

## **ABSTRACT**

### **INTUITIVE WISDOM IN LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING THE EXERCISE OF INTUITIVE WISDOM AMONG MINISTRY LEADERS IN NEW ZEALAND**

by

Clinton J. Ussher

Leaders frequently exercise intuition to great advantage. For this reason, leaders highly value intuition. However, Christian leadership literature does not understand or give a clear definition of intuition. The purpose of this research is to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, and to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders. Biblical wisdom provides a biblical and theological framework for understanding intuition; hence the terminology, “intuitive wisdom.” The study takes an interdisciplinary approach considering research from biblical studies, theology, psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, business and management, and leadership.

The primary data was collected from a purposive sample of nineteen ministry leaders from New Zealand who participated in semi-structured interviews. These leaders were nominated by colleagues and verified as preferring an experiential/intuitive means of information processing using the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI).

The research offers seven major findings: (1) Intuitive wisdom enables one to anticipate what others do not; (2) Intuitive wisdom is understood and experienced differently; (3) Sensemaking is greatly enhanced by cognitive-analytical skills which are also necessary for holistic integration; (4) Christlike character and humility proved the

best way to develop intuitive wisdom; (5) Safeguards are necessary to mitigate risks associated with intuitive wisdom; (6) Personal formational experiences are the default when developing intuitive wisdom abilities in others; and (7) A “cultivation of taste” framework proves helpful for intentionally developing intuitive wisdom in others.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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**LEADERS IN NEW ZEALAND**

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LEADERS IN NEW ZEALAND

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
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by

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIM	Agor Intuitive Management Survey
EA	Experiential Ability
EE	Experiential Engagement
ISSP	International Social Survey Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIV	<i>The Bible</i> , New International Version NIV is used for all scripture references unless otherwise noted.
NRSV	<i>The Bible</i> , New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PID	Preference for Intuition or Deliberation Scale
Prov.	Proverbs
REI	Rational-Experiential Inventory

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## CHAPTER 1

### Overview of the Chapter

Significant moments in leadership are often the result of intuitive wisdom. The problem, however, is that intuition is often viewed with disdain and distrust. Rarely does one find ways to develop intuitive wisdom forming part of leadership development programs. This chapter lays out research undertaken to address these challenges and gaps by exploring how intuitive wisdom informs the leadership of ministry leaders in New Zealand. The chapter begins with a personal introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the project, the primary questions guiding the research, as well as key ideas and themes emerging from associated literature. It will offer rationale for the importance of this project, the limitations of the research, and describe the research methodology. In the end, the reader will have a general understanding of the entire research project.

### Personal Introduction

Leadership has been a part of my life from a very young age, resulting in the growth of a deep love of and appreciation for leaders. I love being with leaders and talking about leadership. And because I love to learn and grow as a leader, I love hearing (and sharing) leadership stories. I am particularly inspired by leadership stories that result in some kind of breakthrough to greater Kingdom faithfulness and fruitfulness. As a young leader, I began to observe a trend in the stories and experiences of leaders in that they seemed to “just know” the right thing to say or do. Usually it turned out that they were right.

When leaders describe their greatest breakthroughs, either personally or in ministry, it is often the result of “just knowing” what to do, where to go, or what to say.

This was particularly true when describing vocational calling or issues of vision and direction. The closer I listened to or read leadership stories, the more I noticed the pivotal insight or idea was typically not sequential or logical. In fact, it was often a leap of logic. Some would attribute it to God speaking or God leading, but not all. Others referred to having a “sense,” or a “gut-feeling,” or a “hunch.” I grew increasingly fascinated by this leadership ability and wanted to know more. How did they come to know? Why are some leaders better at this ‘knowing’ than others? Was this ‘knowing’ attributable to God? And, if so, how?

On a personal level, I have experienced a somewhat dichotomized experience of leadership formation. On the one hand, leadership training (books, conferences, workshops, courses, and other types of training) was incredibly inspiring, helpful, and motivating for me. As I said, I love learning and growing as a leader. On the other hand, I have also come away from such leadership training contexts feeling like a fish out of water – as if I did not really fit within the leadership community. I remember sharing some of this uneasiness with my father-in-law, Rev. Dr. Dennis Jackson, who is a wonderful ministry leader and leadership coach. In reflection, he referred to two different types of leaders: “strategic leaders” and “intuitive leaders.” This led to a fascinating and shaping conversation as he unpacked the differences between these two types of leaders based on his experience.

Strategic leaders were described as typically driven by goals and planning. Once a goal has been identified, they mark it out in forecasting steps for achievement. Along the way, they adjust and re-work the steps, but the goal is still clearly in sight and they bring the necessary resources of people, information, communication, alignment, and funding

to bring about the goal. Because of their strong analytical and pragmatic skills, strategic leaders tend to teach others and are often sought out for learning. They typically write the books and articles on strategy and goals. They are practical and defined. They can be rigid and self-reliant on their strategy and plans and ‘answers’ to nearly everything. They can frustrate intuitive leaders with their pre-determined plans and answers. They often lead best with other strategic persons who are willing to develop and execute the plan/s. They are enhanced by having intuitive leaders around them who can more easily address necessary adjustments to the plan and often make the plan more personal.

Intuitive leaders move forward with a sense of movement in alignment with high purposes and deeply held personal values; albeit often unstated. They do what is right before them as the next logical step in accomplishing and reaching to the higher purpose (what else would you do?). Intuitive leaders will often struggle to articulate their plan or strategy. This can be because they may not have a defined plan or strategy; they simply do what is obvious to them as the next step. They motivate others with their results. The best learning from them comes through interviews which assist them in articulating their purposes and values, and identifying the steps taken. These then can be analyzed into a strategy for learning. They often frustrate strategic persons with their lack of well-defined plans and steps. They typically lead best with strategic high-level support persons who are able turn their intuitive actions into measurable steps for other team members. These strategic persons also assist in making the purpose practical and well communicated.

This distinction resonated deeply with me and caused me to think further about my own leadership formation. Using these distinctions, I came to embrace an understanding of myself as an “intuitive leader” who had largely been formed and

equipped in “strategic leadership” environments. Thus, explaining my dichotomized experience and my focused exploration of intuitive leadership. After all, I want to grow and develop as the leader God created me to be, not be coalesced into something else.

I wanted to understand intuitive leadership better. I wanted to see what the Scriptures, theology, and the Christian tradition said about intuitive leadership. I felt increasingly like I should learn to trust my intuition, which involved guarding myself from being misguided. Yet, searching for ways to grow and develop intuitive abilities for leadership proved a challenge. I found very few resources for Christian leaders in this space which, thus, prompted this study. It is this source of knowing (intuition) that I am interested in researching among ministry leaders. I further hope to identify ways to train, equip, and develop ministry leaders to more effectively utilize intuitive wisdom to the glory of God and for the edification of the Church.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Intuitive wisdom in leadership is not understood or developed; that is the problem this study attempts to address. Ministry leaders face regular challenges, obstacles, and increasingly complex situations in their church or leadership context. And their ability to traverse such turbulent times with wisdom is essential to the health and growth of their church/organization. Some leaders seem to possess an intuitive ability to adapt and navigate complex leadership situations with positive outcomes. While such leaders are a wonderful gift to the body of Christ, little is known about how intuitive wisdom informs their leadership; or how this ability might be developed among emerging leaders. This apparent gap in current Christian leadership formation is both noticeable and understandable.

Part of the problem is that post-Enlightenment Western societies have elevated human reason to be the utmost authority. Even though postmodernity has revealed this trust in cognitive-analytical abilities to be misplaced, a skepticism of non-cognitive capacities remains. There is an underlying sense of disdain or distrust towards intuition due to its nonconscious nature. Furthermore, especially in Christian contexts, experiences of intuition being abused by leaders causes many to be leery, if not reject it outright. Hence, most leadership training resources are dominated by a cognitive-analytical approach to leadership. What is needed is a robust framework for understanding intuitive wisdom and how to develop it. The ability to improve a leader's intuitive wisdom capability would help to close the gap in leadership development, resulting in a more holistic and fully orbed approach to leadership development and, ideally, leaders who successfully navigate the complex leadership situations they face in ministry.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the research was to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, in order to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders.

### **Research Questions**

To determine how intuitive wisdom informs leadership and how it might be developed, the following research questions were used to define the parameters of the study.

**Research Question #1**

How does intuitive wisdom inform the leadership decisions, problem-solving, and direction of the sample ministry leaders?

**Research Question #2**

What language and/or processes are used to communicate intuitive wisdom to others on their team or in their congregation (sensemaking or rationalization process)?

**Research Question #3**

Have the intuitive wisdom abilities of the sample ministry leaders improved over time? If so, what have been some of the most shaping influences (postures, practices, or experiences)?

**Research Question #4**

What common elements do these leaders use to successfully develop intuitive wisdom in emerging leaders?

**Rationale for the Project**

The first reason this study matters is because we live in a world that is changing rapidly and dynamically, and our approach to leadership needs to change in response. Foundational shifts in our culture have been underway for some time, but people (and leaders especially) are struggling to grapple with a sense of instability caused by these changing dynamics. Wherever we turn, we can find historians, futurists, editorialists, economists, semioticians, environmentalists, anthropologists, and sociologists pumping out material aimed at describing our cultural location and the flux in which we exist. The leadership models that brought us here simply will not suffice in the uncharted cultural territories of today, let alone the future. Most leadership resources could be classified

within the framework of a manual. Manuals are highly practical, offering explicit instructions to operate a device, or achieve a certain outcome, by providing the basic data in a step-by-step approach. Keel suggests, “Manuals are pragmatic guides that guarantee results – if you will simply do what they say. But therein lies the problem of leadership in a postmodern world: we need something beyond pragmatism... In this context a manual is not only unhelpful, it is deceptive and dangerous” (Keel 23). This study attempts to pave the way for a new approach to leadership involving more than mere pragmatism.

The second reason this study matters is because great leaders succeed by harnessing the power of both the external world and the internal world (Townsend 13–14). Leaders are usually well-equipped to glean and integrate large amounts of valuable external information (reports, research, journals, input from colleagues) using rationality, logic, and objective sources. Obviously, this is an important capability for leadership. However, leaders tend to be less confident or equipped to glean and integrate the equally valuable and helpful internal information which often transcends pure reasoning. Townsend describes such internal information as, “subjective, internal, and experiential. These intuitive aspects of leadership are not infallible, but they are highly significant and valuable” (Townsend 14). Because I think the *missio Dei* demands great leaders who are equipped and empowered to lead in ever-changing contexts, it implies that leaders better know how to utilize all the leadership resources and tools available. This study aims to increase understanding of intuitive wisdom and proposes ways to improve the intuitive aspects of leadership.

The third reason this study matters is because intuitive abilities rarely factor into Christian leadership resources or training. This gap in the literature means Christian

leaders are uninformed and ill-equipped to improve (hone and develop) their intuition, but also to protect it against being misguided, or worse, abused. This project provides evidence-based research upon which a new approach to leadership training can be built. Such an approach will help to fill this gap and result in a more holistic and fully orbed approach to leadership development. The desired outcome being leaders who have experienced personal transformation through the integration of intuitive wisdom enabling them to lead as a whole person.

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, this study matters because intuitive wisdom as a conceptual construct for leadership requires a robust biblical and theological framework. This is a significant gap in the Christian scholarly literature. Without firm biblical and theological foundations, Christian leaders are leery, skeptical, and distrusting of intuition. This may be due to experiencing excesses or abuse of intuition where, for example, one's intuition is over-spiritualized, directly linking it with God's voice. This study offers biblical wisdom as a framework within which to consider intuition as part of God's creative design for humanity.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

For the sake of clarity, several terms that are either technical to the study or used in different ways are defined here.

#### **Conation / Connate**

*Conation* refers to an inclination (an instinct, a drive, a wish, or a craving) to act purposefully (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). It is understood as one of three components of the human mind. The other two components are: Cognition, which refers to the process of coming to know and understand; and Affect, which refers to the emotional

interpretation to information or knowledge. Conation is the function of the mind that translates knowledge (Cognition) and Affect into behavior. It is closely associated with the concept of volition.

### **Emerging Leaders**

*Emerging Leaders* are those people who have been identified as prospective leaders and are actively involved in some form of leadership development process. This terminology is used intentionally to remove age distinctions; in other words, the term emerging leaders does not necessarily refer to young people.

