

SILENT RETREAT: February 4, 2022- February 5, 2022

LOCATION: HOTEL/ CHARLOTTE HILTON/UNIVERSITY PLACE

On my silent retreat, I practiced the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and meditation. I was constantly in prayer. Being alone challenged me to deeply reflect upon God through prayer. I was listening to hear what God was revealing to me. Fasting for breakfast and lunch helped me realize the words of Matthew 4:4. It states “Man does not live by bread alone but by every words that precedes out of the mouth of God. Meditating helped me become more reflective. In the hustle and bustle of life, we don’t often take time for reflection. Solitude gave me the ability to prayerfully reflect upon my life and purpose. I discovered that one can seek closeness with God in a hotel room, I previously thought that one could only be close to God at a retreat in the mountains because it is close to nature and I thought closer to God. I have always been critical of those who have religious retreats at hotels. I found that one can find solace in a hotel room. The silent retreat gave me the opportunity to reflect regarding the span of my life. I am especially reflective because I enter my sixth decade in November. Using Biehl’s concepts and structure, I was able to reflect on the following aspects of my life.

#### 1. Dominant Childhood Feelings:

Early Childhood:

- Second of Three Children

- Only Girl
- Beautiful Childhood, Raised in Brooklyn, NY by Parents
- Very Good Girl in Elementary School/Good Grades and Department
- Fourth Grade Teacher had a Department Chart/I always got gold stars. A jealous classmate had an older student who was a school monitor lie and say I was running in the school hallway/I received a red star. I cried and told my Mommy when I arrived home. She comforted me and consoled me with love and affection.
- Spent many weekends with Maternal Aunt/Jackie
- Spent Summers and most Christmas holidays in Charleston, SC with Maternal Grandparents
- Child of Divorced Parents/Mom Awarded Sole Custody of me and Older Brother
- Mom remarried when I was 13/Younger Brother born when I was fifteen
- Intelligent, Precocious Girl, Somewhat Shy

## Teens

- Very Good, Protective Years
- Attended Independent Catholic High School/ Honor Roll/Good Department
- Two Very Good Best Friends/Crystal and Portia
- Highlight/Sweet Sixteen Birthday Party/Sweet Sixteen Parties were popular at HS/Attended Other Parties
- Language Club, Cheerleader, Yearbook Club
- Became An Active Member of my Local Church at 15
- First Boyfriend at 16 yrs.

## College

- Academically Inclined and Always wanted to Pursue College
- Accepted At Howard University
- Enjoyable College Experience/Two Good High School Friends Also Attended/John and Portia
- Graduated from Hord University with a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree
- Had Boyfriend/Ended Relationship/Too Long To Settle Down
- Wonderful Experience to Attend College

My dominant childhood experience was love and security. I had a wonderful family based support system and mostly positive experiences. It makes me realize how blessed I was at the time.

## 2. DOMINANT ADULT PHOBIA:

My dominant adult phobia is the death of loved ones. I realized that I had not processed the grief. I did grief counseling which helped me process the grief. I learned that one can only deal with separation and loss (death, relationships) through the intercessor, Jesus Christ.

### Grief Processing

- Death of Maternal Aunt's First Husband (17 yrs.)
- Death of Great-Grandparents
- Death of Grand Aunts and Uncles
- Death of Maternal Aunt
- Death of Maternal Grandfather
- Death of Maternal Grandmother
- Death of Grand Aunt
- I did a grief journal and I have learned through grief counseling how to process the grief ( Many were alive and present at my Sweet Sixteen Birthday Party)

## 3. DOMINANT EMOTIONAL NEED:

My dominant emotional need to be loved unconditionally. I received this type of love as a child. I also desire to be respected by peers. I strive to excel and achieve distinction. I certainly want to be appreciated when I do well. I seek financial security and financial independence. I am a person who likes to be in control. However, I am learning how to relinquish power. I want to be considered competent and appreciated. Through reading Biehl, I now understand how my childhood experiences influence my adult phobias.

#### 4. SUREST/SAFEST STYLE:

My safest sure style includes being a leader, a controller, and rescuer.

I have good leadership skills. Sometimes in a group setting, I have to be cognizant not try to dominate and to let others complete their thoughts and statements before I interject. I consider myself a controller. I like to get situations under control. I also have issues with vulnerability. I like being in control of a situation. I am the family rescuer. I protect and defend love ones and friends. I also seek to help empower those who are vulnerable. I try to avoid competing and risky behavior.

