

Member Care *Journal*

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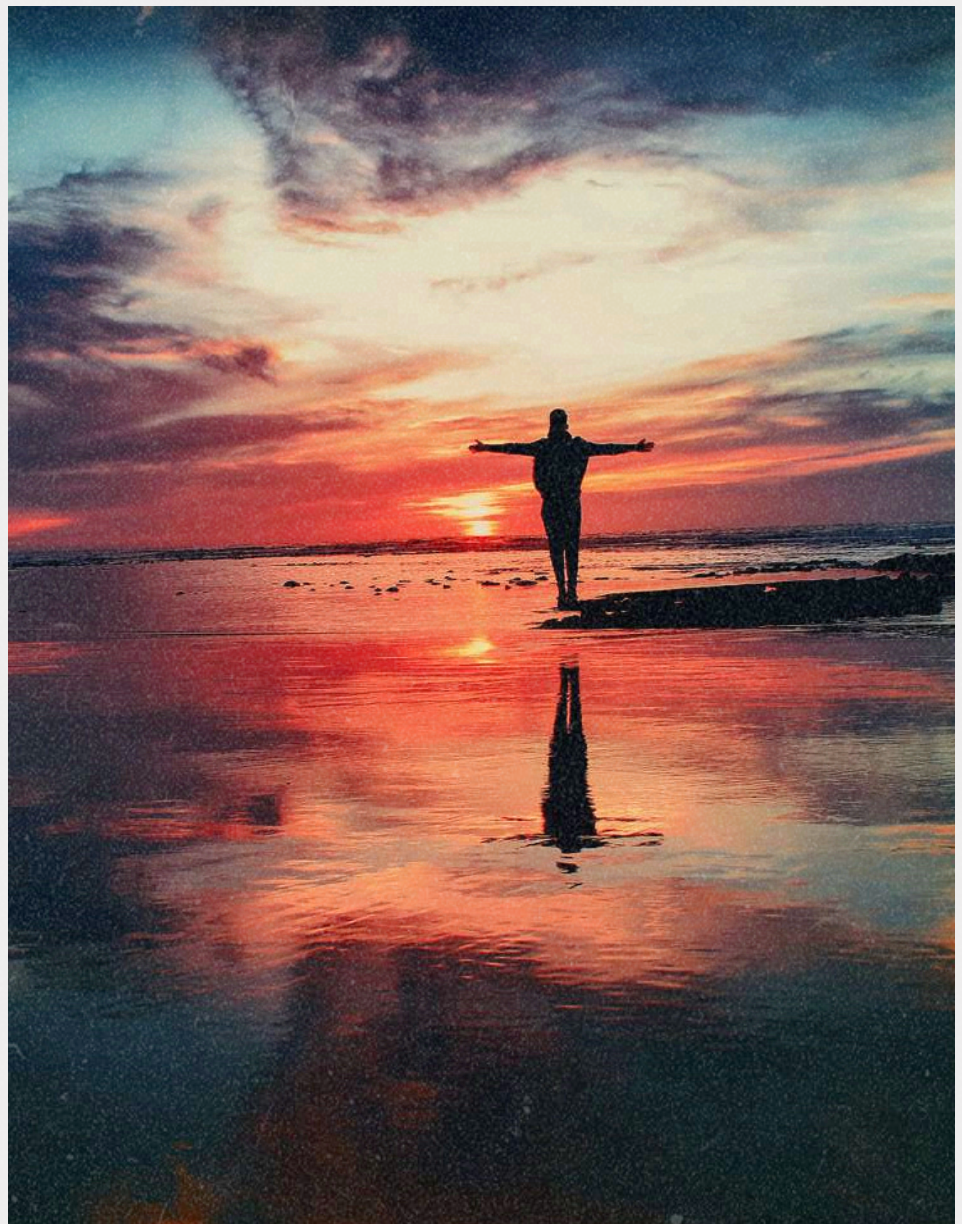
CONSIDER MY
LAMENT

CREATED FOR
CALLING

SHAME IN THE
LIVES OF
MISSIONARIES

EMBRACING
SABBATICAL

HOW TO SEE
CLEARLY
THROUGH
SMUDGY
GLASSES



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From the Editors

Welcome to the second issue of Member Care Journal.

We were very encouraged by the feedback we received after the first issue. We are grateful to those who took the time to contact us and tell us how helpful you had found it. We were delighted to hear from Kelly and Michèle O'Donnell who said that the journal fulfils a dream that they and others have had for over 30 years. You can read more about their vision here:

O'Donnell, K. (1992). An agenda for member care in missions (Ch 21) in K. O'Donnell (Ed.), *Missionary care: Counting the cost for world evangelization* (pp. 286-298). Pasadena, CA: William Carey.

We are also very happy to add Dr Roni Pruitt to our editorial team. She is a pioneer in Member Care, having served in missions for over 35 years with field service in Asia and Europe. Out of her experience flows a passion for missions and the care of missionaries. Dr Pruitt founded the first academic training program in Member Care at Columbia International University in the USA. She is dually trained holding a PhD in the field of Psychology and Intercultural Studies and merges the richness of both disciplines into Member Care. Roni serves as a board member on the Global Member Care Network and is part of its Conference coordinating team. Welcome Roni!

Our first article, by Helma Rem, is on the theme of lament, based on her MA dissertation. Helma unpacks what lament is: an expression of grief and the language of suffering. She looks at instances of lament in the Bible and then explores how lament could be of value to missionaries. Finally, she considers how lament could be incorporated as a practice within member care.

When Dineke de Vries proposed a topic for her MA dissertation, I (Sarah) was excited because it was something that I knew almost nothing about. With her experience in music therapy and creative arts, she wished to explore how art activities could be used for group reflection on calling for mission workers. Through her research, she aimed to determine how such activities could facilitate spiritual and religious coping, aid work engagement and encourage their sense of calling. In this article, Dineke shows that group arts activities can positively influence a sense of calling, religious and spiritual coping, and also a sense of community, so strengthening a missionary's resilience.

Next, we are delighted to include an article from Faith Stephens on shame in the lives of missionaries. This article originally appeared in the March 2024 issue of the *Lausanne Global Analysis* (found here: [March 2024 article](https://lausanne.org/lga)) and is published here with permission from both the author and LGA. To receive that free bimonthly publication from the Lausanne Movement, subscribe online at <https://lausanne.org/lga>. Faith has used her research to outline the roots of shame in theology and how it is experienced by missionaries. She gives examples of what can trigger shame in a missionary and offers some suggestions for engaging with it. We are also excited to be able to include the Shame Awareness Tool which Faith developed and which was not in the original article (due to space).

Billy Drum shares with us his reflections on his recent sabbatical experience. What should a sabbatical entail, and what happens when life throws a curveball and the plans go off track? Thanks, Billy, for sharing your personal experiences, and that of your family, with us.

Finally, you will also find in this issue another case study from Dr Roger Van Der Veen. This time, he tackles the subject of ethical breaches, when they are vague and ambiguous, and what the member care response should be. It also helps to highlight the differences between HR (Human Resources) and Member Care within an organisation. The case study explores the fictitious situation of John and Mary, missionaries who have raised concerns about their

team leader and his use of funds as 'goodwill payments'. See if you can spot another, possibly even more significant, ethical issue that is also at play.

We hope that you enjoy this second issue of the Member Care Journal. Apologies that at present we are unable to translate the journal although we are looking into it. If you would like to submit an article of your own, please contact us for the Writer Guidelines – we are

already working on issues for 2025. We would love to hear from you and receive your feedback or suggestions for future editions. For feedback, queries or the Writer Guidelines please contact journal@globalmembercare.com

Sarah Hay
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From the Editors



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Roger Van Der Veen



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Please note: The views expressed in Member Care Journal are those of the authors of each article and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editorial team.

Consider my lament

By Helma Rem

The work reflects Helma's personal experiences as well as those of many missionaries, highlighting the importance of lament in times of pain and loss. The author explores how lament can be a valuable practice for processing grief and finding hope.



INTRODUCTION



‘Consider my lament’ became the title of my dissertation for the MA Member Care study at Redcliffe. More than that, though mostly in different words, I had heard missionaries say it often in conversations. It also became my personal heart cry as I went

through the process of research and writing from 2019 - 2021. In April 2020 my life changed significantly. I had been the main caregiver for my mother for many years, in which she needed increasing care. Just after COVID hit The Netherlands she passed away, in April 2020. I also lost

family and very close friends in 2020 and 2021. Through writing the dissertation I discovered the encouraging, joyful and deep comfort related to lament and that a lament process ends with hope. Maybe not always directly, but hope will come.

METHODOLOGY USED AND WHY

I hope that this article will encourage readers

a) to consider the possible value of lament for missionaries and

b) to consider lament as a practice in the care for these missionaries known as 'Member Care'.

These were my two research goals, which I addressed by asking the following questions:

- What does lament mean?
- To what extent is the concept of lament evident in member care literature and practice?
- Is there value in lament for missionaries?
- If it seems valuable for missionaries to make lament an integral part of member care, then where can it be integrated into the thinking and practice of member care?

For collecting data I reviewed literature. Interviewing missionaries and member care workers would have been an option, but became more difficult because of timing, and I found that talking about lament and the meaning of it in the missionary context was still quite new or even unknown.

WHAT IS LAMENT?

Scholars like Pemberton, Vroegop, Duffield and Brueggemann made decisions to unravel lament and to understand what happens in lament.

In 'songs of lament' the most common structure seems to have 5 elements:

1. Address
2. Complaint
3. Request
4. Motivation
5. Confidence

Pemberton put them nicely in a circle (See figure 1)

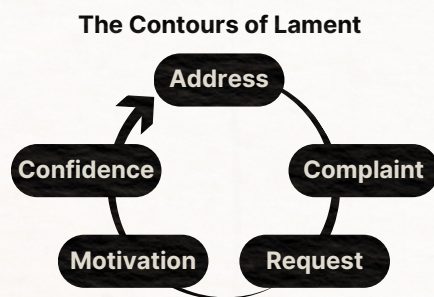


Figure 1. The Contours of Lament. From *Hurting with God* by Glenn Pemberton (2012, p. 66) (Used with permission)

It was difficult to find a definition of lament. I looked at different ones which together will give insight into lament. Pemberton calls "lament a language in motion" which "leaves where lament is leading towards an open question". (2014, p. 51) It is not a language that can freely express all kind of

emotions, but rather a language with structure to be spoken in times of disorientation. (Pemberton, 2012, p. 65)

Wolterstorff writes:

"The lament at heart, is giving voice to the suffering that accompanies deep loss, whatever that loss may be. Lament is not about suffering. Lament is not concerning suffering. Lament is the language of suffering, the voicing of suffering. Behind lament are tears over loss. Lament goes beyond the tears to voice the suffering." (2001)

I decided to use the following description to be used in the work I am involved in:

"Lament is an expression of a grief, an active process of a soul trying to wear out its pain, outlive it, persist through it to a place of respite and a different perspective on living....

It's the expression of a sorrow and a path to a life beyond that sorrow. (Ross, 2020)

It helps to give lament a voice, and to include stages of lament. It can speak to the heart of people hearing or reading it.

LAMENT IN THE BIBLE

My personal journey of lament started with discovering Psalm 13 during a time I had cancer.