### **Intuition**

*Intuition* refers to ways of knowing that are non-cognitive in nature. Feelings, emotions, subconscious, fear/danger instinct, adrenaline, and even our physical body itself are a small sampling of such non-cognitive faculties; each of which serve as powerful and important sources of knowledge. For instance, polygraph tests measure the subject's physiological reactions (blood pressure, pulse, respiration, skin conductivity) to a series of questions they are being asked to answer. Such physiological reactions are generally regarded as a reliable source of information regarding whether or not the subject is telling the truth. A full discussion about the nature of intuition is provided in chapter two below. However, for the purposes of this study, Erik Dane and Michael G. Pratt's definition of intuition has been adopted: "intuition is a nonconscious process involving holistic associations that are produced rapidly, which result in affectively charged judgments" (Dane and Pratt 36).

### **Intuitive Wisdom**

*Intuitive Wisdom* is used in this study to denote an understanding of intuition grounded in biblical wisdom. Such reframing of intuition within the exercise, theology, and worldview of biblical wisdom is to offer a firm Christian framework for intuition; and thus, distinguishing it from other foundations (for example, New Age Spirituality).

### **Ministry Leaders**

The *Ministry Leaders* in this study consist of pastoral leaders, denominational leaders, and executive leaders in parachurch or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### **Rationalization / Sensemaking**

*Rationalization* refers to the process of converting *intuition* or *tacit knowledge* into explicit knowledge or some useable form. Typically, this process enables one's intuition to be communicated and shared with team members or others within the organization. The term *rationalization* is used interchangeably with *sensemaking*.

### **Tacit Knowledge**

According to the philosopher Michael Polanyi, *tacit knowledge* is knowledge that is difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing. It is often referred to as “know-how” and associated with one's ability to speak a language, ride a bike, or play a musical instrument (Polanyi 4–6). Typically, *tacit knowledge* is defined in contrast to explicit knowledge that is formal or codified.

### **Wisdom**

*Wisdom* in this study refers specifically to biblical wisdom as a literature legacy emerging from a wisdom tradition built upon a wisdom worldview. It is also considered

an ongoing interpretive practice by which one seeks to live skillfully in the world God created. A full discussion of biblical wisdom is provided below (see chapter two).

### **Delimitations**

For this project, the researcher chose to work with Christian leaders in churches or Christian organizations in New Zealand. In each case, someone who knew the research participants well nominated them as being highly intuitive and as meeting the following criteria: (1) able to identify intuitive wisdom as a valuable informer of their own leadership, (2) believed that intuitive abilities could be developed in others, and (3) demonstrated the capacity to develop intuitive abilities in emerging leaders. The intuitive abilities of nominees were verified using the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) psychometric, and only those with a mean score of four (4) or higher on the Experiential Ability (EA) and Experiential Engagement (EE) subscales were invited to participate in the interviews. The final sample of nineteen leaders participated in in-depth interviews.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

This project consulted a range of different literature to inform and support each aspect of the research project. Part of the reason for the relatively wide range of literature surveyed here is due to the current lack of material available regarding intuition within Christian leadership studies. Chapter 2 of this project discusses scholarly literature from biblical studies, theology, philosophy, psychology, management, neuroscience, and sociology, and it also engages with some Christian educators in four main sections. The first section considers biblical wisdom as the biblical and theological framework for the research. The second section explores intuition research paying particular attention to the ways in which it is exercised and developed. The third section examines the context of

Aotearoa New Zealand as the locale in which the sample leaders serve. And the fourth section considers relevant leadership literature through the lenses of wisdom, intuition, and New Zealand contextual influences. A further description of each section follows below.

The literature review begins with an exploration of biblical wisdom. This section attempts to provide a biblical and theological framework for the research. Drawing primarily from OT wisdom literature, and in particular the book of Proverbs, it describes: (1) the nature of wisdom, (2) the exercise of wisdom, and (3) the development of wisdom. Prominent OT (Old Testament) wisdom scholars such as James Crenshaw, Roland Murphy, William Brown, and Michael Fox (among many others) contribute significantly to the discussion. The nature of wisdom reveals an underlying worldview which is deeply rooted in a creation theology. Essentially, the wisdom worldview assumes God created the world with a certain order or structure, and human life flourishes when aligned with God's creative order. Part of God's design was to endow humanity with the capability to acquire wisdom – an incredible potential. However, wisdom also recognizes (from experience) that human flourishing is not guaranteed and, therefore, asserts humans are unable to achieve perfect or full wisdom. Only God has perfect wisdom. Hence, biblical wisdom embraces the dialectical tension of both human potential and limitation and consistently exhorts people to seek wisdom. And the seeking of wisdom is where the discussion shifts to examine ways in which wisdom is exercised and developed.

The second section of the literature review explores intuition research from a wide range of disciplines including: psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, management and

business, and theology. Following a similar outline to the wisdom section, this section examines: (1) the nature of intuition, (2) the exercise of intuition, (3) the development of intuition, and (4) Christian intuition. This section draws upon the influence of psychologists Seymour Epstein, Daniel Kahneman, David Myers, and Gary Klein; Michael Polanyi's epistemological theory of tacit knowledge; and research into developing intuitive abilities for business and management by Eugene Sadler-Smith and others. The nature of intuition is often defined in terms of dual-process thinking where people prefer type one thinking (fast, intuitive, high capacity) or type two thinking (slow, reflective, low capacity). However, the discussion around the exercise of intuition shows an integration of the two is both the ideal and, mostly, the norm. Primary themes explored around the exercise and development of intuition included research into judgment and decision making, but also the significant amount of attention paid to expertise. It is shown that experience is a great contributor to improving one's intuitive abilities.

The third section engages sociological and historical research of Aotearoa New Zealand to identify significant influences in the leadership context. The section pays particular attention to the changing dynamics of church involvement and the role of the church in wider New Zealand culture. Challenges of secularism, pluralism, privatism, and anti-institutionalism combine to make New Zealand a complex and challenging context for ministry leadership.

The fourth major section of the literature review considers leadership research from New Zealand and nearby Australia. This section aims to integrate the themes from the wisdom, intuition, and New Zealand sections with leadership in hopes of informing a

different approach to leadership; of intuitive wisdom in leadership as a constructive framework for ministry leaders in New Zealand.

### **Research Methodology**

Part of the challenge with a research project like this is that intuitive leaders are not always consciously aware of how intuition informs their leadership. Thus, the methodology employed in seeking to answer the research questions needed to be carefully selected. The aim was to create a methodology that helped guide participants along a journey of self-discovery that both grew their own awareness while also providing reliable data for the purposes of this research project. Chapter 3 provides a complete description of the methodology employed. However, what follows here offers a brief overview of the types of research employed, a description of the study participants, research instruments employed, means of data collection, method used for data analysis, and a brief statement about the trustworthiness and significance of this study.

In attempting to answer the research questions guiding this project, the research methodology involved a two-step purposive sampling process, followed by in-depth interviews with the sample ministry leaders. The purposive sampling involved referral nominations and a validated psychometric assessment, Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI), to confirm the sample leaders' intuitive preference for information processing. The in-depth interviews were conducted one-on-one with the sample ministry leaders following a semi-structured interview format.

### **Type of Research**

Because this study aimed both to understand how intuition informs ministry leaders and to identify guidelines for developing intuitive abilities in emerging leaders, a

Pre-intervention type of research made the most sense. Pre-intervention studies aim to describe or explain the phenomenon thoroughly and propose specific next steps without executing those next steps (Asbury Theological Seminary 2). Although mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative) were employed in the sampling and data collection process, the primary nature of this study is qualitative. This is due to the purpose and research questions guiding the study. The purpose of this study is not only to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed ministry leaders but also to uncover guidelines for developing the intuitive wisdom abilities of emerging leaders. The nature of such research is qualitative, dealing in terms of describing, explaining, understanding, exploring, discovering, and generating ideas (4). The only quantitative means used (REI administered as an online survey) was used solely for added verification in the purposive sampling process. Whereas, the referral-based purposive sampling and in-depth interviews employed qualitative research methods.

### **Participants**

The participants interviewed in this study were determined through a two-step verification process of purposive sampling. The first step required them being nominated or referred by a ministry colleague in New Zealand. The second step involved a verifying internet-based survey designed to assess their preference for information processing. Those with a mean score of four (4) or higher on the experiential subscales of the REI (EE and EA) were invited to participate in an in-depth interview. Nineteen pastors and leaders of Christian organizations from New Zealand comprised the interview population. They represented a cross-section of age, gender, theological/denominational allegiance, and geographical location.

## **Instrumentation**

Three different research instruments were used in this project. The researcher designed and implemented two of the instruments but for the third instrument he utilized a validated psychometric assessment (REI) for assessing preference for information processing. First, an email introduction and invitation were disbursed widely throughout several national networks of ministry leaders in New Zealand. The email included a description of a ministry leader who exercises intuition in his or her leadership frequently resulting in positive outcomes. Email recipients were asked if they knew of a ministry leader who fit the description, and if so, to please nominate them via email response as a potential participant in this study. A copy of the email used is in Appendix A. The second instrument was the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) administered as an online survey (Google Form). This is a validated psychometric assessment designed to assess one's preference for information processing between rational-cognitive and experiential-intuitive approaches. The survey was sent via email to each of the nominees with an invitation to participate in the study. I collated the survey responses and determined the sample size based upon the participant scores and availability. A copy of the survey and study invitation is in Appendix B. The third research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview. The researcher employed open-ended questions in an attempt to get participants to tell stories in the belief that this would provide a helpful rich description of how intuition informs their leadership. A copy of the interview protocol used is provided in Appendix C.

## **Data Collection**

The data for this study was collected by identifying and interviewing nineteen pastors and leaders of Christian organizations in New Zealand who fit the predetermined criteria for the study. The data set consisted of two sources: (1) answers provided on the REI assessment, and (2) in-depth, semi-structured interviews with each of the sample leaders. A copy of the online survey (REI) can be found in Appendix B. The interviews were conducted in-person in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch during November and December 2018. Prior to the interviews, participants gave consent related to the purpose, duration, digital recording, intended use, voluntary nature of participation, and right to withdraw at any time (see Appendix D). Digital audio recordings were made for each of the interviews and professionally transcribed. Interview transcriptions were reviewed and approved by interviewees. The data from the interviews was arranged into an organized, reportable format to facilitate review, analysis, and synthesis. Appendix C includes a copy of the interview questions.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis took a data-driven approach by focusing on themes emerging from the research data. To accomplish this, I first examined the transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews. I took notes and made highlights as I reviewed these repeatedly. Patterns and themes began to emerge. I selected three transcripts and reread them highlighting specific portions of text. After doing this with three transcripts, I categorized and the common words, themes, and patterns that emerged and created codes for each one. I organized the codes according to the four research questions for this study. I then coded the remaining transcripts, making sure to add new codes as required.

I developed a codebook in which each code was given a definition and illustrative quotes were extracted from the transcripts. The codebook was examined in-depth and the data was analyzed in light of the research questions. Throughout the analysis, I made notes on the similarities and differences between data points within the same code/theme.

### **Generalizability**

The qualitative nature of the research and the small sample limit the generalizability of this project. Further limitations exist due to the subjective nature of the topic and any potential bias of both participants and researcher. Some of this is overcome by the research design in that the sample population could not be predicted or controlled by the researcher. The learning emerging from this project may have cross-over relevance to ministry leadership contexts outside of New Zealand, but best limited to the Global West.

