

### **SIGNIFICANT TAKEAWAYS:**

1. Burnett, Bill and Dave Evans. *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*. Knopf, 2016.

“Wayfinding is the ancient art of figuring out where you are going when you don’t actually know your destination. For wayfinding you need a compass and you need a direction. Not a map – a direction.” (p.43).

It’s not surprising that when I about to driver certain places, I do a test run before the actual date. I do not like surprises – I want to know the road. Twists and turns are too uncertain and they leave me flustered and unsure of my next move. Lost time and opportunity can result. Trusting God and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead—he knows the direction—is what leadership is about. It is God’s leading, I follow. This is one of my growing edges.

“Awareness is key to life design, and this is true especially when you are designing your career. (p. 144).

I learned earlier in my program that awareness is important. Awareness of self (my identity, strengths, weaknesses, etc.) and awareness persons with whom I will work or lead in ministry. When I failed to take another person’s perspective into account, I lost the opportunity to know their meta-story so I understand how to support them. The significance of this in my ministry is that I will abandon my tendency to be a lone ranger because as I am driven to succeed but involve others, listen to them and understand the real story behind their story.

“Co-creation is an integral aspect of a design point of view, and it’s a key reason that design thinking works. Your life design isn’t in you; it’s in the world, where you will discover and co-create it with others.” (p.200).

The word “co-creation” bring me back to the creation story (Genesis 1). God has called Christians into partnership with him. I understand this to mean, it’s not me and God nor God and the other person, but everyone together working to extend the Kingdom of God. This partnership might mean that I will work with persons whose culture is different from mine. It might be these

co-creators who will help me to bring out all that lies within me as I am called to be and do. I have the tendency to be aligned with people of my culture (a safe space for me). I am collaborating with others on church projects. It is sometimes uncomfortable, but necessary for my life of service.

2. Sayers, Mark. *The Road Trip That Changed The World: The Unlikely Theory that will Change How You View Culture, the Church, and, Most Importantly, Yourself*. Moody Publishers, 2012.

“Meaning and transcendence will only flow into our lives when we understand that Christ’s death on the Cross has reconciled us to God to others, and creation. When we live out of this truth we can live lives of sacredness and meaning in a secular culture. (p.187)

As I try to make sense of things that I experience on a level other than physical, then it occurs to me that Christ is the one that helps to bring meaning to those experiences. In all the chaos and confusion of Covid-19, I must bring a sense of peace by reminding others that God suffered; therefore, He is able to identify with our suffering and to walk us through these difficult times. I continue to work on living this out so that I can be an effective witness.

“In the therapeutic culture, our disconnection from God and the disillusionment that comes with cosmic meaninglessness is recast. We are told that we are not lost, not in need of eternal purpose. Instead we are told that our problems stem from our being out of touch with our feelings, or that we are stressed, sexually unfulfilled, or suffering a lack of intimacy.” (207)

Our culture places a high priority on confidence based on feelings. So feelings take precedence over faith. It is not uncommon for young adults at church to say “I am not participating because I’m not feeling it.” For me, the tendency to give in to feelings can be strong at times. Ephesians 2:8 says that my salvation comes through faith, not feelings. Feelings are inconsistent; they are unreliable. So I will continue to seek ways to build my character and faith in God.

3. Stone, Douglas and Bruce Patton. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. Penguin Books, 2010.

“The more easily you can admit to your own mistakes, your own mixed intentions, and your own contributions to the problem, the more balanced you will feel during the conversation, and the higher the chances it will go well.” (p. 119)

Although I have an introverted personality, I believe my early years of struggle to connect with others was a direct result of not admitting to mistakes. I felt doing so will portray me in a bad light (not realizing that not admitting to mistakes was what really portrayed me in a bad light). I learned otherwise and worked on admitting mistakes. During my Leadership Class (Ireland & Meyer) my case study showed me where I neglected to build a Covenant with God relationship with one of my Trainees. I have grown in this area, but it remains as a work in progress.

“[t]he single most important rule about managing the interaction is this: you can’t move the conversation in a more positive direction until the other person feels heard and understood” (p.206).

My tendency was to give instructions and expect the people I work with to follow instructions. I attributed this to my culture dictated that I respect elders and anyone in authority, even when they were wrong. Obviously this did not translate to an American context and I struggled for a long time. In my current context, part of my learning is to engage others in a way they feel valued and understood and, importantly, to allow them to open up to express their thoughts and feelings. I continue to make strides in this area, being mindful of 1 Corinthians 12:22- (“Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness”).