Pemberton lists in a table the following causes or words related to lament in the Psalms: attack (from enemy); speech; wicked; against God; sorrow or distress; physical pain or illness; sin; honour or shame; protests innocence (by self); alone; absent or delayed; sense of separation. (2012, pp.247 – 249). “Jeremiah laments by mentioning the judgements from God to the people, to urge them to repent and he encourages them that there is fresh hope in the fact that they have an unchanging covenant with God.” (Brooks, 1989 p. 11)

In learning to lament we can



watch Job calling to God. Davy says: “Job plumbs the depths of suffering like no other work and so addresses human pain and suffering more profoundly and more truly than any other.” (2014, p. 200) And while there are times Job can only express his questions and pain he also acknowledges that he knows of hope. “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.” Job 13:15a.

I could not find lament very explicitly in the New Testament (NT). Some refer to Jesus lamenting when he said: “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why

have you forsaken me?”) Mark 16: 34b. In this deep cry I find all the components of lament represented.

Hassler (2016) concludes that in examining NT texts like 2 Corinthians, lament does exist in the NT. He writes that you have to learn to read between the lines to see lament in the NT. Related to lament and the Bible I came across authors who write about a ‘theology of lament’ and also a ‘missiology of lament’. See books and articles from Bier (2013), Hoff (2013), Mbriwa (2020) and the Evangelical Alliance (No Date).

LAMENT IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT

We cannot avoid thinking about the meaning of lament in a cross-cultural context when considering mission. Franklin wrote:

Missional spirituality takes place in and is deeply influenced within a cultural context. As God works around

the world we hear stories and descriptions of what the spirituality of God’s people looks like. This provides tangible learning experiences about the rich diversity of spirituality, spiritual practices, and tradition. (Franklin in Amalraj, 2018, p. 23)

The word lament may not be used directly, but we do know of lament-like rituals in different cultures, especially around funerals. For some cultures,

lament may not even be a concept. For example, in my own Dutch culture, we grow up with the expression: “Niet klagen maar dragen en bidden om kracht” (do not complain but bear and pray for strength.) To lament would then be translated ‘to complain’ and in my culture complaining is not something to be done.

LAMENT AND MEMBER CARE

LAMENT IN MC LITERATURE

In my research I looked where lament or the concept of lament was mentioned in key member care books. I observed that the more recently a book is published, the more likely it is that lament or the concept is mentioned. The book *Sorrow and Blood* has a chapter about 'The Problem of Evil and Suffering'. (Taylor, 2012, pp. 120 - 130) Lament is mentioned as a practice and possible response to the problem of evil and suffering. Nap mentions the importance of sharing from the heart which can be lamenting from person-to-person (2022, pp. 137 - 154).

Spirituality in Mission: Embracing the Lifelong Journey (Amalraj, 2018) is not introduced as a member care book, but it reflects the development in the mission world. The importance of spirituality is no longer assumed but addressed as important for missionaries. 'Where There Is Lament - Suffering and Spirituality' is a chapter written by Adeney, an anthropologist. She writes about suffering and gives examples from the Bible and from personal experience: information worth reading as background when thinking through lament for missionaries. In the chapter about 'Spiritual Formation' Warner writes:

To be free we must name the truth of our shadow selves. Freedom depends on confessing our unhealthy dependencies, our desperate desire to control, our hidden jealousies and insecurities. These confessions, and subsequent lament and mourning (Matt 5), allow the light and love of the Holy Spirit to enter our lives and bring healing. (Warner in Amalraj, 2018, p 81)

In reviewing the member care literature my conclusion is that there is a lack of engagement with lament. It may be that often missionaries are still looked at as people who are strong and will always find a way to deal with life when it is not ok.

LAMENT AND THE MISSION CONTEXT

LAMENT AS A PRACTICE IN MEMBERCARE.

I asked the question "was lament always a practice in member care but was it just not described this way?" Based on the research I have to say 'no'. Lament did not stand out as a practice in the member care world.

Perhaps the reason was because lament wasn't a practice in the churches missionaries came from. If today's missionaries and member care workers grew up in such churches and other

Christian environments like youth and student groups or Christian movements, then lament isn't something to turn to when life is hard and unfair. Even lamentations in the Bible did not trigger many churches and mission organisations to make lament part of their liturgy or spiritual practices. There was some change when COVID hit the world. Then I found a few articles about lament especially written for missionaries.

Spiritual life in general became something mission organisations needed to take up with their staff. The book *Too Valuable to Lose* already mentioned that the 'new breed' missionaries find it difficult to discipline themselves for a regular time of prayer and Bible reading. (Taylor, 1997) How is that for the 'new breeds' of today? Was it therefore that a book like *Spirituality in Mission* (Amalraj, 2018) was written? Even in this book lament is rarely used. Adeney the author of the chapter 'Where There Is Lament' (Adeney in Amalraj, 2018, pp. 55-63) quotes Brueggemann (1995, pp.103-104):

Where there is lament, the believer is able to take initiative with God and so develop ... the ego-strength that is necessary for responsible faith. But where the capacity to initiate lament is absent, one is left only with praise and doxology. God then

is omnipotent, always to be praised. The believer is nothing, and can praise or accept guilt uncritically where life with God does not function properly. The outcome is a “false self”. ...The absence of lament makes a religion of coercive obedience the only possibility.

Adeney connects the theological world, writing about lament, to the mission world. She confirms the place and importance of lament in spirituality and mission.



LAMENT AS POTENTIAL HELP FOR MISSIONARIES.

Member Care has taught us that missionaries need support to endure. Lament can be a member care/spiritual practice that helps in situations of difficulty, in facing grief and loss which are so pertinent in missionary-life.

Duffield writes about losing lament in the church:

Why have we in churches abandoned the lament? Is it because we have become too comfortable? Is it because we are not sensitive enough to communal pain and social injustice? Is it because our churches do not allow the voice of suffering and protest to surface in our prayers and liturgies? ... Although these questions indicate possible reasons why lament is neglected in the Church, I want to ask a more practical question: Can we rediscover lament? I also want to address the biblical and theological roots, or under-girding, of such a rediscovery of the practice of lament. (Duffield in Dorey, 2012)

When it comes to lament in the missionary context do we then look at an organisation, a department, a missionary, a workshop, a spiritual retreat, a special lament service, a meeting with a friend, or another opportunity where lament can have its rightful place? Before answering this question it is necessary: to know what lament is; to choose to lament; to make time and to find the right time to do it. If we do we will find opportunities. It is not a practice one suddenly decides to take up as a good thing to do. It is a way to process things with God.

I wrote Psalms of Lament reflecting on difficult situations in my life. Reflection can be closely connected with lament. Creating a longing for practising lament can become part of an organisational member care culture. Because hardly anything has been written about lament as a practice in member care, member care workers may need to be the first to learn about the practice of lament. Maybe the re-discovery of lament in the mission context through addressing it in member care can be of help in bringing back lament in churches.



Conclusions

I have examined the status of lament in the field of member care and for missionaries.. I have looked at how lament could be a possible practice to add for both even though the concept and practice of lament is relatively new in this field. Lament as a spiritual practice fits into the member care context and has value for individual missionaries.

While the literature mainly speaks about lament as a spiritual practice where lament is directed to God, people can lament to each other. I believe it is important to make this kind of lament known so that it can be practised and so that we will not fail as a friend or a member care worker, but be what Job wanted his friends to be.

Job needed friends to engage the pain, not interpret the pain. Job needed friends who would join in the chorus of lament, not offer the secret prayer to a life of blessing. ... Job lamented before God, not only because he had been subjected to terrible trouble, but because his friends had failed him. (DeGroat, 2009)

A role of member care could be to equip missionaries to understand what lament is and to look at basic skills needed to enable them to sit with others in their lament. It can also be used in counselling and debriefing settings where personal lament can also be seen as debriefing with God.

My conclusion is that member care workers and missionaries need to explore the importance of lament and to explore and discover how lament can be of value and practised in their work and lives. Also member care workers should look for ways to implement teaching about lament in the ongoing training and development of missionaries.

Reflection

It was a privilege to learn more about lament and how lament can be used by people in their relationship with God. I came to understand that lament can be a practice in general to help in life as it comes, especially when life gets difficult. I did consider if lament is a practice to use regularly but lament needs a reason and in general this is a difficulty: something someone struggles with or something a group or a community struggles with or suffers about. We see a lot of hurt and suffering in the mission world. I think that is also a reason why in the Trauma Healing workshops lament plays an important role. (Trauma Healing Institute, 2024)

Will it help everyone and should member care workers always use it? I don't think so. It can be one of the tools to use. I do think that knowing about lament and its value in the mission world is important. Since finishing my dissertation I have had several opportunities to share about lament: in short seminars, during a Member Care Netherlands day, for my colleagues in Papua New Guinea (both expat and national). I was encouraged by signs of discovery. These are all seeds that have been planted.

It will be interesting to see how making lament more a practice in member care and for missionaries will help people to process and to find ways to hope again.

"This may be found out if more research is done about the impact of lament, and why people choose it or not. When talking about further research and with the mission world becoming more global, learning from different cultures about how they lament will enrich this beautiful practice.

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Created for calling

APPLYING GROUP ARTS ACTIVITIES TO
PROMOTE WORK ENGAGEMENT THROUGH
AWARENESS OF CALLING AMONG
MISSIONARIES

By Dineke de Vries-Kruidhof



MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

As a member care facilitator, I have observed the personal price workers have often had to pay for participating in mission work. I wondered if and how their initial motivation, or calling, helped them to stay positively engaged with their work. I observed (and have personally experienced) the incredible strength of faith-inspired calling as a key factor (Plake, 2015). Being part of a community of colleagues who shared the same values and purpose made it even more powerful. I wanted to research how intentional communal reflection on personal calling might impact my colleagues' levels of work engagement.

Applying my professional experience as a music therapist in psychiatric care, I chose to employ arts activities for this group reflection. Expression through the arts, especially when guided by an art therapist, can be experienced as deeply meaningful, providing self-awareness, insights and interpersonal connection in a different way than verbal interaction can. (Leckey, 2011, p. 501; Crone et al., 2013, p. 279).

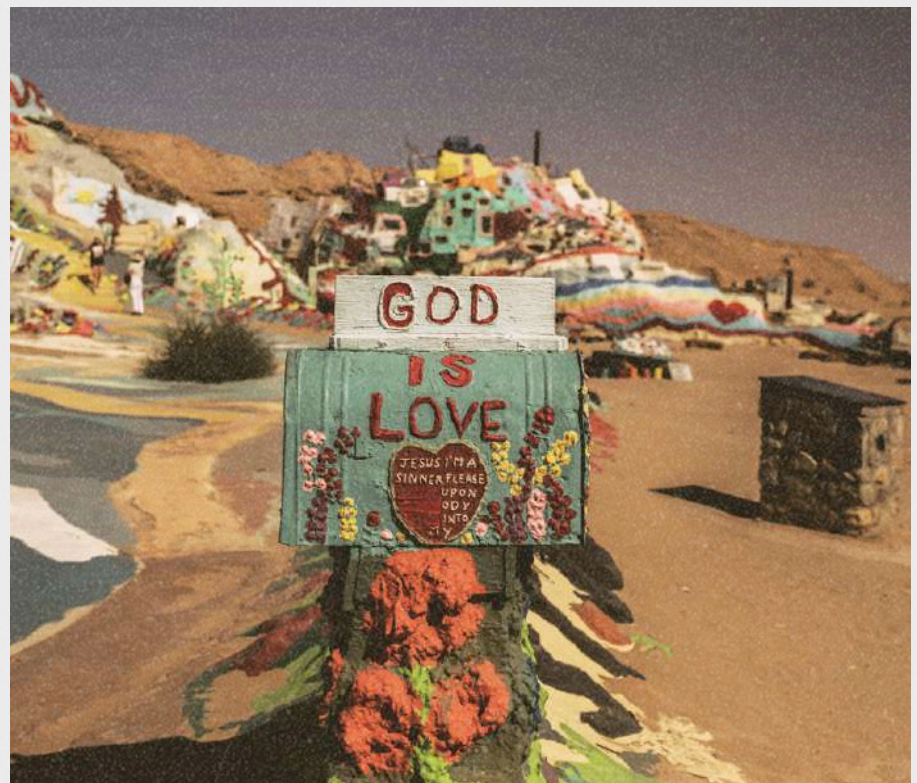
I developed a curriculum with arts activities for group reflection on calling for a group of mission workers and named it

the Calling Project. It aimed to allow participants to discover and artistically express personal thoughts and emotions throughout their journey with God in understanding their calling. Next to the increased self-awareness this might facilitate, I expected the process of group arts activities and sharing of personal stories to bring meaningful interpersonal connection. Reflection on one's spiritual journey could potentially amplify a participant's experience of being led and loved by God. This could also serve as a reminder of shared spiritual purpose which in turn might positively influence the sense of meaning and engagement with their work.