### **Project Overview**

This project seeks to identify how intuition informs leadership decisions and direction among ministry leaders in New Zealand. Chapter 2 discusses the biblical and theological foundations along with the most influential writers and practitioners regarding intuitive ways of knowing and leading. Chapter 3 outlines the various ways the researcher went about answering his research questions. Chapter 4 presents the results of the research following qualitative data analysis of interview transcripts. And, finally, Chapter 5 outlines the study's major findings with implications for each discovery now and in the future.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter includes a review of literature relevant to the study of intuitive wisdom in leadership. The research consults a wide range of literature from biblical studies, theology, philosophy, psychology, management, neuroscience, sociology, leadership, and Christian education. The chapter is organized into five main sections. The first section considers Biblical wisdom as the biblical and theological framework for the research and explores relevant wisdom themes under the following categories: (1) The Nature of Wisdom, (2) The Exercise of Wisdom, and (3) The Development of Wisdom. The second section explores intuition and pays particular attention the ways in which leaders exercise and develop intuition. Like the wisdom section, this section discusses relevant themes according to: (1) The Nature of Intuition, (2) The Exercise of Intuition, (3) The Development of Intuition, and (4) Christian Intuition. The third section examines the context of Aotearoa New Zealand as the locale in which the sample leaders serve. The fourth section considers relevant leadership literature through the lenses of wisdom, intuition, the New Zealand context, and pedagogy. The chapter concludes with a brief review of relevant research design literature and a summary of the major themes, arguments, and definitions emerging from the literature consulted.

#### Biblical Wisdom

The wisdom books of Scripture frame *wisdom* as the means by which humans may seek to live well in God's world. The Biblical frame of wisdom is never exclusively cognitive, but rather tied more fully to the cultivation of character and the self. The wise

person is one who begins with the fear of God and seeks to better understand, discern, and choose – a spiritual process guided by the Holy Spirit that sets up questions that align well to the questions that arise from considering intuition. Both wisdom and intuition perspectives affirm the need for insight in order to know how to live well in good times, bad times, and times of uncertainty.

When problems arise, one of the greatest needs of ministry leaders is insight. Insight to understand the nature of the problem, underlying assumptions, barriers, and most importantly a clear way forward. This is not a new idea. The sage of old wrote: “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight” (Prov. 4:7, NRSV). Katharine Dell begins her volume, *Get Wisdom, Get Insight*, by quoting this verse and making a clear link between wisdom and insight. She then proceeds to make a helpful distinction between wisdom as both “an attribute that is God-given” and “a genre of material contained in the Bible” (Dell 1). This exploration of biblical wisdom will survey pertinent literature related to the nature of wisdom, the exercise of wisdom, and the development of wisdom.

### **The Nature of Wisdom: “let the discerning get guidance” (Prov. 2:5b)**

Scholarly interest in biblical wisdom has significantly increased over the past forty years (see Bartholomew 3–33). Generally, the consensus is that biblical wisdom is one or more of three things: (1) a genre of biblical literature, (2) a movement in the ancient world associated with teachers or sages, or (3) a denotation or suggestion of a particular understanding of reality or worldview (Murphy, “Wisdom in the OT”; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*; Brueggemann; Dell). It is this third sense – of reality or worldview – that offers germane connections to intuition in ministry leadership.

However, it is best to not think of these three aspects of wisdom in isolation, but instead as interrelated: where wisdom literature serves as both the recorded wisdom of the sages and the primary teaching curriculum for shaping the worldview of their students. In other words, a wisdom worldview is not a given. It is something to be learned, developed, and formed.

While the wisdom worldview is of primary interest to this study, we are only able to learn what that entails by looking at the wisdom literature – the written record of the wisdom tradition preserved and passed down the generations. The following discussion traces the nature of wisdom first as a literary genre, second as a movement associated with sages and teachers, and third as a worldview or particular understanding of reality.

#### *Wisdom as Literary Genre*

The wisdom tradition developed into a literary genre – a written record of teachings and advice from the sages. The biblical wisdom literature in the Old Testament includes Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Beyond these three are the apocryphal books of Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon. There is also debate around whether other Old Testament texts, with clear similarities of style and content, should also be included in the category of wisdom literature. For example, several Psalms have been identified as “wisdom Psalms” (i.e., Psalm 37 or 49), although there is no scholarly agreement around which ones ought to be included in such a corpus. Others have suggested that passages from Deuteronomy and The Song of Songs are part of the wisdom literature. Roland E. Murphy gives a helpful survey of these differing views before concluding they ought not be considered wisdom texts inasmuch as they provide “wisdom echoes” (Murphy, *The*

*Tree of Life* 97-110). Murphy's argument is that such echoes are best understood as part of the natural effect of wisdom influence on Israelite society as a whole (107-108, 221).

The wisdom literature reflects a variety of literary styles and devices. The most common wisdom saying is the proverb. "Proverb" is the common translation for the Hebrew term, *māšāl* (Murphy, "Wisdom in the OT" 921), and is a concise statement or pithy observation that conveys truth or meaning. "The basic wisdom saying is usually composed of two lines in parallelism... [and] very often there is simply a juxtaposition" (921). Parallelism can be synonymously attempting to reiterate and reinforce the truth through repetition, or antithetically conveying the truth through contrast. Sometimes the parallelism registers a paradox (Prov. 20:17) whereas other times it simply carries an observation (Prov. 10:15). Other forms of wisdom sayings include poetry (even acrostic poems – see, Prov. 31:10-31), hymns, prayers, narrative/storytelling, and extended discourse (as found in Proverbs 1-9). One interesting subgenre developed by the sages was that of biographical narrative which was used to communicate a lesson from personal experience whether actually experienced or observed in the life of another (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 38). Whether using poetry, proverb, or narrative, the overall purpose of wisdom literature is consistently didactic. Murphy notes, "most [wisdom sayings] are value-laden and hence explicitly didactic, attempting to influence action" (Murphy, "Wisdom in the OT" 921). While the purpose of wisdom sayings remains consistent, the specific content (or context) does not.

The Old Testament wisdom books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes offer a diverse range of perspectives. Walter Brueggemann provides a helpful synopsis of their various perspectives:

The book of Proverbs... is a collection of conventional teachings that is basically conservative relating to the coherence and order of the community that is tried and true. This instruction is particularly alert to the boundaries of human behavior which, when violated, bring trouble and death. The book of Job assumes teaching like that of the book of Proverbs (reflected in Job's "friends"), in which reflection on experience has been hardened into dogmatic conviction that requires experience to conform to preconceived patterns of morality. The book of Job thus is a literature protest against conclusions like those in the book of Proverbs, which have closed off the chance to learn from new experience. The book of Ecclesiastes is a later wisdom teaching that is cast not in a tone of protest but of resignation. The teaching underlying Ecclesiastes is that reality is ordered, but it is hidden and beyond human comprehension; consequently, the best humans can do is to settle for conventional conduct.

(Brueggemann 233-34)

Such diversity within the wisdom literature has led scholars to conclude that the wisdom tradition was not some rigid or static set of judgments, but rather an ongoing reflective conversation, integrating new insights and experiences as they emerged (Murphy, *The Tree of Life* 11–13; Brueggemann 234). Such an ongoing reflective conversation is also evident in Jesus' interactions in the four Gospels, particularly with the Pharisees, where Jesus uses wisdom forms (Witherington 155–58). This understanding of a dynamic written tradition that is explicitly didactic, facilitates a dialogue between biblical wisdom and intuitive leadership.

*Wisdom as Movement of Professionals – scribes, sages, teachers*

The wisdom tradition developed through a movement of scribes, sages, teachers, and likely even schools devoted to passing along lessons of wisdom. The influence of wisdom was so pervasive on the nation of Israel that it is almost inconceivable to imagine a time when it was not operative (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 27). The source and underlying worldview of the wisdom tradition only lends strength to this assertion while also raising several questions: How did the tradition develop? What was the primary settings out of which the sages wrote? How and where were wisdom lessons taught and passed on to younger generations? Attempts to identify the specific setting or hub for such a movement have produced a number of studies which, examining the same evidence, have not resulted in consensus (cf. Blenkinsopp 1–14; Crenshaw, “Education in Ancient Israel”; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 28–65; Davies; Weeks). Fortunately, amidst the differing opinions, helpful points of agreement do exist.

James Crenshaw discredits the traditionally assumed notion of Solomon as the ultimate biblical example of a wise person. He argues this idea likely emerged from the repeated themes of life and wealth being the result of living wisely in the wisdom literature (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 42–54). Whether or not this is the case, it does little to deny the existence of a sapiential tradition – even one that existed during Solomon’s reign. If Solomon functions as a metonym for the wisdom tradition, this opens the possibility of the sapiential tradition as having a more prevalent influence upon Israelite culture than if it were historically Solomon-centric. If the wisdom tradition was not centralized in Solomon’s royal court, was it located elsewhere?

Both Crenshaw and Blenkinsopp trace the development of the sapiential tradition from its roots in a familial (or clan) setting making the home and daily life the primary setting in which parents and the extended family (especially elders) served as the primary “teachers” for ancient Israel (Blenkinsopp 11). Crenshaw argues that while some wisdom sayings may have emerged from a royal court setting, the vast majority likely emerged from a family or clan setting (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 56–57). He also indicates the likely existence of “houses of learning,” or schools as evidenced in Sirach (57).<sup>1</sup> Crenshaw argues, “Israel’s sapiential tradition seems to have arisen during the period of the clan, flourishing subsequently at the royal court and in houses of learning” (57). Blenkinsopp ties the emergence of these schools to the development of the scribal office and the importance of learning to write (Blenkinsopp 12). Writing was essential for diplomacy and the administration of a royal court. Over time, scribes became something more than official recorders; they also began to offer wise counsel to the ruler/s and assumed high social standing. Thus, a professional class of sages emerged in ancient Israel (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 28–29).

As mentioned, the scholarly acceptance of the existence of schools and a formal education system in ancient Israel is not univocal. On the one hand, G. I. Davies is an example of a scholar who acknowledges that while internal evidence for a more widespread schooling system within the Old Testament is slight (Davies 199), there is enough evidence in the surrounding cultures (especially Egyptian and Mesopotamian), and archaeological research to answer the question posed in the title of his essay in the

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<sup>1</sup> There is evidence in this apocryphal book that its author, Ben Sira, was a recognized sage and teacher of wisdom: cf. Sirach 24:30-34, 33:16-18. It seems he was also associated with some kind of school, or “house of learning/instruction” – see Sirach 51:23.

affirmative: “Were there schools in ancient Israel?” On the other hand, in answering this question, Stuart Weeks argues that too much scholarly attention has been based on assumptions rather than evidence (Weeks 4). He admits, “The very existence of written documents indicates that some sort of education must have been available in Israel” but asserts that does not imply an established educational system (132). It could have taken any number of different forms and, in fact, concludes his assessment of the evidence by arguing “there is neither any strong evidence for schools nor any convincing reason to suppose that they would have existed” (156). In the end, while the evidence is not clear on this particular issue, we would do well to heed Crenshaw’s advice: “considerable diversity characterized education in ancient Israel, and scholarly preoccupation with the existence or nonexistence of a school threatens to obscure this significant fact” (Crenshaw, “Education in Ancient Israel” 615).

If the wisdom literature was indeed the emergent literature of a widespread movement, rather than an imposed top-down dictate, then it can be understood as seeking to give expression to deeply held and widespread (non-cognitive) cultural values. Or, in other words, to articulate and form a particular sensibility or intuitive framework for faithful living.

#### *A Wisdom Worldview*

The wisdom tradition developed from a particular way of seeing and understanding the world. Daniel J. Estes defines a worldview as “not a full-blown philosophy of life, but the beliefs, attitudes and values that cause a person to see the world in a certain way” (Estes 19). Going a step further, Estes suggests that a worldview not only relates to the way things are, but also “provides a vision for seeing life as it

ideally ought to be” (20). Scholars agree that, in ancient Israel, such beliefs, attitudes, and values were formed largely as a result of common sense, or more precisely, through the reflective observation and experience of both the created order and human behavior (for example: Crenshaw; Murphy, *The Tree of Life*; Murphy, “Wisdom in the OT”; Brueggemann). The result is a wisdom with a high degree of prudential concern, one where attention is paid to issues of “what works, what risks may be run, what realities can be trusted, and where the practice of human choice, human freedom, and human responsibility can be exercised” (Brueggemann 232). In other words, wisdom is concerned with living life well in relation to creation. Estes helpfully identifies four main assumptions upon which the worldview of wisdom in Prov. 1-9 is built: (1) Creation – the universe is Yahweh’s creation; (2) Order – Yahweh is sovereignly controlling the world; (3) Rationality – Yahweh’s world is knowable, but also mysterious; and (4) Fear of Yahweh – humans must reverence Yahweh in their lives (Estes 19–39). We will consider each of these beginning with the first and second assumptions together.

