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## INTRODUCTION

In my current level of leadership and experience in ministry, I am on the lower levels of philosophy of ministry where, Robert Clinton writes in his book *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*, “lower levels of leadership the philosophy will be more simple and specific to the ministry situation.”<sup>1</sup> Clinton recall a conversation with two of his friends about the difference between one of their current and previous leader. The previous leader was decisive and had a vision for the church while the new leader seemed to lack them. The other friend explained that the new pastor did not have a “clear philosophy of ministry. He had no framework in which to judge the requests that were coming to him from potential leaders.”<sup>2</sup>

I have served under several different leadership and looking back, there was a difference between those who had a clear ministry philosophy and those who did not as well as those who were developing it. I, too, have been a leader without a clear ministry philosophy when I started but am currently in the early developmental stages of philosophy of ministry. Reading *Making of a Leader* gave me a framework and language to what I was experiencing as well as my frustrations with leadership from others and myself. As I was thinking through my core ministry values, non-negotiables, and statement of faith, I realized I have a general idea of what those things are, but I have never sat down to process through and write them down. In this paper, I

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Clinton *Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (CO: NavPress 2012). 157

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 154

will be dissecting and solidifying my philosophy of ministry into words.

### **PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY**

My philosophy of ministry is grounded in John 5:19, “Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” Jesus only did what he saw the Father doing. He did many amazing things during his life, but Jesus did not heal every single sick person he encountered. He did not deliver every demoniac and he did not engage with every single person. He only did what he saw the Father doing because he loves the Father and loves to do His will. And Jesus was able to see and know what the Father was doing because of their deep love and intimate relationship.

I once asked a leader I love and respect how he was able to discern God’s will. He simply responded that he had been walking with the Lord for a long time, so he knew what God likes, what pleases Him, and most importantly, he was able to hear and discern His voice. As simple as it was, what he said sparked this curiosity and hunger to really know who God is. And I have made the secret place a priority in my life.

Intimacy became the foundation of my philosophy of ministry. Everything flows out of abiding in Christ. Apart from Him, we can do nothing.<sup>3</sup> I have led many times running on fumes and depended just on my giftings and experiences and it resulted in burnout and people – including myself – getting hurt. And without seeing and knowing what the Father is doing, I am not doing God’s work but instead, building my own shallow kingdom. No man-made strategies and trainings – no matter how amazing – can bring true transformation. Our ministry goal as leaders is to simply lead others into the Presence of God.

#### **Statement of Faith**

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<sup>3</sup> John 15:5

1. I believe in the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who is the Creator of all things and is infinite in power, love, wisdom, and goodness. (Matt 3:16, Gen 1:1, Neh 9:6)
2. I believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His atoning death through the cross, His resurrection and ascension. He is exalted over everything and He will return in power and glory. (John 1:14, John 3:16, Luke 1:27, Rev 22:12)
3. I believe the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and is active and moving today. The Holy Spirit empowers, inspires, guides, and leads the believers to Christ. (John 14:16, 26, Matt 28:19-20, Acts 1:8)
4. I believe the Bible to be inspired, the infallible, authoritative Word of God. (2 Tim 3:16-17)
5. I believe I was created in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying Him forever (Gen 1:27, Psalms 145)
6. I believe the Church is the community of believers who received Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Church is a unified community with Jesus as the Head of the body. The Church exists to worship and glorify God and are the primary agents for the advancement of His Kingdom. (1 Cor. 12:27, Rom 12:4-5)

## **Core Ministry Values**

### ***Prayer***

Prayer has always been foundational in my Christian journey and is part of my spiritual inheritance as a Korean. I have heard several professors mention “Korean prayer” at ATS. This is when the entire congregation shouts the name of Jesus three times and enters into intercessory prayer. While there are negative things that can be pointed out in Korean culture, prayer is something precious I received from the previous generation.

As a child, my friend’s mother would take my friend and me to the church prayer room every Friday to pray. I did not realize at the time, but she was my spiritual mother. We would spend hours there before Friday night service to just pray and spend time with God. This is where I learned to pray and speak to God at a young age.

I learned that prayer is communion with God. The more I spent time in prayer, the more I grew intimate with Him. The more time I spent with Him, the more I started to love and know Him. In Mark 1, Jesus starts out ministry with a bang. He heals the sick, cast out demons, preaches the good news all in one day. But He always made time to escape and be with the Father. Even when the crowds were all searching for Him, Jesus withdrew from the crowds to connect and be with the Father. Jesus did not go to Father because He wanted more power and anointing, but because He really loved to be with the Father.

When I led out of the secret place, there was an increased anointing and victory in my life. However, when I was not praying, I became a dangerous person to the church. Leonard Ravenhill writes in *Why Revival Tarries*, “No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying.”<sup>4</sup> Through prayer, believers stay connected to the vine. Through prayer, believers grow closer to the Father and build intimacy. Through intimacy, believers can see what the Father is doing and do the kingdom work that He wills.