HYPOTHESIS

The foundation for the Calling Project were the statements from Bickerton (2013) and Miner et al. (2015) that connectedness to God, collaborative religious coping, experienced meaningfulness in work (eg serving God through work), and calling are positively related to work engagement. On that premise, the following hypothesis was assessed:

Participation in the Calling Project, in which group arts activities around the theme of calling facilitate spiritual and religious coping, will positively influence levels of work engagement and sense of calling in missionaries.



RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODS

My associated research question was: 'How might group arts activities promote an awareness of calling among missionaries, and how might that impact their level of work engagement?'

Both desk and field research were applied. Through desk research, an academic theoretical framework was formed, exploring five theoretical concepts: work engagement, calling, religious and spiritual coping, arts, spirituality and wellbeing, and member care.

Data was gathered in field research through a series of group arts activities sessions (named the Calling Project), semi-structured interviews with the participants, and measurement of sense of calling and levels of work engagement both before and after, through the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (Dik et al., 2013) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-17 (Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006).



FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

WORK ENGAGEMENT

Work engagement is defined as 'a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption' (Bakker et al., 2008, p. 187). People who are engaged with their work are able to face work-related 'adversity' or stress with greater resilience. Recent HR and management thinking have a limited and varied understanding of the concept (Shuck, 2011, p. 2; HR.com, 2018, p. 6).

The Utrecht Group (Schaufeli et al. 2002; 2006; 2011) are by far the most developed in their thinking. Their scale to measure engagement, the UWES, has been widely used in high quality research (Bailey et al., 2015, p. 44, 45), and so I have chosen to use their definition and scale.

Work engagement among religious workers:

Only a few articles have addressed work engagement among religious workers (Bickerton, 2013, 2015; Miner et al., 2015, Plake, 2015). Bickerton notes that research into occupational wellbeing among clergy is biased towards burnout (Bickerton et al., 2014, p. 1), yet this is incongruent with the high

levels of job motivation and satisfaction (Bickerton, 2013, p. 27). He found that attachment to God, collaborative religious coping and a sense of spiritual calling, serve as resources for work engagement.

Miner et al. (2015, p. 59) add that connectedness with 'a source of divine control', and calling are related to work well-being.

CALLING

This article does not provide room to discuss all the facets of calling that were reviewed, so narrows it down to the most relevant aspects, the definition of calling and calling among missionaries.



DEFINING CALLING

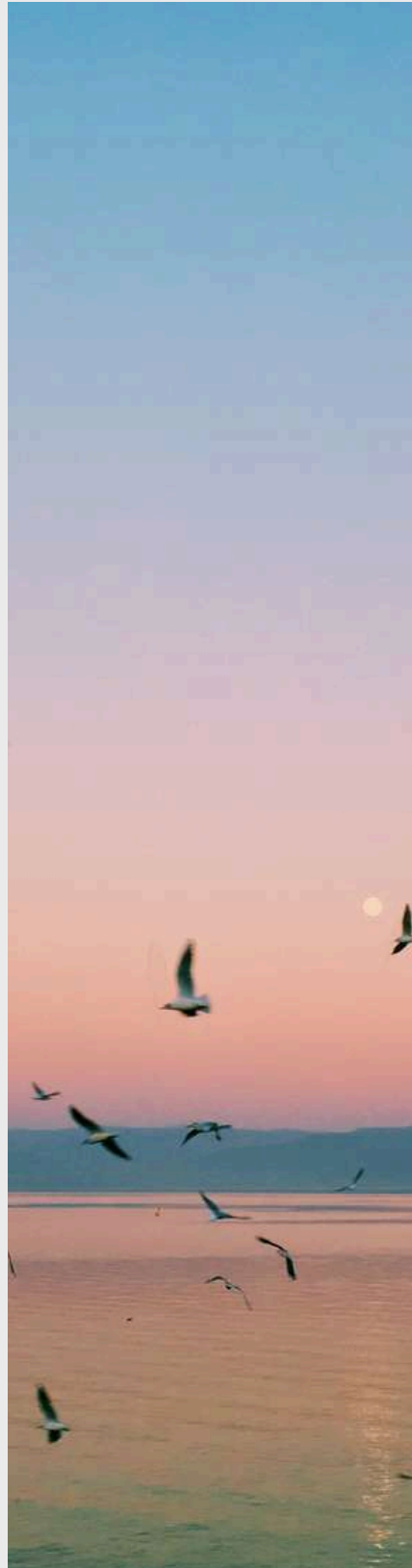
Dik and Duffy (2009, p. 427, Dik et al. 2012, p. 244) described calling as:

(1) a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to (2) approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and (3) that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

In other words, being summoned by something outside the self to take on a role that is, or is experienced as both purposeful and meaningful, driven by service to the other.

CALLING AMONG MISSIONARIES

Bickerton (2013, p. 175) acknowledges 'calling' as a spiritual resource that promotes work engagement. Plake (2015) developed a Missionary Expatriate Effectiveness scale, which confirmed that calling directly predicts work engagement. Interestingly, calling tends to be present in higher quantities among missionaries who have lived in a single country for a number of years (ibid, p. 227), and is as such correlated to years on the field.



Dik and Duffy (2012) state and Plake (2015, p. 227) confirms that a sense of calling has a dynamic, developing character.

Married missionaries score slightly lower on calling, perhaps since they have to negotiate answering to their calling with the needs of their spouse and children (Plake, p. 230).

RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL COPING

Björk and Kim (2009, pp. 612, 613) state that 'one largely ignored area in religious coping research concerns the missionary context'. In the general population, social support has been proven to be key in how people deal with stress. Such support can be found through relationships with families and friends, but also in one's (faith) community or God (Björk and Kim, p. 613). In their research among short-term missionaries, religious support from God, team members and team leaders were positively related to psychological wellbeing.

In summary, we can state that, although it has received little attention in academic literature, there are strong indicators both for the need for and the value of religious coping among missionaries.

ARTS, SPIRITUALITY AND WELL-BEING

To provide an academic theoretic framework around the arts activities that were part of the Fieldwork, next, I will highlight literature around the following three themes: the relationship between creativity and wellbeing, the interaction between spirituality and creativity, and the theory and application of arts activities in therapy.

• HEALTH BENEFITS OF CREATIVITY

When referring to creativity in this section, I connect this to the domain of arts-based activities. Creative arts (music, drama, dance, visual arts, and writing) activities provide an opportunity to gain insight, reflect on, and find meaning in complex life issues on a spiritual, emotional and psychological level (McClean, Bunt and Daykin, 2012; Carson, 2010; Valters Paintner, 2007; Farrell et al., 2008). While processing thoughts, ideas and insights metaphorically by making a creative product, '(making) art invites the formation of complex ideas and the internalization and personalization of learning' and may capture thoughts that are otherwise inexpressible (Wang, 2015, p. 79). Research indicates that creative activities can promote social networks and improve psychological and physical health (Leckey, 2011, p. 501; Crone et al., 2013, p. 279).' De Vries-Kruidhof (2016, p. 4)

• ARTS AND SPIRITUALITY

Observing or making art as meditation, worship or approach to express oneself is an old and widely utilised practice (Rennie, 2015). Through the combined application of creativity and spirituality personal growth and positive transformation take place, as stated by the theory of Transformative Coping:

Spirituality affords the chance for reflection and increased self-knowledge (Danesh, 1997; Pargament, 2007; Zohar & Marshall, 2000), while creativity provides a chance for emotional expression (Bray, 2010; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Jamison, 1993; Madden & Bloom, 2004) and, as a result, perspectives, expectations, and acceptance can be adjusted. (Corry et al., 2013, p. 981).



• ARTS ACTIVITIES IN THERAPY

My experience as a music therapist, and in co-leading art therapy sessions, influenced me in applying arts activities as a reflection method in the field research. I was influenced by Smeijster's analogue process theory, which 'describes musical phrases as equal to felt vitality affects in the person' (Goodman, 2011, p. 236). Based on this theory, one can see expression through art as a direct and deeply personal communication of inner experience, enabling the 'art-maker' to share their emotional interior with others in a profound and meaningful way.

Making and listening to music in therapy enhances experiences associated with spirituality, such as transcendence, faith and hope, a sense of meaning and purpose and a search for connectedness (McClean, Bunt and Daykin, 2012, p. 403).

Art therapists Pelletier and Cournoyer perceive artmaking as a way to process and express how the soul experiences spirituality. Participating in group art therapy enables individuals to relate both to God (vertically) and to the other (horizontally) (2015, p. 108).