It is well-attested that the most fundamental and overarching influence on wisdom’s worldview is creation itself (Ansberry 176; Estes 22). The ancient Israelites understood the universe as created and ordered by God. The pursuit of wisdom was, therefore, to discover the “nearly-hidden order of God” (Brueggemann 232) and live attuned to God’s order. Some have gone so far as to suggest a theology of creation is at the very heart of wisdom (Perdue; Zimmerli). This meant all of creation and human activity were viewed as “the classroom in which wisdom, patterns of conduct, and particular consequences were revealed” (Ansberry 176). Further, understanding the cosmic order “shaped the sage’s vision of the moral order, social life and human

flourishing” (176). To live well (and wisely) in the world requires an understanding of the cosmic order as created and ordered by God. Thus, the prudential concern of wisdom is more than mere pragmatism. It is also a strong theological affirmation of God as creator and sustainer of all things, as we find in Proverbs 3 and 8.

Proverbs 3:13-20 introduces wisdom personified as a woman and offering many blessings. Wisdom is the source of happiness, and peace (Prov. 3:13, 17), more valuable and precious than earthly riches (Prov. 3:14), incomparably desirable (Prov. 3:15), offering a long life, riches, and honor (Prov. 3:16). “She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her” (Prov. 3:18) suggesting wisdom as a life-giving source for those who find her. This rich and compelling description then opens to reflect on God’s action in creation: “The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew” (Prov. 3:19-20). These verses reveal wisdom as not some ethereal matter, but the very wisdom of God – actively involved in the design and creation of the cosmos.

Commenting on this text, Christopher Ansberry uses the language of “tools,” “powers,” and “instrument” to describe wisdom’s role in creation: “Wisdom and understanding are portrayed as the tools or powers employed by the divine architect to construct a sure, enduring cosmos (Prov. 3:19), while knowledge serves as the instrument through which Yahweh exercises his providential care for and preservation of the created order (Prov. 3:20)” (Ansberry 177). This helps to clarify not only the nature of wisdom, but also an important underlying assumption of the ancient sages – that wisdom is embedded in the created order. Since the cosmos reflects the wisdom of God, “to acquire wisdom is... to acquire knowledge of this design and the ability to live in accord with the cosmic order”

(177). Thus, wisdom was involved in “building” creation (Prov. 3 and 8) and, therefore, wisdom is necessary to build a house (see Prov. 24:3). Living wisely means “living with the grain” according to the way creation was designed.

This implication is further elaborated in the second text: Proverbs 8:1-36. Similar to Proverbs 3, this text also personifies wisdom as a woman and begins by describing her many blessings and incredible value (Prov. 8:1-11). The poem then shifts to emphasize wisdom’s involvement, not only in the cosmic order, but also in the social order of society (Prov. 8:12-16). Here wisdom is portrayed as the source of good advice, sound judgment, and justice. This leads Ansberry to note a correspondence between the instrumental role of wisdom in the cosmological realm (Prov. 3:19-20) and her role in the social order particularly related to leadership and government (Prov. 8:15-16) (Ansberry 177-78). The poem continues, seeming to justify wisdom as the source of social order, by appealing to her pre-existence (Prov. 8:22-31). Wisdom is described as being created by God before the beginning of the heavens or the earth and as an eyewitness to God’s formation and ordering of the world (Prov. 8:22-29). This section concludes with a particularly intimate description of the relationship between God and wisdom: “then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race” (Prov. 8:30-31). The claim is that wisdom possesses a unique and intimate knowledge of the structures, patterns, and components of reality. “This knowledge of the fundamental patterns of the cosmos provides her with the resources to endow leaders and individuals with the skills necessary to live in concert with the cosmic order and to flourish in accord with Yahweh’s design” (Ansberry 178).

Having considered the first two assumptions underlying the worldview of wisdom, we turn now to consider the third, “Rationality: Yahweh’s world is knowable, but also mysterious” (Estes 30–35). Estes states, “Because Yahweh created the world and he is sovereignly controlling it, the world is knowable, at least in part” (Estes 30). This is because God planted truth within His universe and gave humans the capacity to discover it using their intelligence (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 209). In fact, Proverbs 1:20-21 and Proverbs 8:1-4 depict wisdom as crying out to people seeking to draw their attention and response. It is an invitation issued to all people, regardless of social class (Prov. 8:4). God’s wisdom, embedded in creation, wants to be known and can be known. Because God has both created and ordered the universe, there are discernible patterns of act and consequence that the sages observed as offering some degree of predictability and rational explanation for daily life. The wisdom tradition gathered these observations into a corpus of tested information which could then be passed down to subsequent generations (Estes 31). One of the most common ways such observations were recorded and remembered was in the form of “act-consequence” statements (Estes 33) which can be either positive or negative. Proverbs 3:1-12 gives a positive example of six pairs of causes with corresponding consequences before concluding with the promise of blessing on the one who finds wisdom (Prov. 3:13) and the wonderful rewards she brings (Prov. 3:14-16). Inversely, Proverbs 7:24-25 gives a strong word of warning which is emphasized by the negative consequences described in the following verses (Prov. 7:26-27). Thus, an important aspect of the wisdom worldview recognizes God’s wisdom as embedded in the created order and accessible to human intelligence, at least in part.

The wisdom worldview was also quick to acknowledge and teach that not all of

life and reality was knowable. This notion suggests strong ties to the definition of intuition offered below where intuition is described as knowledge that is non-cognitive. Some of life remains inscrutable to humans because human knowledge is limited and also imperfect as a result of our fallen state – one of the effects of sin being the inability to understand reality accurately (Estes 34). Proverbs 20:24 offers a good example, “A person’s steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand their own way?” The entire book of Job reveals human understanding to be a far cry from the omniscience of God. The confusion and wrestling of Qoheleth’s search for meaning (Ecclesiastes) further underscores wisdom’s recognition of the limitations of human knowledge, but also its embrace of mystery and the sovereignty of God. This leads scholars such as Walter Brueggemann to describe wisdom as a dynamic and interpretive tradition which, at its best, “is commensurate with the world as God’s creation over which God retains inscrutable but decisive governance” (Brueggemann 235). Since God is not constrained to the canons of human logic as he governs the universe he created, wisdom repeatedly issues the call for humans to put their trust in God, who alone knows the world exhaustively (Estes 35). This helps to explain the insistence of the wisdom literature that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God (see Prov. 1:7, 9:10).

The fourth assumption underlying the worldview of wisdom, according to Estes, is “Fear of Yahweh: Humans must reverence Yahweh in their lives” (see Estes 35–39). This phrase, the “fear of the LORD,” appears twenty different times in the book of Proverbs (see, particularly, Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; 31:30). In Job, this phrase is used both in describing the kind of man Job is (Job 1:1, 1:8; 2:3) but also as a conclusion to the hymn to wisdom in Job 28 where God speaks, “Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is

wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Prov. 28:28, NRSV). Fear of God is also the final conclusion to Qoheleth’s search for meaning and truth, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NRSV).

Estes argues that the fear of God is a necessary implication of His creation of the universe. Because God created the entire universe and all life flows from Him, God is the “foundational authority” of the cosmos and of the wisdom worldview (Estes 36). Thus, nothing should be interpreted independently from Him. As Proverbs 1:7b suggests, only a fool would ignore God’s wisdom and attempt to navigate life without His instruction. The created order and foundational authority of God in the universe means the proper stance or disposition for human beings is one of humble reverence and dependence toward God. This brings us close to the actual meaning of the phrase, “the fear of the LORD,” which the wisdom literature repeatedly asserts to be “the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7, 9:10, Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Our understanding of the nature of biblical wisdom began with that which is most readily accessible to us, namely, the wisdom literature. We have seen how the wisdom sayings preserved for us in the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes emerge from a pervasive and influential sapiential tradition. And we saw how that sapiential tradition was built upon a wisdom worldview consisting of four pillars: (1) Creation – the universe is Yahweh’s creation; (2) Order – Yahweh is sovereignly controlling the world; (3) Rationality – Yahweh’s world is knowable, but also mysterious; and (4) Fear of Yahweh – humans must reverence Yahweh in their lives (Estes 19–39). Which begs the question,

how was wisdom lived out? We move now to explore how wisdom is exercised or practiced.

**The Exercise of Wisdom: “walk in the ways of the good” (Prov. 2:20a)**

The exercise of wisdom is perhaps best summed up as “living skillfully” in the world according to God’s order (Estes 26, 70–76). As we have seen above, the pathway to skillful living begins with ‘the fear of the LORD’ which opens the way to discovering and living according to God’s truth revealed through creation and human experience (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 209). Such an exercise is not always straightforward. Following the Genesis account of God creating human beings offers a helpful dialectic for this discussion. We read that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God, the *imago Dei* (Genesis 1:26-27). As bearers of the *imago Dei*, humanity is endowed with extraordinary potential. In contrast, we are also reminded that humanity was created “from the dust of the ground” and only became a living being when God breathed in the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). Such dependence upon God as the creator and sustainer of life displays the limitations of humanity. The dialectic tension of Genesis 1 and 2 is one of both potential and limitation being held together in humanity. By analogy, the exercise of wisdom follows a similar course. The biblical wisdom literature portrays wisdom as a powerful potential for living well, while also acknowledging humanity will never exercise wisdom fully. Only God is capable of perfect wisdom. The need is for dependence on God. The fall in Genesis 3 was, after all, a move towards autonomy (cf. Prov. 3:5-6). Hence, the exercise of wisdom must hold together potential and limitation in dialectic tension and work out of that tension in order to live skillfully.

*The Dialectical Tension of Skillful Living – Human Potential and Limitation*

It is well established in the literature that skillful living requires more than abstract thought, it also involves human agency and action (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*; Estes; Murphy, *The Tree of Life*; von Rad; Perdue). Therefore, biblical wisdom is highly practical and concerned with everyday life. While there is some resemblance between wisdom literature and “natural theology,” Murphy quickly dismisses this notion stating, “It would be a mistake to characterize the wisdom experience as a species of “natural theology” within the Bible” (Murphy, *The Tree of Life* 124). The reason being that the Israelite sages understood life in this world within the concrete supernatural situation that is God’s creation and continued involvement (124). Hence, lessons drawn from creation and human experience are imbued with a sense of God’s revelatory nature since God’s dominion extends over all creation. Gerhard von Rad puts it this way, “We hold fast to the fact that in the case of the wise men’s search for knowledge, even when they expressed their results in a completely secular form, there was never any question of what we could call absolute knowledge functioning independently of their faith in Yahweh. This is inconceivable for the very reason that the teachers were completely unaware of any reality not controlled by Yahweh” (von Rad 64). Thus, the wisdom experience ought to be “described as a faith experience” in which God is drawing people to Himself “through their daily experience of themselves and creation” (Murphy, *The Tree of Life* 125).

Wisdom lessons and experiences from the past serve to guide the exercise of wisdom going forward, but not exclusively. As mentioned above in the third assumption of the wisdom worldview, “act-consequence” statements became one of the most

common ways these lessons were preserved and passed down to younger generations (Estes 30–33). At the same time, wisdom embraces mystery and the limitations of human understanding recognizing that only God knows the world exhaustively (Estes 34–35). Holding together the “knowability” and “inscrutability” of God’s created order follows the dialectic of Genesis 1 and 2. Hence, Stephen C. Barton describes the exercise of wisdom as “a quest intellectual and practical, individual and communal, innovative and traditional, empirical and speculative, giving studied attention to things both accessible to human observation and hidden from it” (Barton 93). This, Barton continues, suggests wisdom is something more than a body of knowledge, “it is also a *way of seeing* which attends to what lies hidden as well as to what lies on the surface” (94). In an attempt to better understand this “way of seeing,” we turn now to consider how wisdom was acquired.

*Human Potential of Acquiring Wisdom.*

Michael V. Fox provides an analysis of the terminology used for wisdom and folly in his commentary on Proverbs (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* 28–43). Fox asserts that the distinctions between terms are “not essential for understanding a verse,” however, it is still a worthwhile endeavor to try and “ascertain their lexical meanings, [and] the basic concepts they bring to the text” (28) as they describe not only wisdom and folly, but also the types of persons who possess these attributes. Fox’s analysis includes eleven terms for wisdom found in Proverbs:

1. *Bînāh* (*Understanding, Discerning*) designates the faculty of intellectual discernment and interpretation, the exercise of that faculty, and the product thereof, in words or deeds.