#### 5. SINGLE GREATEST STRENGTH:

My single greatest strength is rescuing. I am a very compassionate person. This includes recognizing injustice, empathizing, and serving the poor. At times I may be too compassionate. I am learning the benefits of sometimes using tough love in certain situations.

#### 6. BACK UP STYLE:

My greatest backup style is withdrawing or avoiding situations. This may be a passive/aggressive trait. I do not like direct confrontation. I am learning to confront issues instead using avoidance. By reading Biehl, I realize that I used backup styles when I feel threatened or when others infuriate me. I have learned through counseling to directly confront issues.

I was raised in a very loving, affectionate family. I am very comfortable with closeness. I am also comfortable with displaying affection. I have a very close

relationship with my parents, siblings, and extended relatives. I have learned over the years not to place my family values upon others and to meet them where they are. I have focused on introspection in the last few years. I have learned to process the deaths of loved ones through grief counseling. I have also learned how to cope my issues such as emotional eating. I now realize that I cannot lead others to Jesus Christ until I have dealt with my issues. Through Biehl's book, I understand how my childhood experiences affect my adult phobias and emotions. I will continually seek counseling to help me process issues that have occurred over the span of my life.

#### SILENT RETREAT # 2

DATE: March 11<sup>th</sup>-March 12<sup>th</sup>

LOCATION: BSMT OF HOME

I practiced the spiritual discipline of silence in the basement of my home. I have a bathroom in basement, windows, and access to food and refreshing drinks.

However, I had begun the Daniel Fast. The experience was difficult at times but rewarding (I think my family enjoyed my silence for 24 hours; smile). Neil Anderson's book "The Steps To Freedom Christ" helped me work through my experience. I learned valuable tools and resources during my silent retreat.

Fortunately, I was able to tune it traffic noise and music being played by neighbors. It was a rewarding experience. I plan to practice it again. Silence is one

of the spiritual disciplines. Through my silence, I was reflective and able to listen to God.

### **SPIRITUAL AWARENESS**

The assessment tests administered online and manually have given me a measuring instrument to assess my strengths and weaknesses both spiritually and existentially. I am amazed by some results and not so surprised by others. 2 Corinthians 13:5 states “examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” I need to have spiritual and existential checkups. This helps me remain well-balanced human being. This will help me become better equipped for ministry. I cannot lead others to Christ until I have examined myself.

The first assessment I took was the Spiritual Gifts Assessment Test, There were some surprises and some results that did not surprise me. In the following areas, I received the following scores: **Administration: 45; Evangelism 45; Teaching 45; Wisdom 45; Encouragement 45; Faith 45; Exhortation 45; Missionary 44; Prophecy 44; Discernment 44; Mercy 44; Apostle 44; Knowledge 44; Writing 44; Leadership 44;pastoring 43; Giving 42; Music 42; Music 42 Intercession 41 Poverty 39 Craftsmanship 39 Hospitality 38 Celibacy 38 Miracles 34 Healing 25 Tongue Speaking 0 Tongue Interpreting 0. I know that I am competent in the gifts of Administration, Evangelism, Teaching, Discernment, Leadership and Pastoring. Other areas of competency were surprising to me. I also knew that I did not have the gift of Speaking in or Interpreting Tongues. I did not think I had the gift of Healing. I am somewhat surprised to see that I do indeed display some competence regarding the gift of Healing. Assessing my spiritual gifts admonishes me to heed the words of the Apostle Paul and use my spiritual gifts to edify the kingdom of God. I think my spiritual assessment test should be used as a measurement tool along with other**

assessments to help me become well equipped, I am for ministry. This will be not only an asset to myself but also an asset to those who are in ministry.

The next assessment test I took was the Enneagram Test. This test assesses my personality type. My results revealed that I am 1-5-4. Type ones are principled, disciplined, perfectionistic, and have high integrity. I can also be rigid, inflexible, and judgmental. I am also Type 5. Type 5 personalities are described as being cerebral, perceptive, competent and original. I can also sometimes avoid my feelings and get lost in ideas. Last, I am also a Type Four. This means I am unique, creative and deep. I can also be dramatic and get lost in my feelings. This assessment helps me analyze my strengths and weaknesses in ministry. It will enhance the important skill of working with people in the church setting. It will also help me to have a better rapport with the pastor and the ministry team. This will help be an asset and also help me analyze my weaknesses on the ministerial team. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale test gave good predictions. I scored 120 on the Spiritual Well Being and 60 on the Existential Well -Being. I feel as though I am spiritually mature and well-equipped for ministry. In the Learning Modalities, I learn best by using my auditory skills.