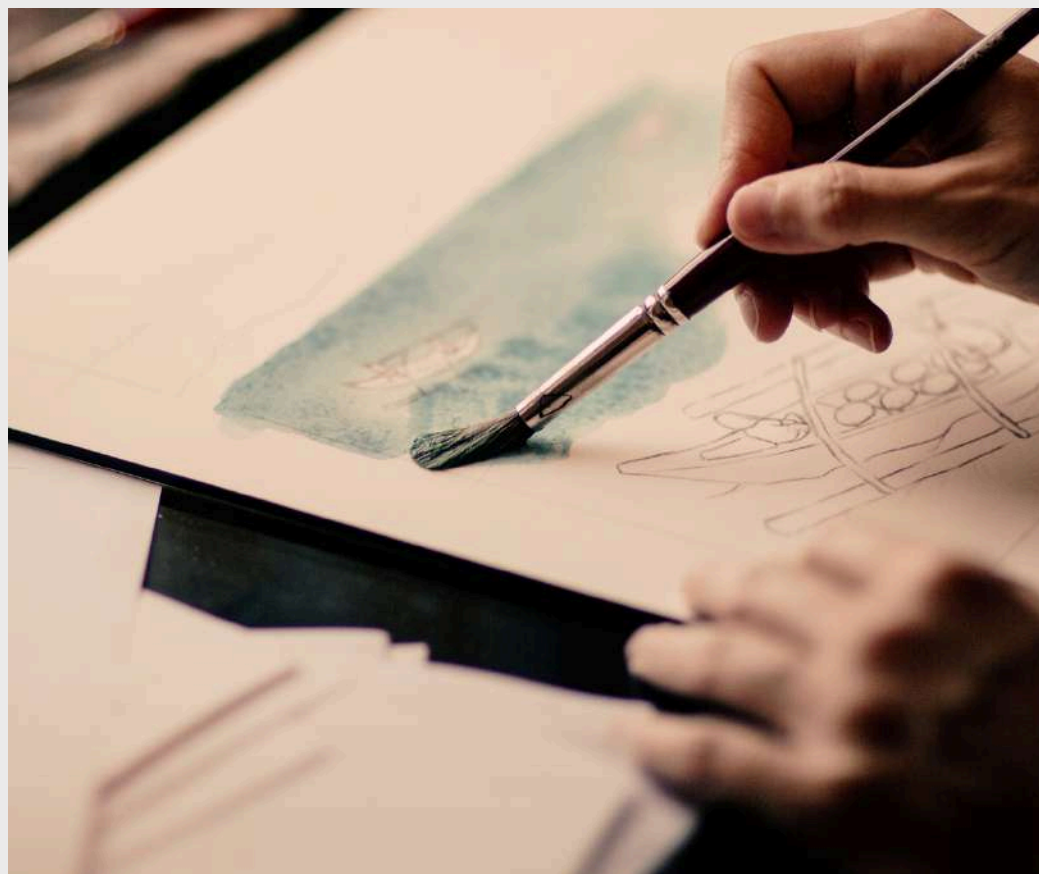
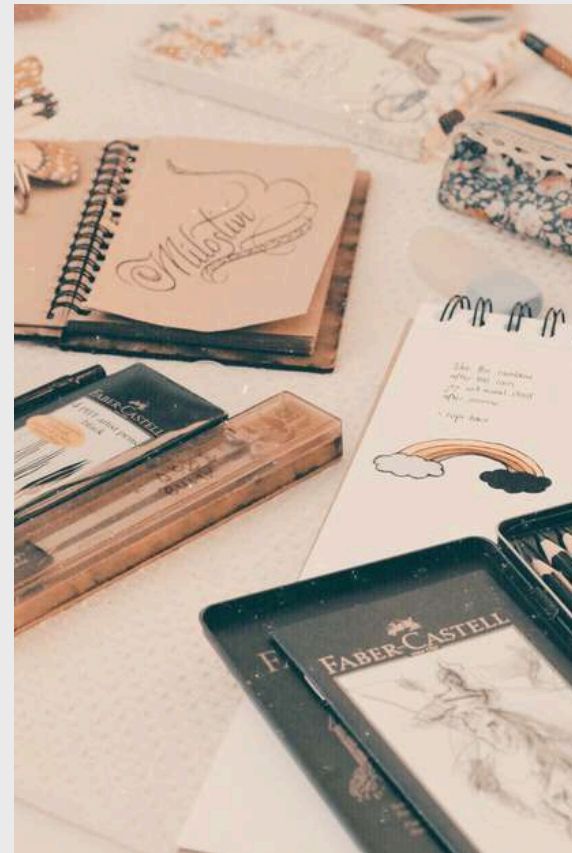
MEMBER CARE (MC)

As we assess the research question 'How might group arts activities promote an awareness of calling among missionaries, and how might that impact their level of work engagement?', one might question how it is related to the practice of MC. Promoting awareness of calling could be expected to fall in the realm of pastoral care or spiritual direction. Promotion of work engagement could be associated with HR. This research relates both to the practice of MC.

MC practice would benefit from increased knowledge of factors improving the work-related health of workers. If workers are supported through MC on an individual level but still work in an unhealthy or even toxic work environment (Hay, 2004), substantial well-being development may be unlikely.

There is a need for a shift from mostly responsive to more preventative MC. Such a movement could be seen as a parallel with the shift in psychology thinking from more illness-focused to strengths-focused psychology, known as positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). MC has a unique position in mission organisations by combining characteristics of pastoral, psychological, and organisational care. This offers opportunity for holistic care

which aims to promote work engagement, a sense of calling, religious and spiritual coping and the use of arts in reflection.



FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD RESEARCH

PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

In March and April 2017, I led a series of five arts activity sessions, which I named The Calling Project (the CP).

The five participants of the CP (real names not used) were colleagues of the organisation I provided MC for at the time. Participants of the CP live in a fairly large city in Asia. The city is known for its air pollution, little public green space, noisy traffic, barking street dogs, and overpopulation. For participants, it is a joy to live in this country, relate to locals and appreciate their rich history and cultural diversity. Simultaneously, there are constant background stressors.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Christian organisations have unique characteristics. Workers have a 'psychological contract' with their work, as they see it not just as work but as ministry. In the case of the organisation in which this research took place, Nicholls (2018, p. 79) notes that its corporate culture 'includes a remarkably high level of personal commitment to 'the cause', along with a strong sense of community and shared

values'. In my opinion, these environmental and organisational factors require strong convictions about the reasons to live and work in that setting (calling), and an experience of meaningfulness in order to stay engaged with one's work.

RELIGIOUS SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE ARTS ACTIVITIES

As mentioned, the Calling Project consisted of five-member care arts activities sessions around the theme of calling. In one of the sessions, all participants brought a piece of music that spoke about their sense of calling. Annie and Carl appreciated listening to all the different music since it reminded them of all the different sides of God, and the different ways people can relate to Him.

In another session, we did a group singing improvisation around the theme of lament. For Annie, the spontaneity that this activity necessitated, made her 'open for the Spirit'. In singing improvisation, there is little room for thinking ahead, or planning what to do: one can only respond musically to others in the moment. As such participants act from their senses, their gut, which is the same intuitive knowing through which the

Spirit sometimes speaks.

In the arts activities, Diana related to God with more openness and closeness. Doing the activities together as a group was a support in this process. She felt that God said, 'You don't just draw closer to me. Your spiritual life and well-being involve community.' According to Diana, this sense of community in the group was stronger because all participants were required to attend every meeting. (I required this to ensure everyone experienced the same sessions, and research results would not be affected by participants missing certain sessions).



PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH THE ARTS ACTIVITIES

The arts activities allowed some of the participants to experience personal spiritual growth (spiritual coping). A major theme Carl reflected on was the letting go of having to know the specifics of his calling and the work he was supposed to be doing. This process required surrendering these things to God. For Carl, this process had a parallel in the group lament singing improvisation. This was for him the most uncomfortable of all the arts activities, but he was committed to trying it. He experienced his participation in the activity as a 'type of surrender to the process and just learn from what God is doing'.

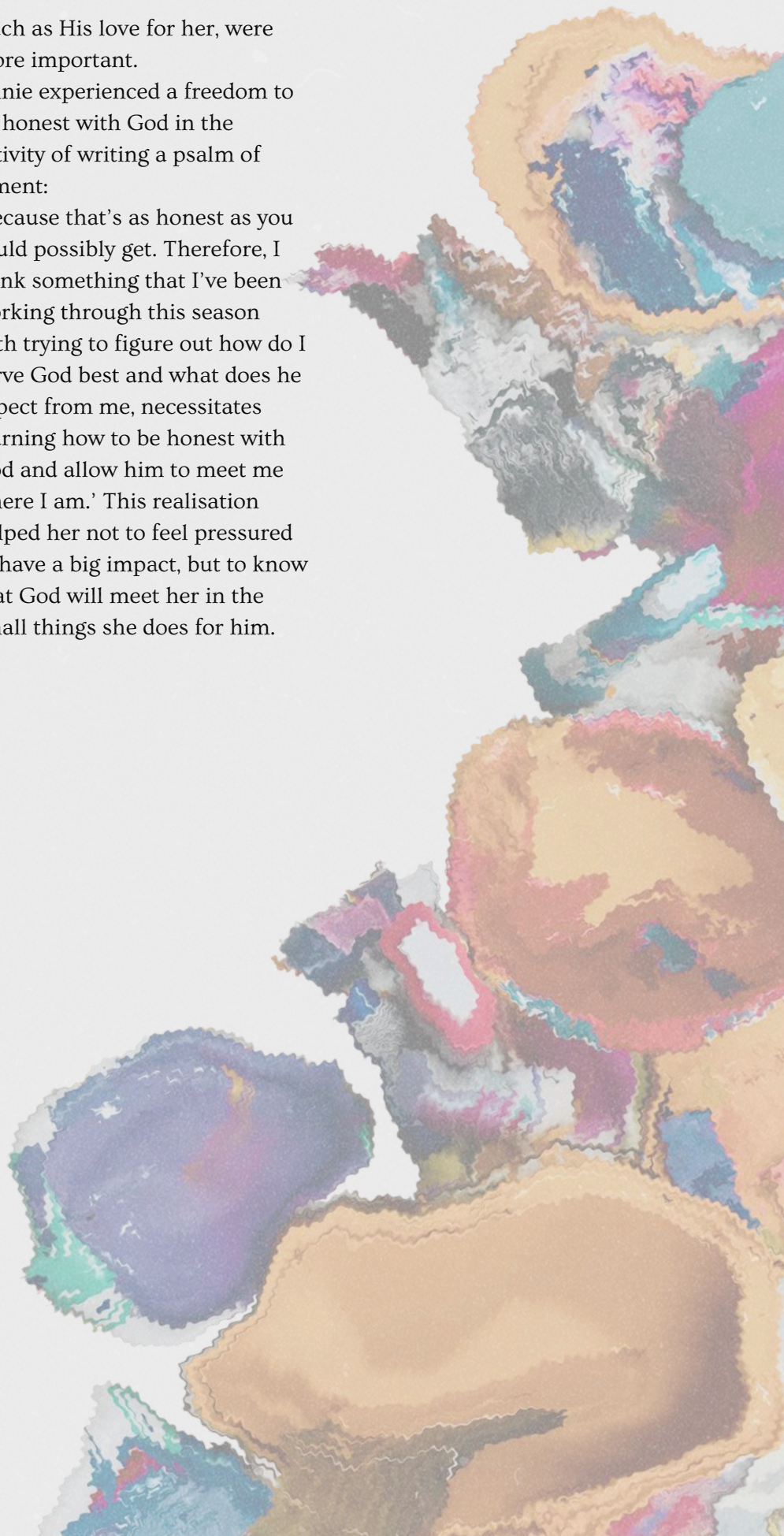
For Diana, expressing her thoughts and emotions around calling in the arts activities supported her (already changing) understanding of her calling. She felt she could pray about these themes to God through the art she made.

One of the arts activities involved making a drawing of your personal journey with God. This was for Eleanor an encouraging reminder of His care for her in all the different moments in her life. Eleanor again realised that God is not most concerned about the tasks she should perform for him, but that bigger overarching truths,

such as His love for her, were more important.

Annie experienced a freedom to be honest with God in the activity of writing a psalm of lament:

'Because that's as honest as you could possibly get. Therefore, I think something that I've been working through this season with trying to figure out how do I serve God best and what does he expect from me, necessitates learning how to be honest with God and allow him to meet me where I am.' This realisation helped her not to feel pressured to have a big impact, but to know that God will meet her in the small things she does for him.



INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The possible impact of participation was assessed with two questionnaires (CVQ and UWES-17) and semi-structured interviews prior to and subsequent to the CP.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF BEING CALLED

The first main theme of the interview content was that of the participants' personal experience of being called. In the interviews done before the CP, the participants described their experience of calling as either a process, rational choice or 'the missionary call'. Despite differences in understanding of what a missionary call was, in almost all participants, there was a developing, non-static conceptualisation of calling.

INFLUENCE OF THEOLOGY OF CALLING

It is striking to me how, except for Bea, all participants experienced a certain amount of anxiety in uncertainty about what their specific calling is and how they should answer it. I do not have enough information to be able to indicate the cause of this. It is my impression that as a certain theology of calling (namely, the belief that God explicitly calls people for a specific task) is challenged. There is more room for the trusting belief that whatever we

contribute in faith, God will use for his Kingdom.