2. *Da‘at (Knowledge)* is the broadest of the wisdom words. It appears that everything designated by any of those words could also be called *da‘at*. It is broader even than English “knowledge,” insofar as it includes minimal acts of awareness and innate intellectual capacities apart from learned information and skills. *Da‘at* is cognition itself – any cognition, from minimal awareness to elevated sagacity.
3. *‘eṣah (Planning, Design)* is essentially deliberation: careful thinking and planning, the resolution arrived at by such thinking, and the capacity for such thought.
4. *Ḥokmāh (Expertise, Wisdom)* is essentially a high degree of knowledge and skill in any domain. It combines a broad faculty (including powers of reason, discernment, cleverness) and knowledge (communicable information, that which is known and can be learned).
5. *M<sup>e</sup>zimmāh (Shrewdness, Circumspection, Discretion)* is hidden, private thinking; the notions of planning and scheming are extensions of the primary sense.
6. *Mūsār (Discipline, Correction, Education)* is teaching of the avoidance of faults.
7. *‘ormāh (Cunning)* is the talent to devise and use adroit and wily tactics in attaining one’s goals, whatever these may be.
8. *Šekel (Discretion, Good sense)* its core meaning is “insight,” the ability to grasp the meanings or implications of a situation or message. *Šekel* is consequently discernment or prudence, the ability to understand

practical matters and interpersonal relations and make beneficial decisions. It later comes to include intellectual understanding and unusual experience.

9. *Taḥbûlot (Strategy, Guidance)* derives from sailing (steering and navigational) roots to mean “navigational skills,” hence skill in making one’s way through life, or knowing the ropes.
10. *T<sup>e</sup>bûnāh (Good sense, Competence)* is the pragmatic, applied aspect of thought, operating in the realm of *action*; it aims at efficacy and accomplishment... *T<sup>e</sup>bûnāh* is the competence to deal with the exigencies of life, and it generally implies a follow-up action, or at least the expectation of one. *T<sup>e</sup>bûnāh* does not require an understanding of causes, significances, and implications, though one may certainly have both. In short, *T<sup>e</sup>bûnāh* is know-how, whether in the execution of a particular task or in social relations generally.
11. *Tuṣiyyāh (Resourcefulness, Competence, Wits)* denotes clear, efficient thinking in the exercise of power and practical operations. It is used in determining a course of action and dealing with difficulties rather than in comprehending intricacies or deducing conclusions. (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* 30–38)

The pragmatism of biblical wisdom is evident. Wisdom is exercised in making good decisions, providing insight, anticipating outcomes, identifying implications, and in understanding what is required; all of which, the wisdom literature assumes is humanly possible or achievable. This is true both in terms of practical concerns – for instance,

executing a particular task – but also interpersonal or social relations generally. The empirical basis of such wisdom through observation and experience has been well-attested in the literature (Murphy, “Wisdom in the OT”; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*; Perdue; von Rad; Crenshaw, “The Acquisition of Knowledge”). Certainly, cognitive awareness of lessons learned through observation of the created world and human experience form part of the wisdom experience. However, that is not the complete picture presented in the wisdom terminology listed above.

Wisdom terminology also includes knowledge, understanding, or competence resulting from minimal cognitive awareness. For instance, *da‘at* (knowledge) also “includes minimal acts of awareness and innate intellectual capacities apart from learned information and skills” (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* 31). Fox develops this further stating the term, *da‘at*, “can occasionally refer to an innate faculty, a capacity one may have prior to gaining knowledge” (32). The term *ʿbūnāh* seems to pick up on this idea of subconscious understanding and translates it into competent action, or know-how; without needing “an understanding of causes, significances, and implications” (38). Similarly, the term, *tušiyyāh*, seemingly closely related to problem-solving denotes the ability to find a way forward without necessarily “comprehending intricacies or deducing conclusions” (38). This term appears in Proverbs 2:7 denoting “resourcefulness” as a gift “stored” or “endowed” by God. Fox elsewhere describes it as, “an inner power, not essentially intellectual, that can help one escape a fix” (Fox, “The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2” 239). John Genung makes the case that this term suggests intuition as one way that God works, reveals, and speaks. His argument essentially equates the wisdom term, *tušiyyāh*, with human intuition and elevates it to hold “quasi revelatory value” (Genung 117, 120–21).

Such revelatory activity inevitably implies some form of connection or encounter with God.

It is not surprising the Israelite sages recognized direct encounter with God as one source of knowledge and wisdom. Both Crenshaw and Estes recognize revelation as a source of wisdom knowledge (Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*; Estes). Crenshaw discusses three sources of knowledge for the sage of ancient Israel: (1) Observation of nature and human behavior; (2) Tradition of truth/wisdom passed down from previous generations; and (3) Direct encounter with God (Crenshaw, “The Acquisition of Knowledge”). This direct encounter with God caused people to wrestle with how to bridge the gap between humans and the transcendent God. Crenshaw identifies two answers to this problem, one from Hebraic tradition and the other from the Hellenic world:

The Spirit of God who inspired poets, priests, and prophets was identified with the divine thought, word, and wisdom. Alternatively, the human mind was a microcopy of the divine mind. Hence the human intellect possessed a tiny spark of the divine rationality governing the universe, an idea that linked Israelite sages with Greek philosophers. These two responses to the problem of a transcendent deity implied that the human intellect was in direct touch with ultimate truth. (Crenshaw, “The Acquisition” 252)

Such a view in the biblical wisdom tradition serves to affirm the potential side of the dialectic in that humans are created with the capacity or ability to receive revelation via direct encounter with God.

However, not all scholars are quick to endorse such a strong conceptualization of wisdom as an innate ability within humanity. Gary Almon explicitly dismisses the notion of wisdom as a native ability for humans, and argues that none of the literature indicated intuitive wisdom (Almon 22). He substantiates this claim by citing Estes, “Wisdom is not a native ability for humans, but it must be chosen consciously (Prov. 9:12)” (Estes 73). However, Estes’s quotation was related directly to his defining of the wisdom term, *ḥākām*, amidst a discussion of seven different words for wisdom – reading Estes’s specific claim as a general exclusion. Furthermore, it issues a needless dismissal of intuitive wisdom as part of how God created humanity. In contrast, wisdom does not dismiss this idea, but instead offers various characterisations pointing to non-cognitive or not-always-conscious choosing such as, Wisdom as a woman calling or Wisdom as something to be learned from a young age. Crenshaw argues the wisdom tradition does maintain some innate quality in humanity working in co-operation (or reciprocally) to receive divine revelation (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 207–225). He shows how wisdom “seems to claim that people have an innate quality that guides them in safe directions” (221). Ansberry claims, “Proverbs operates under the assumption that humans possess an innate ability to choose wisdom and act in accord with the moral order. This ability, however, exists in potential only” (Ansberry 183). Once more, the dialectic between potential and limitation paves a way forward in which we might agree with Murphy who says, “wisdom is both a gift from God (Prov. 2:6) and something that has to be pursued, a gift given but never fully possessed, a way of life to be cultivated always. It is both knowledge and praxis. But the knowledge is already practical, not theoretical” (Murphy, *The Tree of Life* 232).

Michael Fox issues a critique of wisdom epistemology being considered entirely empirical. Fox argues that experience “is not an immediate source of wisdom” nor does it “translate directly into wisdom” (Fox, “The Epistemology of the Book of Proverbs” 670). Fox builds towards proposing “coherence theory” as a more comprehensive epistemology for understanding Proverbs. This is because Proverbs focuses on an orderly world as the norm and, as a result, frames a cosmos in which things cohere and fit together. Here, wisdom serves to sift out anything that would serve to disrupt or be obtrusive in the orderly world it posits (675-684). Fox offers this intriguing description of how Israelite sages would exercise and teach such wisdom:

The sages of wisdom recognized coherence not by logical testing but by their sense for what fits the system, what I have called moral aesthetics...

It is what the sages of Proverbs teach their disciples, not by pounding doctrines, or not by that alone, but in the way that an artist conveys an ineffable sense of color, proportion, and shape to an apprentice: by pointing to what he himself sees. In fact, wisdom *is* an art, not a science, and the sages of wisdom are artists... The sages are artists painting a world whose realities often lie beneath the visible surface. (Fox, “The Epistemology” 684)

The sage’s understanding and exercise of wisdom is multi-dimensional and holistic because “wisdom is by nature cognitive *and* emotional *and* aesthetic” (684). However, Fox is also quick to add, “This wisdom is something that humans can have only imperfectly... God alone has it all in perfect fusion” (684). Here we see Fox maintaining

the dialectical tension between human potential and limitation when it comes to the exercise of wisdom.

### *Human Limitation and Folly*

One of the most common ways the wisdom literature describes the exercise of wisdom is in avoiding folly, the antithesis of wisdom (Prov. 1:7b, 8:5, 10:21, 12:15, 14:15-18, 26:1-11). The amount of attention paid throughout the literature illustrates humanity's proclivity toward folly; and thus, limitation. Fox's helpful analysis of wisdom terminology delineates six different terms used to denote folly or "the fool" in Proverbs (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* 38-43). Each of the folly words suggest a general lack of good judgment, without necessarily implying a lack of intelligence, "with consequent distortions in moral and practical choices" (38). Hence, if human flourishing is experienced by living in accordance with the normal and orderly way of creation, then the exercise of wisdom serves as a safeguard. Wisdom is exercised to protect life and human flourishing with all kinds of personal, social, and moral implications. One such implication, in terms of intuition, is that the trustworthiness of one's intuition is greatly improved – the practical good of avoiding folly.

### *Wisdom in the New Testament*

When it comes to witnessing the exercise of wisdom in the Biblical canon, the central model is Jesus Christ. Jesus not only carries forward the wisdom tradition of ancient Israel, but also reinterprets it for his context in what some have coined "subversive wisdom" (Dunn; Witherington). However, Jesus was not simply another wisdom teacher. He was the very embodiment of divine wisdom (John 1); or, as Dunn concludes, "Wisdom incarnate" (Dunn 92). So, when we read of the life, ministry, and

teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, we witness wisdom exercised – seeing beyond what is immediately apparent on the surface, knowing just what is needed to be said or done, and anticipating when and where to go (Barton; Goldsworthy). Witherington’s exceptional work, *Jesus The Sage*, shows how Jesus “contributed to the growth and development of Jewish Wisdom and, for the community of his own followers, charted a course that they would follow in further developing Wisdom ideas and forms” (Witherington xi).

The fullest articulation of the development of this wisdom tradition after Jesus is the apostle Paul’s contribution to the New Testament, which reveals a high engagement with the concept and subversion of the norms of Wisdom. Richard B. Hays shows how Paul offers a critique of human wisdom gone awry. Hays offers a strong interpretation of Paul’s words in Romans 1 as a “description of human beings in rebellion against God: ‘Claiming to be wise, they became fools’ (Rom. 1.22)” (Hays 111). His argument traces Paul’s letter to the Corinthians warning against the danger of wisdom becoming some tacit form of self-affirmation (1 Cor. 1-3). Instead, Hays argues for wisdom being “grounded firmly within the canonical narrative whose climax is the death of Jesus” – in other words, a “wisdom of the cross” (Hays 122–23). Such Christocentric grounding of wisdom helps to both safeguard against folly while simultaneously promoting life and human flourishing. After all, Jesus came “that [we] might have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10b). Again, we see the dialectic tension of possibility and limitation being outworked.

In summary, our discussion of the exercise of wisdom has shown it involves more than simply ‘knowing the most,’ or being ‘the smartest person in the room.’ Biblical wisdom entails something more than cognitive knowledge or amassing information. It

goes a step further to understanding how to use that knowledge for human good (Crenshaw, “The Acquisition of Knowledge” 247). As Ellen Davis describes:

[L]iving in the world in such a way that God, and God’s intentions for the world, are acknowledged in all that we do. It sounds like a lofty goal, perhaps too lofty for ordinary people living busy lives. Such a goal of wisdom seems attainable only for great saints; maybe a hermit or a monastic could achieve it. Yet this is not the understanding of the biblical writers. It is important to recognize at the outset that they consider wisdom within the grasp of every person who desires it wholeheartedly. Wisdom does not require any special intellectual gifts. The fruit of wisdom, a well-ordered life and a peaceful mind, results not from a high IQ but from a disposition of the heart that the sages (wisdom teachers) of Israel most often call “fear of the LORD” (Prov. 1:7). (Davis, *Proverbs* 1)

Biblical wisdom claims that it is possible for one to live wisely in the world while recognizing full wisdom or understanding belongs to God alone. As Davis states above, this requires cultivating a particular posture or disposition of the heart.