### ***Worship***

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<sup>4</sup> Leonard Ravenhill, *Why Revival Tarries* (MN: Bethany House Publishers 2004)

The Christian purpose is to worship God. In Isaiah 43:21, God declares the Israelites the people he formed for himself that they might declare his praise. There are many expressions of worship to God – songs, music, shout, offering, thanksgiving, dance, etc. – but it all comes down to Romans 12:1, “Therefore, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.” We worship God with our lives by communing with Him. Out of this comes our expressions of worship through songs and movements.

I have traveled to many different countries for missions, and I got to experience and see all the different expressions of worship. I was not familiar with all the different expressions, but all were unique and beautiful. Through my brothers and sisters around the world, I got to worship God in new ways. Because of this, I learned not to judge the different forms of worship. Just because someone is not dancing with all their might before the Lord, does not mean they are not worshipping. In the same vein, I have always been for finding new ways of creative worship. I will always make room for people to express their worship in their unique way.

No one can worship God the way I can because He created me uniquely just like He did everyone else. There is something very beautiful and powerful when someone worships God the way He created them to. Therefore, I will always create space for people to worship God in their own creative way.

### ***Studying Word of God***

The Word of God is our daily bread (Matt 44), our weapon (Heb 4:12), lamp unto our feet (Psalms 119:105), Truth (John 17:17) and God’s love letter to us. We read the Bible to meet and hear from Him. We use the Word of God to fight against the enemy. The Word of God is the foundation for believers. All prophecies point back to the Word of God.

### ***Integrity (Character)***

I have not been a person of integrity in many instances of my life. Because of the fear of rejection and not being love rooted in me, I have oftentimes lie and hide for the sake of saving face. However, as God has been healing me and building my identity as His child, I have been growing into a person of integrity and character. As we grow in our faith, there needs to be growth in our character. Whenever I heard news about a leader falling into sexual immorality, greed, lust, and other sins, I acknowledged that I am not exempt or above the same sins. I found myself afraid of leadership and ministry because I knew what sins I was capable of committing before God. This is the reason why character and integrity are so important. I have prayed and am continuing to pray what Rob Reimer prayed: Let not my ministry go beyond my character.

### ***Missions and Compassion***

I know I am called to the missions field. He has called me to reach the lost souls and reap the harvest. Missions can be in other countries as well as my home. The motivation for missions is love and compassion for the people God loves. Too often, the church remained inside the four walls of the church building. We have a lot of obese Christians who come to receive more of Him and not do the works of the kingdom He called us to do. Jesus' heart is for those in the margins and the oppressed. Matthew 25, Jesus taught that whatever we do for the least of these, we do for Him.

### ***Discipleship and servant leadership***

Jesus commands us to make disciples of all nations. And He modeled what discipleship looks like through his walk with the twelve disciples. He did life with them. He ate and traveled with them. He really believed in them and gave them all He had. He knew they would betray him and run away but He still washed their feet and believed in them. He rebuked and corrected them and was not afraid of their sins and flaws. He truly loved them and encouraged them to be the men of God they were called to be.

Jesus also demonstrated servant leadership. He washed the feet of His disciples so that they too will wash the feet of others. Only servants washed the feet of others and is a such a humbling act. I have experienced many leaders who simply wanted me to serve their goals and vision. I believe that leaders need to learn to submit and follow before leading. However, Jesus led by serving others and desiring for their walking in the fullness of who they were made to be.

### **Non-negotiables**

#### ***Prayer***

Prayer must be the integrated in every aspect of ministry. There is a time for planning, strategizing, and dreaming but without prayer, it becomes a business. Many of my church meetings were about logistics about an event or program with some prayer at the end. However, prayer needs to be the focus. There needs to be an alignment with Jesus, so we are connected to what He wants to do and not our own desires.

#### ***Holy Spirit***

Holy Spirit is the leader of every worship service and meeting. Making space for the Holy Spirit is of utmost importance. I do not want to quench the Spirit and miss out on what He is doing just to follow the program or for the sake of people's comforts. In Ezekiel 10, the Presence of God departs from the temple, but everyone continued to do what they were doing and did not even realize that He left. We can do church without the Holy Spirit, but we cannot be the church without Him. I do not want to be a church that boxes the Holy Spirit. We must be open to what He is doing and surrender to what He desires.

#### ***Ministry is about the people***

Leadership is to lead others into the Presence of God. It is not about my goals and ambitions or getting people to support them. Ministry has to be about the people and leading

them closer to God. I have experienced many times when ministry became about the numbers and amazing events in the church and less about getting people into the Presence and encountering God. The focus should be to love God's people, serve and believe in them to be the men and women God created them to be.

#### **References:**

Clinton, Robert *Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (CO: NavPress 2012).

Ravenhill, Leonard *Why Revival Tarries* (MN: Bethany House Publishers 2004)