It is interesting to note that people who experienced this uncertainty about calling were all North Americans. There is a possibility that they were more influenced by Puritan theology than Bea, who was from Europe. This shift in theology of calling also impacts the considerations about what is defined as 'spiritual work', and how it is not just the work that one once perceived themselves to be assigned to. The participants grew to believe that dedication to a relationship with God and 'mundane' daily tasks are worthy work to be called to.

UWES-17 AND CVQ RESULTS

UWES-17 results indicated an increase in work engagement after participating in the CP. Participants did not point to a reason within the CP for this increase. However, this might be influenced by a lack of understanding of the concept of work engagement among participants.

CVQ results indicated an increase of (search for and presence of) calling after participating in the CP. However, the CVQ results are questioned since the participants' understanding of calling might differ from the concept of calling that the CVQ is built upon.

Before conducting the fieldwork, I assumed that an increase in the presence of all measurement factors would indicate that participation in the CP correlated with a positively experienced sense of calling. However, statements made by the participants in the interviews nuanced my thinking on this. A decrease in 'sense of being called to current work' (CVQ Statement 1) but an increased sense of being called to be in relationship with God would score negatively on 'Transcendent Summons - Present' but made participants Diana and Carl experience their calling more positively. Similarly, CVQ statement 3 ('My work helps me live out my life's purpose') could be scored as decreased by a relieved Diana and Carl, since no longer their work, but their relationship with God gives their life purpose.

The research results indicate that applying the CP as a member care method can strengthen missionary sense of calling and religious and spiritual coping. Furthermore, participation in the CP promoted a sense of (religious) community among participants.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research explored the impact of group arts activities in member care on the awareness of calling and levels of work engagement of missionaries.

In my experience, member care practice is often described as a service to the individual (or a family). This research clearly indicates the value of group religious coping; a key benefit of the CP was open sharing about the spiritual journey and struggles of the missionary existence, in a member care group setting. This underlines the need for member care efforts to be focused on building spiritual resources that enable missionaries to deal with adversity through relating to God. Group arts activities offer opportunity for community building, spiritual growth, reflection and transformative coping.



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Shame *in* the Lives *of* Missionaries

By Faith Stephens



WOMEN SERVING IN CENTRAL ASIA

What is shame?

Twenty years of experience working in the Muslim world and interacting with missionaries who serve in this context has led me to consider how missionaries experience shame. This article will explore shame, how it is experienced by missionaries, and offer tools to equip missionaries to deal effectively with shame.

Shame is a universal emotion that often results from not meeting one's own or a group's expectations.¹ Shame is present in all cultures and groups, but

social norms and cultural values of one's culture, gender, age, religion, and role, as well as personality types will instigate shame differently.² Shame can cause one to feel defective, worthless, and like a failure.³

Shame can be experienced throughout one's life beginning in babies as young as eighteen months old. As shame is experienced, neural firing patterns are developed that are triggered when similar experiences occur, perpetuating

the shame cycle.⁴ Shame signals one's brain to go into fight, flight, or freeze mode making it difficult to think rationally in these moments.⁵ Experiencing shame can produce physical responses such as looking away, blushing, slumped shoulders, and sweating.⁶ Common reactions to the emotion of shame include hiding or escaping from others, which can jeopardize relationships and impact one's contribution and involvement within a group.⁷

¹ Brene Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are* (Center City, Minn: Hazelden, 2010), 67. Jesse A. Allpress, et al., 'Two Faces of Group-Based Shame: Moral Shame and Image Shame Differentially Predict Positive and Negative Orientations to Ingroup Wrongdoing,' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 40 no. 10 (2014): 1270-1284.

² Claudia Ferreira, et al., 'A New Measure to Assess External and Internal Shame: Development, Factor Structure and Psychometric Properties of the External and Internal Shame Scale,' *Current Psychology* (March 2020): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00709-0>. Brene Brown, 'Shame Resilience Theory: A Grounded Theory Study on Women and Shame,' *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Services* 87, no.1 (2006): 43-53. Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 5-110. Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile, *The Road Back to You: An Enneagram Journey of Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove: IVP Books/Intervarsity Press, 2016), 15-29.

³ Corinna N. Scheel, Hedwig Eisenbarth and Katrin Rentzsch, 'Assessment of Different Dimensions of Shame Proneness: Validation of the SHAME,' *Assessment* 27, no. 8 (2020): 1699-1717, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107319111882013>. Mark W. Baker, *Overcoming Shame* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2018), 13.

⁴ Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections Between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices That Can Transform Your Life and Relationships* (Carol Stream, IL: Salt River, 2010), 66-195.

⁵ Brene Brown, *I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't): Making the Journey from 'What Will People Think?' to 'I Am Enough'* (New York: Gotham Books, 2014), 27.

⁶ Neda Sedighimornani, 'Shame and its Features: Understanding of Shame,' *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies* 3, no.3 (2018): 86, DOI: 10.5281/ZENODO.1453426.

⁷ Brian Lickel et. al., 'Vicarious Shame and Guilt,' *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 8, no. 2 (2005): 145-157, DOI: 10.1177/13684302050501064.

Holly A. McGregor and Andrew J. Elliot, 'The Shame of Failure: Examining the Link Between Fear of Failure and Shame,' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31, no. 2 (February 2005): 218-231, DOI: 10.1177/0146167204271420.

Roots of shame in theology

In order to have a holistic picture of shame in the lives of missionaries, it was important to explore the roots of shame in theology. Shame was the first emotion experienced in the Bible as recorded in Genesis 3:6-8.

Both Adam and Eve experienced shame after they ate the fruit that God had told them not to eat. As a result, they realized they were naked and felt shame.

Although Adam and Eve experienced shame after sin, what they felt shame over was not their sin, but their vulnerable exposure. Shame was experienced because they realized they were exposed, seen by another person, and their connection to God and each other was threatened.

In the Biblical narrative, not only was the relationship between Adam and Eve corrupted by shame, but also their relationship with God.⁸

Interestingly, God's reaction to Adam and Eve's shame was to pursue them in their hiding as he called out, 'Where are you?'⁹ He then provided for their shameful exposure by making clothing of animal skins. God's response of moving towards Adam and Eve in their shame is how God continues to engage humanity in their experiences of shame. In fact, Jesus overcame shame on the cross. Allender and Longman explain, 'Jesus willingly endured the shame of the cross, but He scorned it—or, in other words, He shamed shame.'¹⁰ God's movement towards humanity as shame is experienced is an invitation for people to bring their shame to God.

Adaptive and negative aspects to shame

There are two aspects to the impact of shame on a person's life. The strongest argument for adaptive aspects of shame is that shame helps maintain moral values, social rules, help change behaviour and lead people to repent of sin and to God.

The list of negative aspects of shame is very long and includes breakdown of social relationships, fear of relationships, anger reactions, low self-esteem, decreased empathy, suicide, self-harm, depressive moods, borderline personality disorder, social phobia, substance abuse, addictive behaviours, and eating disorders. Another negative aspect of shame is that it can make one believe God is distant and does not approve of or love them as much as others.¹¹

⁸ Simon Cozens, *Looking Shame in the Eye: A Path to Understanding, Grace and Freedom* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2019), 25.

⁹ Holy Bible: New Living Translation (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Genesis 3:9,3:21.

¹⁰ Dan Allender and Tremper Longman, *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs, CO, NavPress, 2015), 227.

¹¹ Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2020), 106. Holy Bible: New Living Translation (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Genesis 3:9,3:21.

Potential shame triggers for missionaries

Considering that missionaries are dealing with expectations from multiple cultures and groups as well as their expectations they have for themselves, there are many potential shame triggers.¹² Some examples from my research include:

- language learning
- support raising
- ministry expectations from team or sending organization
- trauma experiences
- being molested or harassed
- responses to risk
- women's roles in ministry and at home
- singleness
- childlessness
- amount of material possessions (having more than host culture or less than passport culture)
- burnout
- doubting or struggling in their faith
- adjusting to life in a new country
- taking breaks or spending money on breaks
- leaving family or aging parents in passport country
- struggling to maintain all responsibilities
- varying expectations from multiple cultures including host culture, passport culture, and expat culture in country of service
- leaving the field

Shame experienced by missionaries

This deeper understanding about shame has helped me to understand my experience of living as a missionary in the Muslim world. The country that I served in was a very challenging field because of its political instability, male-dominated society, and strict religious laws. As a female missionary serving in this environment, there were many opportunities to feel like I was not meeting the expectations of my organization, the expat community, the churches that sent me, the host culture, and the expectations I had for myself. As I have learned more about shame, I understood that I was probably not the only one experiencing it. I believed that it was important to look at this topic further as the negative aspects of shame could be harming missionaries, hindering connection with God and others, which ultimately impacts ministry.

In order to understand how shame is experienced by missionary women, I invited women who served in the same country I did to participate in two focus groups to discuss the topic of shame. The discussion was shaped by the findings of the literature. Not surprisingly, the focus group findings align with the shame literature, including that everyone

experiences shame. When I asked women to describe their experience of shame they explained it with even stronger language than the definitions cited earlier. I was told shame is extremely painful, isolating, diminishing, tortuous to the soul, and like a prison. Additionally, when asked to share experiences that caused the emotion of shame many of the potential shame triggers for missionaries that are listed above were mentioned. The data was recorded in five main themes which included relationships, harassment, cultural values, reputation, language learning, and transitions.

Additionally, many of the negative aspects of shame were mentioned including suicidal thoughts, crying, frustration, anger, self-condemnation, self-blame, embarrassment, feeling isolated, not speaking out, trying to hide, wanting to give up a role, trying to work harder.

Perhaps the most significant finding was how willing women were to share their experiences with shame. As women shared their experiences with shame, their openness prompted other women to share their similar experiences. As the women shared, they were able to help each other see benefits in their responses to shame that they had not seen themselves.

¹² Harriet Hill, 'Missionaries and Shame,' *Missio Dei: A Journal of Missional Theology and Praxis* 11. (2020).

Shame must be addressed

As we consider both the literature and the focus groups, it appears inevitable that missionaries will continue to experience potential shame triggers throughout their service and lives. Shame has existed since Adam and Eve and will inevitably be present until the Lord's return. Curt Thompson explains that shame is 'the emotional weapon that evil uses to corrupt our relationship with God and

each other'.¹³ If not addressed, shame can negatively impact missionaries' relationship with God, each other, and can lead to other coping strategies such as addictions and self-harm.

Missionaries need to be equipped to be aware of shame and have healthy strategies to engage with shame as it occurs to prevent these negative impacts on their ministries and to strengthen their relationships with God and others.

Suggestions for engaging with shame

Shame results from how one evaluates themselves or believes others are evaluating them. Messages that were received from one's family, community, and social and cultural environments contribute to the types of things the brain encodes as shameful. These formed pathways in the brain continue to fire the same way throughout life unless retrained. Therefore, to adequately address shame in one's life, retraining these previously formed pathways will be important.

The conclusion of my research was that in order to effectively deal with shame, missionaries need to evaluate themselves through the lens of Scripture and what God says about them. Simon Cozens explains that it is problematic when we look for validation from within ourselves or from a group because 'we are looking across to the world, and not up to our maker'.¹⁴

Firstly, missionaries should have self-awareness of the emotion of shame in their lives. Being able to recognize how they experience shame in their bodies—physically, mentally, emotionally, understanding the experiences that often trigger shame—including how their personality contributes to experiencing shame, and knowing how they typically respond to shame, will help missionaries to recognize shame quickly.