**The Development of Wisdom: “turn your ear and apply your heart” (Prov. 2:2)**

The sustained contrast between “wisdom” and “folly” in the biblical wisdom literature implies wise living is not guaranteed. Despite wisdom’s acknowledgment of an “innate quality” in humanity (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 221), it remains something to be cultivated and developed. Fox concludes, “Wisdom is a configuration of character, a compound of knowledge, fears, expectations and desires that enables one to identify the right path and keep to it. Wisdom means not only knowing but also *wanting*

to do what is right and to avoid sin. This desire will protect you from the tragic consequences of immorality” (Fox, “The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2” 243).

Due to the multidimensional and dynamic nature of life in this world, Daniel Hardy argues the development of wisdom involves more than our typically narrow approach to training and development (Hardy 242–47). Instead of such narrow approaches in specialized fields, “which are usually cognitive or technical in their focus,” the development of wisdom requires a far more holistic approach in which “the goodness and truth of wisdom interpenetrates all the various dimensions of life” (243-44).

Brueggemann concurs describing this work as an ongoing interpretive practice: “The process of transmitting wisdom to the next generation provides a model for education as monitoring disciples. Education on this horizon is not the importation of data, but socialization into an ethical perspective rooted in the theological reality of God’s ordering of creation” (Brueggemann 235). This subsection will discuss the development of wisdom by looking at two primary themes in the relevant literature – character formation, and specific wisdom practices.

#### *Character Formation.*

Biblical scholars agree that the primary aim of the wisdom tradition is the formation of character (see especially: Brown, *Character in Crisis*; Brown, *Character & Scripture*; also: Clements; Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*; von Rad; Estes; Fox, “The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2”). One need only read the opening verses of Proverbs 1:1-7 to discover the purpose and theme of Proverbs as formational. In fact, William P. Brown argues the formation of moral character forms a consistent focus of biblical wisdom despite other significant differences between Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes (Brown,

*Character in Crisis*). It is also worth noting the emphasis on community as the formation of character necessarily involves others; both in shaping the life of the learner, but also in shaping the life of the community to be of godly character (Brown, *Character & Scripture*).

Character formation in the wisdom tradition finds its theological anchor-point in the life of God. The wisdom literature repeatedly refers to this as “the fear of the LORD” (Prov. 1:7, 9:10, 15:33; Job 28:28; and Psalm 111:10). Godly character reflects the life of God, not some anthropocentric moralism. Ellen Davis points to the converse implication: “confidence that is not grounded in fear of YHWH [is] the disposition of the fool” (Davis, “Preserving Virtues” 199). Consequently, Davis issues the call for “preserving virtues... in order that history – the story of humans living before God within the created order – may continue on this planet” (ibid. 186). However, this is no easy call to answer. The exercise of wisdom, Davis maintains, has only become difficult because human creatures “separated themselves from God in willful disobedience” (ibid. 192). Instead, Proverbs exhorts:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
 and lean not on your own understanding;  
 in all your ways submit to him,  
 and he will make your paths straight.

Do not be wise in your own eyes;  
 fear the LORD and shun evil.

This will bring health to your body  
 and nourishment to your bones. (Prov. 3:5-8)

Thus, we see wisdom's understanding of character is rooted in, oriented toward, and directed by God, and esteemed as good and lifegiving, "bringing health to your body and nourishment to your bones" (Prov. 3:8).

According to the wisdom literature, godly character is the result of inner transformation of a person rather than focusing on outward behavioral change. As Daniel Estes puts it, "work[ing] from the inside out in cultivating change in the life of the learner, rather than working on external actions with the hope that the inner person might change over time" (Estes 68). Godly character is considered a good, mature, responsible, integrative force that unites and directs the entire person (68). Such development is not achieved quickly or easily. It is cultivated over a lifetime. The goal of wisdom, therefore, is not just to transmit a body of facts, but to develop in the learner the kind of character that will continually impel him or her to keep learning and growing. As Proverbs 9:9 observes, "Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning." Perdue notes well, "Becoming wise is a way of life, a process that continues for a lifetime, as the wise person seeks to live in harmony with God, the cosmos, the social order, and human nature..." (Perdue 74). However, such a posture or "way of life" requires a great deal of teachability, which brings us to the keystone of godly character.

The keystone of godly character formation is a genuine and deep-seated humility. And the biblical wisdom tradition consistently points to it, both implicitly and explicitly. Starting with the Old Testament, Michael Fox shows how Proverbs 2:1-11 moves step by step throughout the process of wisdom education. The key point is that the learner consistently adopts a humble posture of eager receptivity and intentionally seeks wisdom

even when not comprehending what is being taken in (Fox, “The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2” 237–41). There is hope for the simple, but not the fool or the mocker, precisely because he is still malleable and teachable. In the New Testament, Brown suggests the Letter of James “best reflects the ethos of the Hebrew wisdom traditions” and shows James upholding humility as a “cardinal virtue” – see especially James 4:10 (Brown, *Character in Crisis* 160–64). And, Ben Witherington’s analysis shows how even the Christological hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 derives primarily from the wisdom tradition (Witherington 257–66). Here the apostle Paul upholds Jesus Christ as the ultimate exemplar as the One the Philippians should pattern their lives after. He willingly chose humility. The same applies to us today. Therefore, according to wisdom, humility is an essential ingredient and, perhaps, the greatest expression of godly character.

This emphasis on godly character signals a significant component of any Christian understanding of intuition. The inner transformation described above is one by which the inner life of a person increasingly becomes like God. Godly character, after all, is more than simply being a good person with good values. Godly character derives from the life of God. The significance of this for intuition is because much of what constitutes intuition is considered internal knowledge or information. It arises from within a person to the level of consciousness. Consequently, godly character serves to uphold intuition as credible as it corresponds to the life of God being formed in one’s life.

### *Wisdom Practices*

Scholars generally agree as to the ways by which one becomes wise. In his chapter, “Curriculum for Education,” Estes outlines three components which make up the curriculum for wisdom education – observation, tradition, and revelation (Estes 87–99).

Crenshaw's list is consistent with Estes' three (Crenshaw, "The Acquisition of Knowledge"). Tremper Longman includes "learning from mistakes" in addition to observation and experience, instruction based on tradition, learning from mistakes, and revelation (Longman 74–79); which seems to slightly improve the language and better serve the purpose of this study. For this reason, we will follow Longman's list and consider each element in the list in turn.

The approach taken here is to integrate godly character (as discussed above) into these sources of wisdom in an attempt to frame them as *wisdom practices*. After all, each of these sources is dependent upon godly character in order to truly cultivate wisdom, because the development of wisdom requires the active participation of the learner (Fox, "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2"). Without godly character anchoring these practices in God, they can easily mislead. So, it is upon the foundation of godly character we build these additional practices.

*Observation and Experience.* First, wisdom is developed through reflective practice of observation and experience. Estes describes this practice as "examining the physical environment and human behavior to draw lessons about the order which Yahweh has embedded in them" (Estes 88). Longman helpfully notes this is a "conscious reflection on the process of experience and observation" (Longman 76). Since wisdom assumes a theocentric view of the world, in which God is central in creating and sustaining all of life, reflection helps to reveal God's hidden truth. Such a reflective practice is evident in the wisdom literature in texts like Proverbs 6:6-11 as a prime example:

Go to the ant, you sluggard;  
 consider its ways and be wise!  
 It has no commander,  
 no overseer or ruler,  
 yet it stores its provisions in summer  
 and gathers its food at harvest.  
 How long will you lie there, you sluggard?  
 When will you get up from your sleep?  
 A little sleep, a little slumber,  
 a little folding of the hands to rest—  
 and poverty will come on you like a thief  
 and scarcity like an armed man.

Observing the ant (Prov. 6:6) provides the lesson in the subsequent verses (7-11). Other scriptural examples include, Proverbs 5:15-20; 7:6-25; 22:10, 26-27; 26:15; Job 12:7-10; and God's response to Job in Job 38:2-41:34. It is worth noting the inverse of this wisdom practice suggests to live unreflectively is the way of the fool, not of wisdom (Westermann 52). Thus, building a reflective practice upon godly character is how one pursues wisdom. Prayer would be an appropriate context for such reflection through which God works to develop wisdom (Brown, *Character in Crisis* 164).

*Instruction Based on Tradition.* Second, wisdom is developed through instruction based on tradition. Rather than being dependent on one's own observations or experiences, this practice allows one to "rely on the learned analysis of others" (Longman 76). Those providing the instruction were typically parents, as the bulk of education

occurred in the family setting. However, for those fortunate enough to attend a guild or school, teachers would also offer instruction and training (Crenshaw, “Education in Ancient Israel” 614). The Proverbs themselves repeatedly issue the call for the learner to heed the advice of their parent/teacher (Prov. 1:8, 2:1, 3:1, 4:10, 4:20, 5:1, 5:7, 6:20). Proverbs 4:1-4 shows a father instructing his son based on the tradition handed down by his own father:

Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction;

pay attention and gain understanding.

I give you sound learning,

so do not forsake my teaching.

For I too was a son to my father,

still tender, and cherished by my mother.

Then he taught me, and he said to me,

“Take hold of my words with all your heart;

keep my commands, and you will live

Similar examples can be found in Proverbs 7:6-23, and 22:17-21 where the learner is encouraged to learn wisdom from the traditions of those who have gone before. The way of the fool, on the other hand, resists or rejects wisdom instruction (Prov. 12:15). Again, we see the value of this practice emerge from the integration of godly character.

Character attributes of teachability, respect, and humility are essential to appropriate wisdom lessons passed down from parents and/or teachers. Furthermore, it is worth noting the role of others (community) is once more instrumental in developing wisdom.

*Learning from Mistakes.* The third way wisdom is developed is by learning from mistakes. Clearly this third practice is related to the first two; however, Longman is right to draw it out for its unique emphasis on the learner accepting “discipline” or “correction” (Longman 77). These terms often appear in the same proverb:

Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life,  
 but whoever ignores correction leads others astray. (Prov. 10:17)

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,  
 but whoever hates correction is stupid. (Prov. 12:1)

These two Proverbs show that learning from mistakes helps one develop wisdom, whereas ignoring or resisting correction is the way of the fool. Longman helps integrate godly character by pointing out, “Discipline is hard to accept; it means admitting that one made a mistake. This is a humbling experience, but a wise person is humble, not proud” (Longman 77).

*Revelation.* Fourthly, scholarly consensus shows wisdom is not only developed through observation, instruction, and learning from mistakes: it is also developed through the direct revelation of God where people learn information that would not otherwise be discernable by them (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 207–225; Estes 95–99; Longman 78–79). Whereas the previous three practices involved human seeking or pursuing wisdom, this fourth one foregrounds God’s agency in what Crenshaw has called a “reciprocal touch” between God and humanity in which wisdom is developed “from mutual giving and receiving” (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* 223). Revelation insists the heart of wisdom is God himself. God is the only source of true wisdom (Longman 78). Estes makes the point that wisdom’s consistent reference to the creation of the world

is an appeal to revelation “because it has been revealed by Yahweh, not because it has been discovered by human observation” (Estes 97). Thus, it is not surprising to see the close link drawn between the fear of the LORD and wisdom. Consider these verses comparing the wise and foolish from Proverbs 1:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
 but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov. 1:7)

since they [fools] hated knowledge  
 and did not choose to fear the LORD.

Since they would not accept my advice  
 and spurned my rebuke. (Prov. 1:29-30)

Because God is understood as the ultimate source of all knowledge, these verses have two implications for becoming wise. First, direct revelation of God demands ‘fear of the LORD’ expressed as reverence, awe, and humility on the part of the learner. Second, by rejecting “the knowledge and insight available through wisdom... [is to simultaneously] reject Yahweh’s knowledge” (Estes 98). Hence, wisdom is developed when one cultivates a “fear of the LORD” acknowledging God is the source of all knowledge and remaining open to God’s leading.

