something affirming or encouraging you would say to yourself if you could go back to that moment when you felt rejected or shamed?

volunteer4: you're okay and God still loves you 21:27

volunteer6: What your going through will make you stronger later but don't internalize it to be the gospel 21:27

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: I would read Luke 10:6 "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me". 21:29

Volunteer 9: I would say, don't internalize this. Speak your truth. Your feelings are valued. 21:29

Moderator left this message: 21:29
What uplifting words can you give to all in this moment?

Volunteer 9: Be encouraged. Take this forum a step towards becoming a more effective vessel for God 21:31

volunteer4: You are of God's unique workshop 21:31

volunteer6: love you and thank you for loving me 21:32

Moderator left this message: 21:32
Thank each of you for sharing.

Moderator left this message: 21:32
As V4 prepares to type us out in prayer, please remember you have 20 minutes to email the following from your assigned email after this session has ended. 1) two words that describe how you feel in that moment 2) One to three sentences on how the session was for you; what stuck out, was helpful, etc. In this email you can also submit a topic that you would like to suggest we use for one of the remaining sessions. Also, please remember to check your assigned email every Wednesday and Friday.

volunteer4: Thank you God for this time of sharing, growing and healing. Continue to minister to us so that we can minister to others. Amen 21:34

volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth: Amen 21:34

Moderator left this message:
Amen. Everyone have a great week!!

21:34

volunteer6: amen

Appendix 45

Assigned Emails

Good Evening Pastor Katrina,

Here is the information you requested:

volunteer1@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer2@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer3@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer4@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer5@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer6@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer7@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer8@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer9@rivers-at-rehoboth.org
volunteer10@rivers-at-rehoboth.org

Password: rehoboth

Email Access:

Workspace Webmail provides access to your email account from any Web browser.

To Access Workspace Webmail

1. Go to email.secureserver.net.
2. Enter your full **Email Address** and **Password**, and then click **Log in**.

New Questionnaire 1- Demographical Information

- 1.) How do you identify your gender? _____
- 2.) How do you identify your race? _____
- 3.) How do you identify your ethnicity? _____
- 4.) What is your age? _____
- 5.) What is the highest level of education you have completed? _____
- 6.) What is your current intimate relationship status? Single, Partnered, Married, Widowed,
Other (please explain) _____
- 7.) Are you Licensed, Ordained or a MIT? _____
- 8.) How long have you served under this title? _____
- 9.) How do you define your current religious/spiritual affiliation?

- 10.) How do you define the religious/spiritual affiliation for which you grew up under?

Appendix 47

Post Project Questionnaire 3

Answer the following as truthful as possible. Try to be as vulnerable and open as you can. Place the number 1, 2, 3 or 4 beside the answer that best fits you. There are 40 questions.

1=Not Very True 2=Sometimes True 3=Mostly True 4=Very True

Part A:

1. I feel confident of my adoption as God's son/daughter and rarely, if ever, question God's acceptance of me. _____
2. I love to worship God by myself as well as with others. _____
3. I spend regular quality time in the Word of God and in prayer. _____
4. I sense the unique ways God has gifted me individually and am actively using my spiritual gifts for God's service. _____
5. I am a vital participant in a community with other believers. _____
6. It is clear that my money, gifts, time, and abilities are completely at God's disposal and not my own. _____
7. I consistently integrate my faith in the marketplace and the world. _____

Part B: Section 1

1. It's easy for me to identify what I am feeling inside _____
2. I am willing to explore previously unknown or unacceptable parts of myself, allowing Christ to transform me more fully _____
3. I enjoy being alone in quiet reflection with God and myself _____
4. I can share freely about my emotions, sexuality, joy, and pain _____
5. I am able to experience and deal with anger in a way that leads to growth in others and myself _____
6. I am honest with myself (and a few significant others) about the feelings, beliefs, doubts, pains, and hurts beneath the surface of my life _____

Section 2

7. I resolve conflict in a clear, direct, and respectful way, not what I might have learned growing up, or adopted sometime along my journey, such as painful putdowns, avoidance, escalating tensions, or going to a third party rather than to the person directly _____

8. I am intentional at working through the impact of significant “earthquake” events that shaped my present, such as the death of a family member, an unexpected pregnancy, divorce, addiction, loss of employment or a major financial disaster _____
9. I am able to thank God for all my past life experiences, seeing how (s)he has used them to uniquely shape me into who I am. _____
10. I can see how certain “generational sins” have been passed down to me through my family history, _____
11. I don’t need approval from others to feel good about myself _____
12. I take responsibility and ownership for my past life rather than blame others _____

Section 3

13. I often admit when I’m wrong, readily asking forgiveness from others _____
14. I am able to speak freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes _____
15. Others would easily describe me as approachable, gentle, open, and transparent _____
16. Those close to me would say that I am not easily offended or hurt _____
17. I am consistently open to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me _____
18. I am rarely judgmental or critical of others _____
19. Others would say that I am slow to speak, quick to listen, and good at seeing things from their perspective _____

Section 4

20. I’ve never been accused of “trying to do it all” or of biting off more than I could chew _____
21. I am regularly able to say no to requests and opportunities rather than risk overextending myself _____
22. I recognize the different situations where my unique, God-given personality can be either a help or hindrance in responding appropriately _____
23. It’s easy for me to distinguish the difference between when to help carry someone else’s burden (Gal. 6:2) and when to let it go so they can carry their own burden _____
24. I have a good sense of my emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual capacities, intentionally pulling back to rest and fill my “gas tank” again _____
25. Those close to me would say that I am good at balancing family, rest, work, and play in a biblical way _____

Section 5

26. I openly admit my losses and disappointments _____
27. When I go through a disappointment or a loss, I reflect on how I'm feeling rather than pretend that nothing is wrong). _____
28. I take time to grieve my losses as David (Ps. 69) and Jesus did _____
29. People who are in great pain and sorrow tend to seek me out because it's clear to them that I am in touch with the losses and sorrows in my own life _____
30. I am able to cry and experience depression or sadness, explore the reasons behind it, seek outside help if needed and allow God to work in me through it _____

Section 6:

31. I am regularly able to enter into other people's worlds and feelings, connecting deeply with them and taking time to imagine what it feels like to live in their shoes _____
32. People close to me would describe me as a responsive listener _____
33. When I confront someone who has hurt or wronged me, I speak more in the first person ("I" and "me") about how I am feeling rather than speak in blaming tones ("you" or "they") about what was done _____
34. I have little interest in judging other people or quickly giving opinions about them _____
35. People would describe me as someone who makes "loving well" my number one aim _____

Section 7

36. I spend sufficient time alone with God to sustain my work for God. _____
37. I regularly take a 24-hour period each week for Sabbath-keeping — to stop, to rest, to delight, and to contemplate God. _____
38. Those closest to me would say that my family takes priority over church ministry and others. _____
39. I am not afraid to ask difficult, uncomfortable questions, to myself or to others, when needed. _____
40. I do not divide my leadership into sacred/secular categories. I treat the executive/planning functions and ecclesiastical duties of leadership as meaningful as prayer and preparing sermons. _____

Adapted from:

Scazzero, P., & Bird, W. (2003). The emotionally healthy church. Inventory of Emotional/Spiritual maturity. *Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 19*. Retrieved from http://www.preachitheat.chit.org/uploads/tx_wecsermons/EHSAssessmentTool.pdf

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