However, being able to recognize shame is only the first step. Secondly, missionaries should be equipped to reach out to God and others when they experience shame. They need to have the tools to cope with shame such as understanding who God has made them to be.

Finally, missionaries should learn to recognize and cope with shame messages within each culture that they participate in. It will be especially helpful for teams to be able to have conversations about how shame is experienced within both the team and culture they serve.

¹³ Curt Thompson, *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves* (Downers Grove, IL, IVP Books, 2015), 13.

¹⁴ Simon Cozens, *Looking Shame in the Eye: A Path to Understanding*, Grace and Freedom (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2019), 58

Shame Awareness Tool

In order to guide missionaries through this process, I created the 'Shame Awareness Tool' as a culmination of my research.¹⁵ The tool will help missionaries recognize shame in their lives and establish a personalized plan to respond to shame. As missionaries find helpful ways to cope with their experiences of shame, they can also help those they serve in the host culture cope with living with shame. Equipping missionaries to recognize shame and implement healthy responses will not only benefit missionaries, but also those they serve.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATIONS BEFORE USING THE TOOL OR ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

OVERVIEW OF SHAME:

Shame is an emotion that can cause you to feel that something about yourself is defective. This does not mean that you have done something wrong, but that you believe something about you is wrong. Shame differs from guilt in that guilt is usually experienced as a result of doing something morally wrong or harming others. The feeling of shame can lead you to want to hide or escape because you feel exposed. When experiencing shame, the brain goes into fight, flight, or freeze mode, which makes it difficult to think and respond rationally.

Shame can be present in children as young as 18 months old as a result of interactions with caregivers. Shaming messages are experienced throughout life and are uniquely defined within each culture. For cross-cultural workers it's important to consider passport culture, host culture, and the expat/team culture. Additionally, gender, race, roles etc. often have cultural expectations. How you experience shame also depends on your personality.

Shame was the first emotion described in the Bible in Genesis 3:6-8. Adam and Eve experienced shame after they ate the fruit. Curt Thompson explains shame as, "the emotional weapon that evil uses to corrupt our relationship with God and each other." Although Satan attempted to corrupt these relationships, God's response to Adam and Eve's experience with shame is noteworthy. God called out to them and pursued them in their shame as they hid and He provided for their shameful exposure by making clothes for them. As we experience shame, God also is moving towards us to meet with us in our shame.

Shame can be summarized in two forms: external shame and internal shame. External shame is when you believe others are negatively evaluating you or seeing you as inferior. Internal shame is experienced when you negatively evaluate yourself.

Shame triggers will vary for each person. However, there are many common shame triggers for cross-cultural workers such as language and cultural learning, support raising, living in male-dominated societies, standard of living, expectations of supporters and reporting requirements, expectations from multiple organizations, varying views on faith topics, etc.

¹⁵ The 'Shame Awareness Tool' will prompt you to think about how you have experienced shame so that you will be equipped to recognize it when you experience it in the future. There is also a section to reflect on what God says about you and who he has created you to be, which will be helpful to understand so you can remember his voice when you hear the shaming messages from yourself or others. The 'Shame Awareness Tool' will also help you to think about action steps you will take when you are experiencing shame. For questions about or to receive the 'Shame Awareness Tool' and other helpful resources to cope with shame, contact the author at faithstephens810@gmail.com.

SHAME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Since a common response to the emotion of shame is to hide, it is important when you are experiencing shame that you are able to share your experience with someone you trust. It is also important to be able to interact with God when you are experiencing shame, recognizing that when you are experiencing shame it is not from God and that Satan uses it as a tool to corrupt relationships. Additionally, having a solid understanding of who God has created you to be will help you to be able to reject messages from yourself or others that make you feel shame.

In order to effectively manage the emotion of shame it is important that you:

1. Understand what God says about you and who He has created you to be
2. Be aware of your shame triggers
3. Know your physical reactions to shame such as thoughts and sensations in your body
4. Reach out to God and others when you notice shame occurring

Putting these steps into practice will help you to retrain the pathways in your brain and help you to move out of shame quicker.

The Shame Awareness Tool will prompt you to think about how you have experienced shame so that you will be equipped to recognize it when you experience it in the future. There is also a section to reflect on what God says about you and who He has created you to be, which will be helpful to understand so you can remember His voice when you hear the shaming messages from yourself or others. The Shame Awareness Tool will also help you to think about action steps you will take when you are experiencing shame.

For more helpful resources to cope with shame, you can utilize the Shame Resources Book List or contact me at faithstephens810@gmail.com.

SHAME AWARENESS TOOL QUESTIONNAIRE:

Experiences of Shame in Developmental Years

- What things were considered shameful in my environment growing up (within my family, community, church, social networks)?
- When do I first remember experiencing the emotion of shame? What experiences caused me to experience shame in childhood? Teenage years?

Experiences with Types of Shame

- When have I experienced shame because of how I have evaluated myself?
- When have I experienced shame because of how I believed others were evaluating me?

Evaluation of Shame in My Life Currently

- How frequently do I notice shame occurring in my life?
- What things are considered shameful in the cultures I am currently part of (i.e., passport culture, host culture, expat culture, family culture, church culture)?
- What recent experiences have caused me to experience the emotion of shame?
- What is my view of shame in my life?

My response to shame

In the following sections, circle all that apply and write others you experience that aren't listed.

- **My mental responses to experiences that caused the emotion of shame were:**
 - What is my internal dialogue with myself?

I tell myself I'm the only one that feels this way.	I told myself I should be ashamed.	I believed something is wrong with me.
I had compassion on myself.	I adjusted my thoughts to counter the shameful thoughts.	I had conversations with myself about what happened.
I had trouble concentrating.	I had trouble completing tasks.	I replayed conversations.
I had negative thoughts.	I accepted the identity God gave me.	I perceived I wasn't enough.
I blamed myself.	I blamed others.	

Other:

- **My physical responses to experiences that caused the emotion of shame were:**
 - How do I experience shame in my body?

Dry mouth	Tight chest	Red face	Tension in shoulders
Nausea/tight stomach	Felt cold	Wanted to cry	Shallow breathing
Unrest in body	Sweating	Lump in throat	Rapid heart rate
Headache	Pursed lips	Clenched jaw	Shaking
Hunched posture	Eyes cast down	Heaviness in the body	Made me cringe

Other:

- **My emotional responses to experiences that caused the emotion of shame were:**

It felt extremely painful.	My soul felt tortured.	I felt like I was in prison.	I felt diminished.
I felt like I'm underwater and can't hear clearly.	I felt trapped, powerless, or isolated.	I felt insufficient.	I had deep remorse.
I felt humiliated	I felt exposed.	I had lower self-esteem.	I felt afraid.
I felt angry.	I felt confused.	I felt judgmental.	I felt depressed.
I had self-hatred.	I felt hopeless.	I wanted to harm myself.	

Other:

- **My spiritual responses to experiences that caused the emotion of shame were:**

I prayed.	I journaled or wrote about my experience.	I confessed something to God.
I received God's grace.	I received God's forgiveness	I lived in the identity and calling that God has given me.
I accepted God's love for me.	I read the Bible.	I asked the Holy Spirit to speak to me about what was true about me and my situation.
I recognised shame was not from God.	I practised centring prayer.	I practised other spiritual disciplines.

Other:

• **My relational response to the emotion of shame were:**

- How did I engage with others?

I hid, separated, or distanced myself from others.	I hid, separated, or distanced myself from the person or group that caused me to experience shame.	I shared with a close friend or spouse that I was experiencing shame.	I shared my past mistakes with others.
When I shared with others, they showed me grace.	When I shared with others, they spoke truth to me.	Sharing with others helped to improve my experience with shame.	When I shared with others, I received an unhelpful response.
Sharing with others caused my shame to be worse.	I kept the emotion of shame to myself. I did not tell anyone.	I talked to a counsellor or member care personnel about my feelings.	I talked with someone from my faith community about my experience.
I shared with a group of friends or a group from my faith community.	I did not feel safe to share my shame with others.	I was afraid my problem would be widely discussed so I did not share it.	I did not share because I expected that others would be critical and judgemental.

Other:

• **Other behavioural responses to experiences that caused the emotion of shame were:**

I changed my behaviour, so I engaged with others differently in the future. This was helpful for me.	I changed my behaviour, so I engaged with others differently in the future. This was not helpful for me.	I tried harder.
I gave up trying.	I tried to correct misunderstandings.	I began addictive behaviours to numb the emotions.

Other:

- What are my general indicators that alert me that I am experiencing shame? Is there something that when it happens in me (i.e., in my thoughts, physical response, emotional response, etc.) is always an indicator for me that I am experiencing shame?

My Personality and Shame

How does my personality contribute to my experience with shame?

- Am I a perfectionist?
- Am I a people pleaser?
- Do I have high expectations of myself?
- Does my Enneagram number or Myers-Briggs Type Indicator contribute to me experiencing shame?

Reaching Out During Shame

- Am I able to talk to others when I feel shame? Do I have someone I can talk with regularly about shame?
- What do I believe about what God says about shame? Am I able to talk to God about my shame?

Understanding Myself Through the Lens of God

- What do I know to be true about who God has created me to be? What gifts, talents or abilities has he given me? What does Scripture say about who I am?
- What are my responsibilities given to me by God to do?
- Are there things I am doing that are because of a sense of ought from my family of origin, communities, or cultures that I am part of?
- Are there any adjustments I need to make in my life based on my understanding of who God has made me to be versus what others are expecting of me?

Resources of Dealing with Shame

- What tools or resources do I have that helped (or could help) me as I deal with shame?
- What tools or resources do I need that would help me as I deal with shame?

Action Plan for Dealing with Shame

- As I reflect on who God has made me to be based on my personality, specific abilities and talents and Scripture, I know the following to be true about me:
- From prayer and reflection with God based on what he says to be true about me, I understand my God-given responsibilities to be:
- As I understand who God has uniquely created me to be and the God-given responsibilities he has given me, I have created the following personal mission statement. When I feel shame from not meeting the expectations of others, I will remember to look to God and remember this statement of what he says about me:
- **When I experience shame in the future, I hope to use the following plan to help me cope with shame in a healthy way:**

I commonly experience shame when the following occurs:

I notice that shame is occurring in my body because I normally feel:

When I notice my body responding in this way, I will think (what are things that God says about me or how can I speak back to the shame):

I will share my experience with:

I will use one of the following practices to engage with God:

Resources or activities that I can use in my life to help me overcome the frequency or intensity in which I experience shame are:

SHAME RESOURCES BOOK LIST

Shame in Theology

- The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III
- Overcoming Shame: Let Go of Others' Expectations and Embrace God's Acceptance by Mark W. Baker
- Looking Shame in the Eye: A Path to Understanding, Grace and Freedom by Simon Cozens
- Unashamed: Healing Our Brokenness and Finding Freedom from Shame by Heather Davis Nelson
- Grace for Shame: The Forgotten Gospel by John Forrester
- Shame and Grace: Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve by Lewis B. Smedes

Shame in Psychology

- The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are by Brené Brown
- I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't): Making the Journey from "What Will People Think?" to "I am Enough" by Brené Brown
- Letting Go of Shame: Understanding How Shame Affects Your Life by Ronald Potter-Efron and Patricia Potter-Efron
- The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe About Ourselves by Curt Thompson

Shame in Culture

- Covered Glory: The Face of Honor and Shame in the Muslim World by Audrey Frank
- Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials by Jayson Georges and Mark D Baker
- Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the Islamic World by Jan Goodwin

Resources for Spiritual Disciplines to Deal with Shame

- Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun
- Spiritual Rhythms for the Enneagram: A Handbook for Harmony and Transformation by Adele and Doug Calhoun and Clare and Scott Loughrige
- Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God by Sybil MacBeth

Embracing Sabbatical

By Billy Drum



A JOURNEY OF REST, REDEMPTION, AND UNEXPECTED TWISTS

Introduction

Sabbatical—a word that carries both promise and apprehension. For years, I had postponed mine, convinced that the demands of my work were too pressing to step away, but then came the pandemic, accompanied by loss, pivots and reworking of ministry initiatives - a global upheaval and restart that left us all weary and longing for respite. With my wife's encouragement and support from my organization and supervisor, I embarked on a sabbatical, armed with plans, a sabbatical coach, and a spiritual director. Little did I know that this time of rest would unfold in ways I could never anticipate.