As we bring this section on biblical wisdom to a close, a number of the themes we have touched on are helpfully integrated in this passage from Longman’s commentary on Proverbs:

The theme of the fear of the Lord reverberates through the whole book [of Proverbs]. After all, if wisdom depends on understanding the world correctly, how can that be achieved if one does not acknowledge that God

is the center of the cosmos? Everything must be understood in relationship to Yahweh himself. This is what leads to humility, which comes, after all, from knowing that there is a greater power in the universe:

Many plans are in people's hearts,

but the advice of Yahweh, that is what will succeed.

(Prov. 19:21)

And so we look to the One greater than us to provide the instruction we need to navigate life:

To humans belong the plans of the heart,

but from Yahweh comes a responding tongue. (Prov. 16:1)

(Longman 78–79)

### **Intuition**

The study of intuition has a long history across a number of academic fields resulting in a vast literature on the topic. Since it is beyond the scope of this project to provide a comprehensive review, a selected review of relevant literature is provided here to provide an understanding of what intuition is, what it does, and how it does it (Epstein). As with the previous section, this section will examine the nature of intuition, the exercise of intuition, and the development of intuitive abilities, before concluding with a brief discussion of Christian understandings of intuition. What follows is shaped by research emerging from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, management, and theology.

## **The Nature of Intuition**

Historically scholars have struggled to find a consensus around defining intuition. In her dissertation, “Awakening Intuition: A Delphi Study” published in 1995, Verna Veronica Schmidt offers a good overview of the various literature dealing with intuition. She references Wild who published in 1938 and Bastick who published in 1982 for a more comprehensive synthesis and attempt at a working definition of intuition – something that had eluded scholars at the time. However, much more has been written in the twenty years since her research project. Recent studies show an “explosion... [of intuition research] across a broad swathe of academia (and perhaps beyond)” into more popular writings (Andow 189). See, for example, Gisle Henden’s dissertation produced in 2004 which offers an extensive review of intuition literature in the academic fields of philosophy, psychology, rationality, and strategy.

While typically more general in nature, a dictionary definition provides a helpful orientation to the major themes in an understanding of intuition. The Oxford English Dictionary defines intuition as “the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning” (Oxford University Press). Merriam-Webster offers a similar definition with an added stress on the speed of intuition being quick or immediate insight: “(1) quick and ready insight; (2, a) immediate apprehension or cognition; (2, b) knowledge or conviction gained by intuition; (2, c) the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and interference” (Merriam-Webster). In other words, intuition is understood as knowledge or insight that rises to the level of consciousness in a particular situation without a conscious process of reasoning. This experience has often been referred to in simple terms as an “Aha”

moment (Bastick; Duggan; Sinclair), “gut feelings” (Gigerenzer), and getting a “hunch” (Gladwell; Wildermuth). Fortunately, recent research has helped move beyond such simplistic references and now offers much greater clarity about the nature of intuition.

### *Intuition in Psychology*

Research in psychology has contributed much to the understanding and defining of intuition. Myers’ definition of intuition closely follows the dictionary definition: “our capacity for direct knowledge, for immediate insight without observation or reason” (Myers, *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils* 1). In a more recent article (of a similar title) he offers this shorthand definition: “our effortless, immediate, unreasoned sense of truth” (Myers, “Intuition’s Powers and Perils” 371). Epstein offers a helpful summary of how authorities have defined intuition during the last half of the twentieth century. While showing agreement among them, he also argues their definitions fall short by failing to identify what intuition is in any substantive way. In an attempt to remedy the situation, he offers a twofold definition of his own: “Intuition involves a sense of knowing without knowing how one knows... Intuition involves a sense of knowing based on unconscious information processing” (Epstein, “Demystifying Intuition” 296). The clarifying point of Epstein’s definition is in the notion of unconscious information processing, which forms the foundations for the REI psychometric used in this research project.

Taking Epstein’s definition one step further, Sinclair points to the holistic nature of intuition. Intuition, for Sinclair, represents “direct knowing that results from nonconscious holistic information processing” (Sinclair 378). This is an important addition making room for the multiple and varied ways people experience intuition. As shown by Ryslinge, the experience of intuition often involves something more than

cognition. Affect (the experience of feelings or emotion) and physiological cues feature among descriptions of intuition (Ryslinge). The combined effect of these multiple sources/cues is what some have described as “thin-slicing” (Ambady; Gladwell). Gladwell describes “thin-slicing” as “the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience” (Gladwell loc 247). Ambady argues that thin slice judgments are intuitive, are essential to social and interpersonal relations, and can actually be impeded by deliberation, reasoning, and highly analytical tasks (Ambady).

Much of the psychological research of intuition is based on dual-process theories which help describe intuitive processes in contrast to more analytical or deliberative processes (Epstein; Evans; Hammond; Kahneman). Evans offers the quick distinction between two types of mental process: “Type 1 process: fast, intuitive, high capacity. Type 2 process: slow, reflective, low capacity” (Evans 313). Kahneman offers a similar description (Kahneman 12–13). Seymour Epstein provides a more comprehensive delineation between these types as reproduced in Table 2.1 (Epstein 299). While these distinctions are helpful, Epstein agrees with Hammond in that it is best to consider these two types as poles on a continuum, with Type 1 (intuition) on one end and Type 2 (analytical) on the other (Epstein 299; Hammond 330). Based on this notion, Hammond even suggests a change in terminology moving away from intuition, and instead to “quasirationality.” He argues, “the greater part of our cognitive activity is quasirational; it is the normal form of cognition – human judgment that is neither purely analytical nor purely intuitive but involves differing proportions of each, depending on which attributes

are present in our normal activities” (Hammond 330). Embedded in this dual-process approach is both an endorsement and caution regarding intuition.

**Table 2.1: Comparison of the Operating Principles and Attributes of the Experiential/Intuitive and Rational/Analytic Systems.**

Experiential/Intuitive System	Rational/Analytic System
1. Operates by automatically learning from experience	1. Operates by conscious reasoning
2. Emotional	2. Affect-free
3. Motivated by hedonic principle to maximize pleasure & minimize pain	3. Motivated by reality principle to construct a realistic, coherent model of the world
4. Associative connections between stimuli, responses, & outcomes	4. Cause-&-effect relations between stimuli, responses, & outcomes
5. Behavior mediated by automatic appraisal of events & “vibes” from past relevant experience	5. Behavior mediated by conscious appraisal of events & of potential responses
6. Nonverbal: encodes information in images, metaphors, scenarios, & narratives	6. Verbal: encodes information in abstract symbols, words, & numbers
7. Holistic	7. Analytic
8. Effortless & minimally demanding of cognitive resources	8. Relatively effortful and demanding of cognitive resources
9. More rapid processing: oriented toward immediate action	9. Slower processing: oriented also toward delayed action
10. Resistant to change: changes with repetitive or intense experience	10. Changes more readily: changes with speed of thought
11. More crudely differentiated: broad generalization gradient; categorical thinking	11. More highly differentiated; dimensional & nuanced
12. More crudely integrated: context specific; organized by cognitive-affective networks	12. More highly integrated; organized by context-general principles
13. Experienced passively and we are seized preconsciously: by our emotions & have uncontrolled spontaneous thoughts	13. Experienced actively and consciously: we believe we are in control of our reasoning
14. Self-evidently valid: experiencing is believing	14. Requires justification via logic & evidence

While intuition does offer powerful potential, it can also be misguided and get things wrong. Scholars have readily identified the perils of intuition (Greer; Myers, *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils*; Myers, “Intuition’s Powers and Perils”), and typically the best way to mitigate the risks of bias or misguided intuition is via some form of rational/analytical (type 2) process (Evans; Hammond; Kahneman). However, we must also be aware of the cultural and social influences which, in Western societies, tend to favor rational/analytical (type 2) processes. Bob Samples offers an interpretation of

Albert Einstein which cautions against this bias, “Albert Einstein called the intuitive or metaphoric mind a sacred gift. He added that the rational mind was a faithful servant. It is paradoxical that in the context of modern life we have begun to worship the servant and defile the divine” (Samples 26).<sup>2</sup> The dynamics of embracing the gift of the intuitive mind while also employing the rational mind as a safeguard will be discussed in greater detail below when dealing with how intuition is exercised and developed.

### *Intuition in Neuroscience*

Research into how the human brain functions sheds further light on the nature of intuition. One study showed advantageous decisions and a physiological response to a gambling task were present long before participants were conscious of the best choice or strategy (Bechara et al.). Another study revealed the neural basis for intuition among board game experts (Wan et al.). Duggan devotes an entire chapter to tracing the development in neuroscience from a two-sided brain (left-brain, right-brain) to the integrated whole-brain model, which is essential for the functioning of strategic intuition (Duggan 25–37). The findings of such research serve to validate intuition by unravelling what Valerie van Mulukom referred to as “the myth of cognitive progress” in Western societies (van Mulukom). Her analysis of intuition research leads her to the conclusion: “It is time to stop the witch hunt on intuition, and see it for what it is: a fast, automatic, subconscious processing style that can provide us with very useful information that

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<sup>2</sup> A similar quotation is often misattributed to Einstein. For example, in *The Power of Intuition*, Klein quotes Einstein as saying, “The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift” (loc 201). It has been shown, however, that while he spoke highly of intuition this quote has been improperly assigned directly to Einstein, see <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/09/18/intuitive-mind/>.

deliberate analysing can't" (van Mulukom). Each of these studies deepens our understanding of intuition.

### *Intuition in Philosophy*

Scholars widely agree that human beings have incredible cognitive abilities that extend far beyond the realm of analytical and logical processes. In terms of philosophy, perhaps the most notable contribution for this study is Michael Polanyi's epistemological theory of 'tacit knowing.' Polanyi's main contention is that "we can know more than we can tell" (Polanyi 4). To explain what he means, Polanyi offers the example of our ability to recognize a person's face among a thousand (or even a million) without being able to tell how we recognize it (4). Polanyi was influenced by Gestalt psychology which points to the fact that we can integrate the particulars of a physiognomy without being able to identify, in any precise way, those particulars (Polanyi 6). Jon H. Moilanen described this form of tacit knowledge as "more fundamental than clearly quantifiable and explainable knowing" (Moilanen, "The Wisdom of Tacit Knowing" 102). The far reaching implications of this are summed up as Polanyi concludes, "Tacit knowing is shown to account (1) for a valid knowledge of a problem, (2) for the scientist's capacity to pursue it, guided by his sense of approaching its solution, and (3) for a valid anticipation of the yet indeterminate implications of the discovery arrived at in the end" (Polanyi 24). Hence, in philosophical terms, Polanyi shows the significant presence and influence of tacit knowledge in the world, but also of our knowledge of that world.

### *Intuition in Management*

Scholars have provided a great service by outlining a historical review of intuition in management research (Akinci and Sadler-Smith, "Intuition in Management Research";

Dane and Pratt). Such reviews reveal the significant influence of other academic disciplines and related fields on management research. For example, it has been suggested managerial intuition is best understood by maintaining the dual-process contrast between Type 1 (intuitive-experiential) and Type 2 (cognitive-analytical) ways of processing information (Sadler-Smith and Hodgkinson). This is a direct carry-over from psychology research. Duggan draws upon neuroscience research to distinguish between ordinary intuition (gut feelings or hunches), expert intuition (fast insight in familiar situations based on experience), and strategic intuition (slow processing best utilized in new situations) (Duggan 2). Weston Agor serves as a further example of drawing upon interdisciplinary research to shape and inform his own applied research among leaders and managers (Agor, *Intuition in Organizations* 15).

The interdisciplinary approach to intuition in management research has helped to define and delineate the nature of intuition. In particular, Dane and Pratt offer what I consider to be the most helpful and generative definition of intuition. They propose, “intuitions are affectively charged judgments that arise through rapid, nonconscious, and holistic associations” (Dane and Pratt 40). This definition summarizes four characteristics they found to be common and central to the study of intuition in psychology, philosophy, and management. They identified four characteristics that make up the core of the construct: “intuition is a (1) nonconscious process (2) involving holistic associations (3) that are produced rapidly, which (4) result in affectively charged judgments” (Dane and Pratt 36). This helps to identify what can be considered intuition, but also what is not.