Peter Scazzero's book is a wonderful guide to spiritual health. I realize that I need to work on various areas outlined in the book. By the time I complete my integrative paper, I will have a more in depth analysis of my social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual self.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH PLAN

As a seminary student I have taken assessments, evaluations, psychological tests and counseling sessions. Self-reflection and introspection have been the most challenging of all of my life's endeavors. I now understand my personality-type, strengths, weaknesses, and shortcomings. My spiritual journey began at the tender age of fifteen when I first became an active member of the church. My call to ministry began at the age of 24. I answered the call and began active ministry at 32. My spiritual formation began at 40. I am now reaching spiritual maturity at the age of 59. As a new seminary student, I was in denial regarding many aspects of my personality. As I journey forward, I now realize that I am still striving for both spiritual and psychological maturity. I conducted a comparative analysis of my Growth in Grace worksheet as an admissions student and now as a more mature student

The Spiritual Formation Class has enlightened me. The scriptural text that is most inspiring to me is John 15:12 which states "This my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." (NIV). I enjoy people and I am moderately expressive and warm. Also has some interests that are non-social and non-emotional, some solitary activities such as reading a book or a hobby that involves things rather than people. I am a little inclined toward the emotionally warm, gregarious side. Recognizing this personality trait helps me understand how I would navigate in ministry as well as in a secular environment. It will also enhance my evangelistic skills.

I have an average tendency to behave passively or dependently toward certain people in some situations; but a little more inclined to be independent and self-activating. I have learned that I have to engage in direct confrontation as opposed to taking the passive-aggressive approach. This will help me better engage others in discipleship ministry.

I am very much inclined to follow my urges and impulses in an unrestrained way. This has advantages and disadvantages. I have learned to think about my words and actions and the impact they have on others. I am learning to practice the discipline of silence. I am a high risk taker have discovered that being a high risk taker has it's disadvantages and downfalls. Sometimes I am too risqué. As I have matured spiritually and chronologically, I am less inclined to take risks because I think through the consequences of my actions. I am very emotional artistic and subjective. When I was younger, I did not always may make the most realistic decisions. I am much more of realist at 59.

I have very strong inclinations. I have engaged in counseling. Through counseling, I have learned to cope with feelings of anxiety and to work out my issues. I cannot lead others to Christ until I have coped with my issue. I am more spiritually and emotionally mature.

I am willing and capable of thinking, working, and making decisions on my own. Others may be consulted for advice but, more often than not, she will independently choose her own course of action. This fact plays out with family members and close friends. I will seek advice and then choose my own course of action. These has caused issues with my secular supervisors. They inform me that I am not working independently. In my ministerial praxis, this may be disadvantageous because ministerial teamwork is very important.

I am highly motivated and energetic, and I love to realize my full potential. I love success and strive to optimize performance. I am highly motivated, which is a good trait. However, I have learn to embrace those who are broken and less motivated. This leads to effective discipleship ministry. I am empathetic and sympathetic of the feelings of others. This is a good ministerial trait. However, at times I am too compassionate. I must learn to empower those I disciple as opposed to promoting co-dependency.

As a ministry leader, I must learn to meet people where they are. Sometimes my expectations may not be realistic for the individual. I will use an acquired skill learned from the lecture and power point presentation on the Imposter Syndrome. I will help those whom I disciple work through any feelings of rejection or inadequacy. Furthermore, I will address the stages of church development congregants encounter (Chaotic/Antisocial; Formal/Institutional; Skeptic/Individual). I will help them assert confidence and tenacity in all their endeavors. I am working on my counseling skills to improve in this area of ministry. I give proper thought given to decisions and actions in ministry. I am quite patient. This is a great trait to have in ministry, Ministry requires great patience. I am optimistic in ministry but not always realistic. I have learned to be more realistic in my ministerial pursuits and endeavors.

My intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability skills are adequate for ministry. Regarding intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills, I reached an effective functioning level. I strive to develop more enhanced skills in these areas. I need improvement in stress management. Stress is a consistent reality in ministry. I also need improvement regarding impulse control. In the adaptability category, I need to develop more realistic perspectives, better flexibility and better problem solving skills. Through counseling, I think I am improving in my areas of weakness. I believe I had a As I have grown older, I've learned to see a glass half full as opposed to half empty. I definitely strive for happiness which will permeate to those whom I disciple. Furthermore, I will help identify Fowler's stages of development in them )Intuitive /Prospective, Mythic/Literal; Synthetic/Conventional; Individualistic/Reflective; Conjunctive /Faith). I realize that few congregants will reach the Universality Faith stage. However, I will help navigate them through the process of spiritual formation.

I learned how my Learning Type Measure (LTM) influences my ministerial praxis. I am a Dynamic Learner and an Analytical Learner. First, as Dynamic Learner, I have good leadership skills. This can be a disadvantage as an associate minister. I have to realize that the lead pastor is in charge. Congregants will also let me know in subtle ways. I have a good sense of humor which is one of the traits of Dynamic Leader. I demand flexibility. My weakness is not recognizing time constraints and compliance. Sometimes it may take me a long time to complete an assignment. I am unpredictable at times and willing to take changes. This can be a disadvantage because congregants need consistency in ministry. I enjoy people and I have a strong intuition.

Second, as an Analytical learner, I like information presented logically and sequentially. I have learned to tolerate those whose learning styles are different and work as a team. I love to debate issues and reach logical conclusions. I perceive myself as highly intellectual. I have been criticized displaying what others call intellectual superiority. I have grown as a result and realize that I can learn from others regardless of their educational experiences. I also enjoy listening and taking notes. I now realize that others are imaginative with their learning skills. I learn from traditional methodology. I had to adapt to more innovative contemporary concepts, in youth ministry. I prefer to work alone and can be perceived as impersonal at times but not too often. In my ministerial praxis, I realize that Jesus designed discipleship ministry. Thus, I have learned to work in groups and function as a team.

I have also taken the Spiritual Gifts Assessment. I now understand how I can use my spiritual gifts to edify the "Kingdom of God." I have the spiritual gifts of Administration, Exhortation, Evangelism, and Discernment. I have learned to develop these gifts in church in accordance with the gifts of others. I have also learned to be content with the gifts that God has

given me. I do not envy the gifts of others. I encourage congregants to develop their spiritual gifts. The Spiritual Gifts Assessment is not the only criteria I would use to assess spiritual gifts. Paul reminds us in his letter to the church at Corinth, not to develop inflated egos because of the gifts that are bestowed upon us. I Corinthians 13 reminds us that the greatest gift of all is love, Thus, I will use my spiritual gifts to edify the kingdom of God with love. I have learned that the church should be one body operating in the unity of the “Holy Spirit.” I believe that the church can best operate if the various gifts are being used to the glory of God. Therefore, I will be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. In my ministerial praxis, I will use my spiritual gifts to help edify the body of Christ in accordance with the gifts of the “Holy.”

My church frequently has prayer circles and meetings. It was great to learn in the lectures about the seven levels of prayer. I can impart knowledge about prayer to congregants. I will take them through the seven levels a prayer which are 1) Asking; 2) seeking; 3) Knocking; 4) Fasting; 5) Prayer Assignment; 6) Wrestling in Prayer and 7) Warfare In Prayer (Defensive and Offensive). I will also practice and preach the power of Fasting and Praying (Matthew 4:1-11 and Ephesians 6:12),

The omniscient, omnipresent God called me when I was in my mother’s womb. In all things I acknowledge him. My mother has always been involved in my spiritual development. My mother’s love for me and my siblings always reflected the love of God to me. From infancy to adulthood, I have been shaped and molded by her loving hands. Psalm 131 give us the analogy of a child weaned from the mother’s milk. I thank God that I have reaching spiritual maturity and

have allowed my mother's wisdom to nourish me. My late maternal aunt and grandparents also nurtured my spiritual development.

My spiritual development began at the age of 15. I joined a new church one week after my mother and late maternal aunt. I was moved as a result of the stirrings in my heart. One of my favorite scriptures is Romans 1:16 which states "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (NIV) My spiritual journey continued with the call to ministry at age 32. In seminary, I continue to enhance my knowledge of the scriptures and spiritual development. In my ministerial praxis, I plan to lead others through spiritual formation. I realize that in order to do discipleship ministry and lead others to Christ, I must first develop my spiritual formation through spiritual disciplines and counseling services.