4. Tyson, Jon. & Heather Grizzle. *Creative Minority: Influencing Culture Through Redemptive Participation*. Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2016. (64 pages)

“Becoming a Creative Minority paints a compelling picture of the way the church is called to participate in these challenging and demanding times – seeking neither to control nor abandon the world, but to love it to new life through redemptive participation.” (p.12)

Tension exists because I am both body and spirit. As I am created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), there exists within me a spirit realm that must be satisfied as well as the physical realm. So I took the warning of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians that the body/spirit dichotomy is real so that he likens it as a “war.” (Galatians 5:15-17). In this season of Covid-19, it is easier for me to speak Christ as everyone is looking for answers, but two/three months ago, I was not met with such acceptance. I had to exercise love as I seek to live the Kingdom life. I continue to be challenged to build character, know the Word of God and live by His word.

“A Creative Minority has a deep trust in the sovereignty of God, the goodness of God and the power of God—that regardless of what situation you are in, God will be with you if you are submitted to His Lordship.” (p.49)

I am constantly bombarded by questions from family and friends as to this pandemic, its origin, when will it go away and why so much death and destruction. I do not have the answers, but I constantly point them to the God who does. As I grapple with the situation for myself, I believe and trust that God is working His purposes out in this situation. I take the necessary precautions but I trust His sovereign will. There are times when I still feel overwhelmed, especially when I slip up and not take the necessary precautions. Trusting is allowing God to take control. I continue to work on this area.

“The further out of the public square we are pushed, the angrier and more frantic or rhetoric becomes. It is as though out of fear of being forgotten, we seek to span our growing distance from the center with volume and intensity rather than engaging with intimacy” (p.9).

There are times when I find myself uneasy and choosing to remain silent rather than speak out against what I perceive as injustice or inappropriate behavior from one to the other. I take the path of least resistance. Sometimes, these challenges are taxing to my spirit. I, too, can say I experience backlash or loss of influence when I spoke up. Since taking my last Module, I became more determined to having my public faith become congruent with my public faith. So I am challenged to continue to build up my intimacy with God so that I can be bold in any situation and I do not lose my prophetic voice.

### **Self-Assessment Of Current State Of Relational And People Skills**

**Counseling:** The practice of facilitating a person to explore and discover ways to live a more productive and satisfying life. Grade B

I engage in counseling both at church and at my place of employment. I enjoy the practice of counseling, but it can be challenging as I have the tendency to want to fix problems. As the church becomes more multi-cultural, the challenges that comes with that are more complex. I need to re-orient my mind to these cultural issues. My co-worker states: “Ms. Williams past experiences are extensive and varied. I’ve seen how she uses them to her advantage when counseling. Ms. William and I spoke about how this strength also gets in the way. She expects high performance from others which they are not always able to live up to. She wants the best for people, but she needs to give them room to grow. I will grade her counseling skills at B.”

**Pastoral Care:** The practice of leading God’s people. Grade A

In my context, I practice pastoral care on two levels: As a leader in my congregation part of my responsibility is to care for individuals within the church. Those persons are generally members struggling with life challenges. In my regular employment, part of my responsibility is

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6

LE-2: Pre-Course Reading & Paper

also to render pastoral care within a healthcare setting. Here, I work with persons of faith or of no faith. The aim is to bring compassion and empathetic listening, while the congregational work is to bring persons closer in intimacy with God. My Supervisor states that “Verbelle readily adjusted to the guidelines for interfaith ministry. She is a strong introvert, but also a very bright and intuitive person. Verbelle demonstrates a very high level and wide range of pastoral skills. She is very dedicated, self-confident and does not hesitate to accept any challenge. Grade is A.”

**Evangelism:** The act of spreading the gospel through individual witnessing or when I preach. Grade C

I have not done well with Evangelism. I rarely do personal/individual witness, except for the occasional person I counsel (depending on the situation). My preaching always comes with an invitation to Jesus Christ. A Senior Pastor’s comment: “Pastor Williams is not on the Evangelism Team. Nevertheless, I believe her sermons have always conveyed the message of salvation and the invitation is extended for persons to come to Jesus Christ and to establish a personal relationship with Him. A grade of B represents her effort.”

**Leading others in life change:** Modeling before others a way of life so they want to emulate me. This hinges on my ability to build and maintain trust. Grade B

People have always been drawn to me and I will always assist with getting them to learn and complete tasks. Then somewhere along the line, I might lose them. I lose them when I do not follow through with plans. The tasks that I take on leaves little or not room for followup calls nor just taking the time to say ‘hello, how’s your day.’ My class colleague wrote “Verbelle seem to understand concepts easily and seem to put them into practice. She encourages others to do the same. I’ve seen how she has the ability to jumpstart the more hesitant members of the group

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7

LE-2: Pre-Course Reading & Paper

when we are working together as a group. I think Verbelle has the potential for A but I will say a B.”

### **Summary Of Focused Area(s)**

I would want to focus more on Counseling and Evangelism. I believe I have not given much focused time on Evangelism. I have challenged myself to exercise the Great Commission. I believe I need the skills in this area. In addition, counseling is important to my work both at the church and in my career. The issues that I am called to address on the church level calls for me to be grounded in the Word (This I can do). It also calls for my counseling skills (I need help in this area) so that I would be able to assist a person to submit to the will of God.