The Perfect Plan

I held high hopes for my sabbatical. My organization allows cross-cultural workers to take a multi-month sabbatical every seven years, but I had been on the field for over 16 years without even thinking about taking one. I was always too busy; always had something to do or finish. Finally, I felt like it was time. I was ready to embark on this journey of rest, recovery, and discernment. I had read books, determined where and when I would take retreats, planned out my time, and made arrangements for others to take on my workload. My sabbatical plan was perfect: spiritual retreats, making craft beer in the way of monks, silent contemplation, and a pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago. I envisioned disconnecting from work, encountering God, and discerning the path for the season ahead. I had hired a sabbatical coach, worked with my spiritual director, and discussed it all with my regional leader and organizational supervisor. I had overwhelming support for what was next.

The first week was promising—I shed my work persona and embraced stillness. I spent that week trying to unplug and disengage from my work life and just be. I took naps and I threw away any schedules or to-do lists. It was going so well, but then life happened.



Unexpected Interruptions

My wife and I rented a cabin in the nearby mountains to start the sabbatical in peace and give us a good start toward a season of slowing down and resting. Just as we settled into our retreat, a phone call shattered our tranquility. In frantic broken English, our daughter's boss relayed the news that there had been an accident at the stables where she was working in Germany. An air ambulance had been dispatched and our daughter was being life-flighted to a trauma hospital and in critical condition.

What?! This was not in the plan. Our sabbatical had abruptly shifted gears. All our carefully laid plans flew out the window as we rushed back home and frantically made travel plans to get to Germany immediately. We spent the next 20 days navigating German hospitals and doctors and a health system that we were unfamiliar with, while our daughter recovered from a punctured lung, lacerated liver, and broken ribs. When she was able to leave ICU and eventually be discharged to us, we traveled back home to Spain with her where she would need several more weeks of recovery. It ended well, but it also placed a distinct marker on my sabbatical experience.



Grace Amidst Crisis

In Germany, we had navigated the labyrinth of medical jargon, waiting rooms, and sleepless nights. Our daughter's injuries and the unknown had tested our resilience, yet amidst suffering, we glimpsed grace. Strangers became allies, and prayer sustained us. God's presence was palpable, even in the sterile hospital corridors. Our community of care had responded in ways that left us shocked and so deeply grateful. People all over the world were tending to our needs, sometimes to needs we did not even realize that we had.



Redemption in the Unexpected

Our daughter recovered, and we returned to life and our previous plans, my sabbatical altered but not defeated. Ruth Haley Barton's words echoed: "Embrace rhythms of work and rest." The sabbatical I meticulously mapped out had unraveled, yet it birthed unexpected gifts.

I did attempt to re-embark on my sabbatical journey and re-engage with my plans, but not without challenges.

I went on the three-week walk that I had scheduled on the Camino de Santiago with two friends. It did not go exactly as expected: one of our band of brothers had to quit early because of back spasms, and I spent the entire three weeks with a misdiagnosed ear infection. It was not ideal, yet there was so much goodness in the chaos that I still found peace and rest and wonder through it all. My ear infection caused me to slow down. I had to put medication in my ear twice a day and stay still while it sat in my ear canal, so I used that time to listen to a devotional online with my other ear. I have listened to this devotional app before, but usually while multitasking. Now, I was forced to be still and listen, and I grew to crave that time each day. I was also able to walk for days side by side with one of my best friends. We had amazing conversations and deep times of connection with each other and with God. We marveled at Creation, and we laughed until our sides ached. While it had not gone as planned, it was perfect.

I did go on my silent retreat and spent a week in a monastery, also not without its challenges. Mid-flight on my travels to the monastery, the entire air traffic control system went down, and our flight was grounded without arriving at its destination. I would be two days late starting my silent retreat week. I was stranded in the wrong country, lost and

lonely amongst thousands of other people in the same situation. I did not want to be there. Well-meaning people kept texting me to "enjoy the detour" and "it's a blessing," but I was just disappointed and depressed. It was another blow to the plan, and I did not have time for this, and there it was ... the small voice that I needed to hear saying, "Yes you do – you're on sabbatical – you do have time for this – slow down." Over the past several years, I have just had my head down, working hard, moving from one thing to the next. Now I was stuck in another country and waiting for a flight out, being forced to slow down. I could either focus on being upset and on where I wanted to be but was not, or, I could be present and focus on where I was now. I began to be present, to see what was around me, to enjoy the detour, to journal, and to pray. I finally did arrive at the monastery, and I had an amazing and transformational time of solitude and silence. I rank it among the deepest times of spiritual connection and transformation that I have ever experienced. Even now, reading over my journal from that week makes me weep with gratitude.

One of my journal entries from sabbatical reads, "I think my main takeaway is God's redemption. Sabbatical was rough starting out, so was Camino, and more. It is like He wanted my attention. He wanted to say that I have been taking Him, my life, my work, and the journey for granted. It has been painful, but for each obstacle, there has been redemption in the end. Rest, restoration, strength, His grace, and perseverance. Maybe because of all of this, I have been able to continue on." There is such redemption amidst the suffering.

Redemption emerged from the unplanned detours—the grace that sustains, the resilience that surprises, and the readiness for what lies ahead.

Surrendering to the Journey

Sabbatical is not about executing a flawless itinerary; it is about surrendering to the journey. God redeems our imperfect plans, weaving grace into our disruptions. As I emerge from this season, I carry the memories of crisis and twists and turns and the unexpected - and the assurance of God's faithfulness. Sabbatical— in the end unscripted, transformative, and full of surprises—has left its mark, reminding me that rest and redemption often arrive in unexpected ways.



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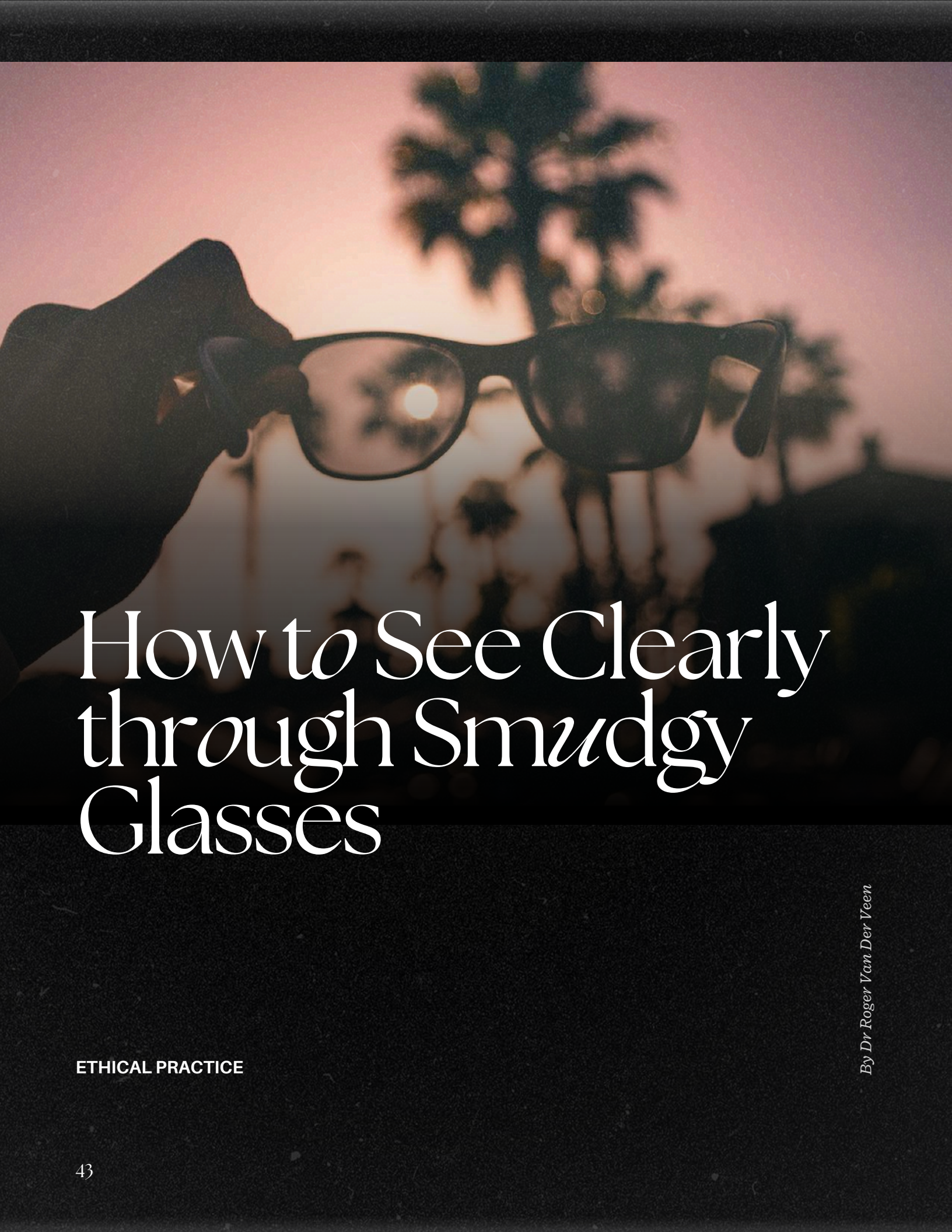
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Sabbatical Coaching:

The Way Between, Sabbatical Coaching, www.thewaybetween.org

Podcast:

Ruth Haley Barton “Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership”, Season 18: Episodes 1-5



How to See Clearly through Smudgy Glasses

ETHICAL PRACTICE

By Dr Roger Van Der Veen

Abstract

When ethical violations are clear cut, it seems straightforward regarding what decision to make and what to do. However, this is not always the case when ethical breaches are vague and ambiguous. In the landscape we live and serve in, lines are shifting. How are decisions made concerning what action to take or not (which could include reporting), ie what are the criteria? In the field of member care, how do member care providers (MCPs) navigate blurred boundaries and the greyness of member care? Given that there is little standardisation or uniformity across the profession of member care from organisation to organisation, this paper will allow readers to follow the process of ethical decision-making via the case study below, which is fictional and is not based on any real people or situations.

Values – what we hold dear, guiding principles, and moral compass.

Ethics – how conduct and behaviour follow espoused values

Case Study – ‘Goodwill Payments’

John and Mary have been married for nine years. They have two children aged two and four years. John is a water engineer and Mary is a mathematics and science teacher. Both were pastors' kids. They completed theological qualifications through a reputable Bible college. John and Mary have been on the field for four years in a medium sized country in Asia, serving with XYZ mission organisation. The XYZ team consists of five married couples who live in the capital city but spend frequent short periods of time in other parts of the country, so the team is not decentralised. While this makes for more time travelling, the 10 team members can operate from one centre.

John and Mary have had one session (over video conferencing) with XYZ's member care provider (MCP) back in their home country, outlining their concerns (not complaints) about the team leader. Fred and Joan (age mid-40s) have been the team leaders for about five years. During that time, Fred has been able to raise substantial funds and get several notable ministries up and running. In short, Fred achieves results because he has been able to migrate his success from the corporate world to the mission field.

However, Fred is dismissive of women (female team members and Nationals). He doesn't do this overtly. He politely listens and says he'll consider what they have to say and then that's the end of it. There are no allegations of sexual harassment or inappropriate comments or behaviour, and nor are John and Mary raising any issues of this nature. At the same time, Fred will listen to what men have to say and will even take credit for their good ideas. He will put men in charge of the more desired ministries and projects. Fred will also manipulate statistics and monetary amounts in reports and submissions to place his team in a better light. Fred has not been unknown to exaggerate the needs of the ministries of the team and raise more funds than needed, which are skimmed off the top and used to pay for a few small luxuries for Fred and the male team members, but not the female team members. Fred calls this a 'goodwill payment' for hardship living in a developing country without the modern conveniences of home: 'the cost of doing business', as Fred puts it. This 'payment' has consisted of goods, such as a new watch, the latest phone, or a bottle of liquor, but nothing more than that. If Fred were skimming off thousands of dollars, had committed a crime, or been behaving inappropriately with female team members, then

action would need to be taken. However, no one has been willing to make a complaint because of Fred's hard work and solid intentions and the proof is in what he and the team have achieved, but his integrity is in question.

The member care provider is on her own as Human Relations (HR) declines to be involved, because there is no complaint and the infractions are 'low level'. However, the member care provider can't ignore the concerns John and Mary are raising because of their credibility on the field and because they are not the first people to do so.

Questions for consideration

1) Is Fred's conduct unethical?

Clearly what Fred is doing is wrong and unethical, and he is breaching the code of conduct, by taking financial supporters' donations and using them as 'bonuses'. However, how unethical is Fred's conduct? Is it low level and doesn't warrant reporting and investigation? Where is the line drawn? As the case study mentions, if Fred were doing other things, there would be an investigation and if the concerns raised were substantiated action would need to be taken.

Is Fred skimming off more than what's being suggested? With temptation and wrong doing, it's often difficult to stop the train once it's left the station. On the other hand, is what's being reported exaggerated? Possibly.

Is Fred buying loyalty? Is he locking the male team members in by giving them 'goodwill payments' so that if he is reported or uncovered, then everyone else is also complicit? To protect himself from the female team members reporting him, Fred might be relying on their silence because of pressure from the male team members not to make waves.

In some cultures, spending funds like this is accepted practice: bribes, corruption, nepotism, etc. Isn't what Fred is doing just what's around him, and he leans on that as a rationalisation to himself, to team mates, to nationals, and to the organisation? However, if a National working on the field for a Western mission organisation were caught doing these things that Fred has allegedly been doing, the National would be let go for unethical conduct. How come the same rules don't apply to Fred as they would to a

National? Several reasons suggest themselves (not necessarily the right ones): Fred is a male team leader from a Western country who brings in lots of money for the projects and ministries. Fred is protected to some degree by his status, reputation, and relationships with people in the organisation. Fred also knows to keep this small scale, and he doesn't make it widely known.

The ironic thing is that Fred could probably have been open and transparent about a line item in the budget for the same dollar amount (or even more) for staff rest and relaxation or something else to benefit the whole team. Unlikely, but Fred might even have been able to put a line item in the budget for the so called 'goodwill payments' as they stood, for example for the watches and phones (probably not the alcohol) as long as there was approval, a paper trail, and a benefit to everyone; perhaps not every quarter though.

As an aside, it is claimed that the team's ministries have been successful. There's no doubt Fred brings in funds. That is evidenced by the financial records, ministries flush with money, and lots of activity, but are these ministries Biblically successful and meeting the organisation's values?

While Fred is under scrutiny for allegedly misappropriating funds, and this has been the focus, another unethical behaviour has been overshadowed. Have you spotted it? Fred's dismissive conduct towards female team members and female Nationals. If substantiated, it is clearly undesirable conduct but is it unethical? Both issues need to be raised with the member care provider, not just the matter of misappropriated funds.

Ordinarily the question 'Is Fred's conduct unethical?' would be asked second in an exercise like this or in a supervision session or in an interview. By asking this question first, all the attention is focused on Fred, his alleged improprieties, the case study, and what action should be taken, which is not what we should be focusing on in the first instance. Therefore, that's why this question was asked first, to highlight these matters. By asking this question first, Fred

has been almost vilified, but that's not what we want to know or consider right now. If the question 'What does the member care provider need to know?' were asked first, then the focus would be on the context and bigger picture in which Fred is located. This is not saying that the heat should be taken off Fred, but rather there is the bigger picture in which he is embedded.

2) What is the context and bigger picture?

The first and primary question that comes to mind is how did this happen? What is the procedure for handling funds, ie the checks and balances that should have prevented this from happening? They mightn't have existed or weren't robust enough.

How come HR is declining to be involved as the situation clearly seems to be something that would land squarely in HR's scope of practice? HR might have dealt with this issue before and put a solution in place. What's happening now might not be as bad as what was happening before. HR might be involved at another level that the MCP is not aware of. Does HR have a vested interest in this situation or stand to benefit from the situation? Probably not. Is HR putting this in the 'too hard basket'? Possibly but this is an

assumption that needs to be queried and tested.

The next question is what are the scope and parameters of the MCP role as defined by the organisation? What member care (MC) is varies from organisation to organisation and even across an organisation. Additionally, what people's role descriptions are might not be what they carry out in their role. This MCP has a brief (or has assumed some sort of brief) to look after the MC needs of the missionaries the organisation holds in its purview. In other words, John and Mary aren't the only clients of this MCP to the exclusion of Fred and the other team members. The people who have previously raised this issue to the MCP (but the nature of the content, who, and how many times are unknown) could be clients. Could Fred be a client in this situation? Possibly as he is part of the situation even though he has not contacted the MCP or HR. The situation (what is going on) is also a client of the MCP, but is this how HR and the organisation view the situation and the MCP's role or is it just assumed and no one really seems interested? The MCP is getting an insight into the organisation and how it is run, and the lack of discussion within the organisation is telling.

What is the impact of the conduct on the team and the Nationals they are building and running ministries with? Male team members are given 'goodwill payments', which they seem not to have refused or declined, but we just don't know. The female team members weren't offered or given any 'goodwill payments,' or were they and they refused? There must be some angst and disquiet going on among the team. This situation, at the very least, has turned into a distraction for the team and their service to God and the Nationals of this country. Are there spiritual dynamics at play? It would be hard to imagine that this were not the case. This might not be a direct spiritual attack, but dark forces would certainly have spotted an opportunity to muddy the waters further.

In conclusion to answering this second question of four, Fred is the embodiment of micro ethics in this case study and the organisation is the embodiment of macro ethics. The situation is more than just what John and Mary are needing to disclose or answering the questions they are asking.

3) What does the member care provider need to do with John and Mary?

As MCPs, we have been trained to ask clients what their goals are and what outcomes they are hoping for. John and Mary seem unclear as to their goals. They might not have any. They might be seeing whether they can make an anonymous unwritten complaint or just scoping things out before taking any further action. This action could be do nothing, leave this team or the organisation or the field, or make a complaint and hope for an investigation with a view to the situation being rectified. What are John and Mary's motivations? Are they embellishing or withholding information? Is there any payback behind what they are doing? Is what John and Mary are claiming true? Is there any evidence to support their claims? Have John and Mary's claims been corroborated? Have John and Mary spoken to Fred or his line manager, or should they, and if they did what happened? Why are John and Mary making contact now with the MCP? Most people who report matters or who are making soft and

unofficial queries are genuine in their desire to see injustice or wrongdoing stopped and changed. They don't usually lie but they might only tell one side of the story with their spin on it. It's also about what they don't disclose. This is not always because of deliberate withholding of information but more likely because they haven't seen it necessary to share something, so it then behoves the person to whom this information is being reported to ask some well-placed questions. Nevertheless, it is still good practice to query in one's mind what else could be going on, to be sceptical.

The MCP in her first or early contact with John and Mary should include a discussion about confidentiality and privacy, what is reportable and the process of reporting, the MCP's role, to spell out any other expectations, and that she will be asking them questions to clarify the situation. The MCP should also have a discussion with John and Mary about what usually happens because of what Whistle Blowers have revealed.

So far why has no one else been willing to make a complaint about these matters of the misappropriation of funds and dismissive conduct towards female team members and female Nationals? (Again, we only know that other people have raised concerns similar to what John and Mary are raising). What has been holding John and Mary and the other people back from making a complaint or reporting this?

4) Conclusion - What should the member care provider do?

Now that the MCP has a handle on the situation through asking assessment questions and formulating, it's time to come up with an ethical course of action. As the situation stands, there is nowhere for the MCP to turn and she needs to avoid getting caught up in the organisation's systems (including the clients' systems), which are broken. This situation is not just her problem or her fault, to take the blame when it falls apart. The next step the MCP needs to take is to speak to her professional supervisor (not line manager) to determine that her formulation and planned

course of action are ethical, that she's not subject to any blind spots, and that this is what she wants to do. The MCP needs to make this issue an HR issue and an organisational issue by reporting it to HR and further up the line. Ideally, the report should present a snapshot of how the system has fallen apart and include written complaints from John and Mary and the other parties who have contacted the MCP. At the very least, if nothing else happens, the MCP is on record for making a report and exercising ethical practice. The course of action for the MCP is not to fix the system and all that is wrong with it.



AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

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Helma Rem was born and raised in The Netherlands. She has been involved in the area of Personnel Work with Wycliffe Netherlands, Wycliffe Europe and the Wycliffe Global Alliance. Since 2023 she works as Senior People Consultant and Staff Care worker in Wycliffe UK & Ireland, The Netherlands and SIL Papua New Guinea. Work and interest brought her to every continent of the world. She visited missionaries and attended international meetings and committees. She did many courses, conferences, consultations, studies and workshops (both attending and presenting) in topics including Biblical Studies, Counselling, Debriefing, Leadership, Child Safeguarding, Dealing with Conflict Biblically, Member Care. Helma has a degree in Personnel Management & Organizational Development. In 2022 she graduated from Redcliffe College with an MA in Member Care. She enjoys riding her bike, meeting friends and family, her work, church activities, making her house a home for herself and others, walking on the beach and reading. Helma is a real connector. Her vision is to use her gifts and talents for people so they can become and do what God has intended for them.

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Faith Stephens has worked in missions since 2001. Since 2003 her work has been focused on the Muslim world including living in the Muslim world for the past 14 years. Her work includes supporting expats serving in the region and operating an NGO with her husband in Central Asia. She earned a MA in Member Care from Redcliffe College.

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Dr Roger Van Der Veen is a Clinical Counsellor and Facilitator at The Well International. He has been involved in the field of member care since 2005. His social work and counselling experience have been in the areas of hospitals, clinical education, mental health, workplace counselling, settlement of immigrants and humanitarian entrants, and child protection, including seven years as a university lecturer. His qualifications are BA, BSW (Hons), MSW, and PhD. Roger, originally from Canada, is married to Julie and they have two adult daughters. In his spare time, he likes bushwalking, anything to do with motorcycles, and following Canadian ice hockey.