Continuing in the spirit of interdisciplinary research, it is interesting to note early in their article the assumption, also reflected in the wider literature, that intuition draws

on “our inborn ability to synthesize information quickly and effectively” (Dane and Pratt 33). This opens an interesting parallel to some of the earlier discussion of biblical wisdom and wisdom’s understanding of God’s design and human nature. Perhaps we ought not be surprised to find similar ideas in Christian literature. One interesting example is Heuertz’s work on personality types using the enneagram. He suggests three “intelligence centers” existing in a person – the mind (thoughts), the heart (feelings), and the body (intuition). These are used to help grow self-awareness, but also considered the primary means by which God speaks to people (Heuertz 87–103). Conceptually the idea of an “inborn ability to synthesize information quickly and effectively” sounds very similar to Heuertz’s “intelligence centers.”

Having reviewed the nature of intuition – what it is – we turn now to consider the exercise of intuition – what it does.

### **The Exercise of Intuition**

Recent literature reveals a pendulum swing in opinion regarding the merits of exercising intuition. Where it was once viewed with skepticism, it is now validated and highly prized. Some have even gone so far as to suggest intuition (and related faculties) will dominate the future landscape of thought and leadership. Upholding the dual-process theory, Daniel Pink argues that after nearly a century, Western society is moving away from an approach to life that has been “narrowly reductive and deeply analytical” (Pink 2). This is the way of the ‘left-brain’ which is “sequential, logical, and analytical” (2). The future, he proposes, will be dominated by very different aptitudes emerging from the right side of the brain, which he describes as “nonlinear, intuitive, and holistic” (Pink 2).

Pink's prediction was made more than ten years ago, and as the literature shows, appears to have gained acceptance (as discussed below).

The exercise of intuition is not only recognized but celebrated in a wide range of occupational or performance contexts. Susan Michaud's study reveals the importance and value of intuition among social workers (Michaud). In the field of marketing, it has been shown that historically devalued intuition is a powerful tool in instances where there are "a paucity of data, when options are manifold, when the future is uncertain and when the logic of strategic choice needs to be confirmed" (Patterson et al. 35). Humphries's interesting article addresses the exercise of intuition in user-centric design as something we take for granted as a positive thing – that is, the facilitation of using something without need for instructions (Humphries). There is a growing literature around both the exercise and development of intuition in nursing and nurse training (Gates; Graham-Hannah et al.; Payne). Others include studies in leadership, management, business, emergency first responders, and armed forces. Literature related to these fields is embedded in the following discussion.

A common thread throughout the literature dealing with the exercise of intuition is its relation to judgment and decision making (being a significant field of research itself). A number of studies even propose that intuitive decision-making leads to better decisions than deliberation (Dijkstra et al.). However, within the research on decision-making there are two extensive subsets of literature. One draws roots primarily from Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge, whereas the other draws more from psychological research. There is much of interest regarding decision-making and tacit knowledge (Moilanen, "The Wisdom of Tacit Knowing"; Moilanen, "Intuitive Decisionmaking";

Thall). However, for the purposes of this study, the focus will be on intuition.

Psychologist Gary Klein has been a significant figure in this blossoming exploration (Klein, *Sources of Power*; Klein, *The Power of Intuition*; Klein, *Seeing What Others Don't*; Klein "Reflections on Applications of NDM"). The influence of Klein's work is evident particularly in applied research in the field of organizational leadership and management (Church; Hallyn; McNaught; Whiting). Yet, within this commonality, there are differing explanations for how intuition is exercised. The subsequent paragraphs will discuss some of the more prominent suggestions in the literature including issues around fear, expertise, heuristics and biases, and speed of decision (fast vs. slow).

First, Gavin de Becker's significant work shows intuition is exercised through the experience of fear. Like other examples in nature, de Becker argues intuition serves as an evolved human defense system in the face of risk (de Becker 2). So, while the title of his book, *The Gift of Fear*, signals fear as a healthy survival skill, the real driver for de Becker is learning to trust one's intuition. The trouble, he argues, is that we have become skilled at ignoring or suppressing our intuition in favor of more rational or substantiated judgments. By living in such "clever defiance of their own intuition, [people] become... victims of violence and accidents (de Becker 30). Furthermore, he suggests we not only get into trouble by denying intuitive signals, but also when "our intuition... is loaded with inaccurate information" (de Becker 35). The implication is that one must carefully evaluate our sources of information. The parallels are strengthened when considering wisdom's emphasis on both character development and the dialectic of human potential and limitation.

Second, much of the literature grounds the exercise of intuition in expertise, particularly as the integration and application of one's past experiences. Gladwell's theory of "thin-slicing" is anchored in expertise, as illustrated by the fascinating story of The Getty Museum purchasing a fraudulent kouros statue valued at multi-millions of dollars (Gladwell loc 15-79). Upon extensive scientific and historical analysis by The Getty staff, the statue checked out as genuine; whereas upon a quick glance by an independent expert art historian it was deemed inauthentic. In the end, the art historian was right – the kouros statue was a fake. Essentially, the claim narrated by Gladwell is that the more experience one has in the particular field/domain, the greater the accuracy of their intuition (Dane et al.; Payne). This has been the dominant premise upon which Gary Klein's research is built: "we learned that intuition is a natural and direct outgrowth of experience. I define intuition as *the way we translate our experience into action*" (Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 139). However, merely having experiences is not enough. Klein asserts experiences must be transformed into expertise and offers suggestions for how one might pursue that through active feedback, reflection, and repetition (loc 1184).

It is worth noting, however, the potential downside of expertise. Scholars recognize the potential for expertise to "blind us" by formulating static views about how things ought to go resulting in an ability to ignore new cues, potentially useful strategies, and a failure to notice important opportunities that may not fit within the expected framework (Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 1284). Duggan agrees adding that "expert intuition" is best suited to familiar situations, whereas new situations require "strategic

intuition” (Duggan 2). In the end, however, the emphasis on expertise is undeniable in the exercise of intuition.

Third, and related to expertise, is the research around heuristics and biases when it comes to exercising intuition in decision making. Gerd Gigerenzer of the Max Planck Institute offers the shorthand definition of heuristics – “rules of thumb” (Gigerenzer loc 127) – whereas others describe them as “mental shortcuts” developed over time (Kutschera and Ryan). Tversky and Kahneman have devoted much of their academic careers to researching this phenomenon (Tversky and Kahneman). Their work focused on the frailty of human decision making essentially exploring the exercise of intuition from the angle of wrong choices based on biases. Klein, on the other hand, takes a more positive approach by exploring the exercise of intuition through right choices when things go well. Fortunately, many of the points of agreement and disagreement between Kahneman and Klein have been collected for the benefit of the field as a whole (Kahneman and Klein, “Conditions for Intuitive Expertise: A Failure to Disagree.”; Kahneman and Klein, “When Can You Trust Your Gut?”). It is worth noting, however, that they both approach intuition as being grounded in expertise in reaction to more flaky esoteric or extrasensory understandings (Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 217).

Fourth, much has been made of the speed of decision resulting from intuition. Due to its nonconscious nature, people are able to respond or act very quickly (almost immediately) as they are not encumbered by slower analytical thought processes (Klein, *Sources of Power*; Klein, *The Power of Intuition*; Gladwell; Gigerenzer). As Gladwell contends, “decisions made very quickly can be every bit as good as decisions made cautiously and deliberately” (Gladwell loc 147). Gladwell is only able to make such a

statement because of our improved understanding of intuition and how it works in recent years (Dane and Pratt; Epstein). It would, however, be inaccurate to suggest scholarly agreement around the reliability of speedy decisions. There is also a consistent theme of caution and counterbalance within the literature.

The caution or counterbalance is a revised approach to the dual-process perspective which favors a more integrated approach of both intuition and analysis. This is where there is wide agreement among intuition researchers (Dane, Rockmann, and Pratt; Evans; Kahneman; Klein, *Sources of Power*; Kutschera and Ryan). Rather than two modes of thinking that can be used alternatively, Betsch and Glöckner argue that “intuitive and analytic processes are components that operate together to form judgment and decisions” (Betsch and Glöckner 291). Research into how these two components operate together reveals experts typically default to using the intuitive mode and drawing on the analytical mode as necessary. In almost all cases, intuition precedes analysis for expert decision makers (Okoli and Watt). Such findings related to the sequencing of intuition and analysis helps to substantiate Samples’ interpretation of Einstein as referenced above: “Albert Einstein called the intuitive or metaphoric mind a sacred gift. He added that the rational mind was a faithful servant. It is paradoxical that in the context of modern life we have begun to worship the servant and defile the divine” (Samples 26). Placing deliberation and analysis subsequent to intuition is to place it in service of intuition by safeguarding and protecting it from error – something Kahneman was particularly concerned with. Kahneman’s primary critique of intuition is it being prone to bias due to its subjectivity. Without rigorous analysis, one can become overconfident in his or her intuition based on very minimal success (Kahneman and Klein, “When Can

You Trust Your Gut?”). This danger of intuition exercised in isolation is “greatly exacerbated by our tendency to reason after the event, confabulating justifications for our intuitions and constructing an illusion of conscious control” (Evans 323). Hence, we see both the dangers of intuition when exercised in isolation, but also its incredible potential when integrated with analysis.

The potential and perils surrounding the exercise of intuition closely parallel the discussion of potential and limitation in the section on “The Exercise of Wisdom” above (see pp. 33-44). For example, expertise is clearly attested as able to improve intuitive abilities, potentially causing one’s intuition to be blinded by static formulations or expectations. A similar assertion was made regarding humanity’s ability to discover and exercise wisdom for skillful living, but never fully. Perfect wisdom belongs to God alone.

Having reviewed the nature of intuition (what it is), and the exercise of intuition (what it does), we turn now to consider ways in which intuitive abilities can be improved and developed.

### **The Development of Intuition**

The importance of intuition for leadership (especially related to decision making) is well established in the literature. However, little is done to develop this important capability (Burke and Sadler-Smith) resulting in a compromised ability for future leaders to cope with complex, dynamic, and uncertain environments (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuition: ‘Becoming Smarter by Thinking Less’”). A scan of specifically Christian leadership literature reveals very little on this topic causing one to look elsewhere for guidance. Fortunately, there is a small, albeit growing, body of research around developing intuitive abilities of business leaders. The following discussion draws

predominantly from business education research (Burke and Sadler-Smith; Prince and Priporas; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuition: ‘Becoming Smarter by Thinking Less’”; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuitive Awareness in Management Education.”; Sadler-Smith and Burke). As will be shown, not only is intuition a validated construct for leaders, but it is also one that can be developed.

The development of intuition leans heavily upon analytical tools and processes to uncover, articulate, and refine intuitive processes. This is particularly true when intuition is understood in terms of expertise (Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 1197-1540). Provis shows the value of reflection and analysis, both of which are more deliberate and systematic processes, in developing sound intuition (Provis 5). Myers calls for “a disciplined training of the mind” in order to proactively test and safeguard against the perils of intuition (Myers, “Intuition’s Powers and Perils” 376). Considering reflection as an analytical process, Bortolotti argues for the integration of both intuition and reflection in order to make wise choices (Bortolotti). Further, while Amy L. Baylor’s interesting proposal recognizes a very high availability of intuition to novices, her development process for intuition remains highly analytical in forging greater exposure and experience for the learner (Baylor 239–40). The upside of using analytical tools and processes means they are more easily explained as techniques or practices to develop intuition.

Before we begin outlining the various practices resident within the pertinent literature, we must recognize the need to prepare or open the way. Weston Agor suggests that any program to develop intuition should consist of at least “three basic components that address your cognitive, affective, and evaluational attitude about using this skill: (1) Methods to help you allow intuition to work; (2) Methods to help you believe in it; [and]

(3) Methods to help you cultivate and practice it” (Agor, “How to Use and Develop Your Intuition in Management” 219). In other words, part of developing intuition involves overcoming much of the criticism intuition has received over the years. A similar starting point is evident within the program for introducing intuition development into the MBA program in a university context, described as dispelling myths (Sadler-Smith and Burke 248–49). Essentially, the first obstacle to overcome is one’s own skepticism and distrust of intuition – something that has been culturally conditioned for people in western societies ever since the Enlightenment. Two practical steps have been suggested to achieve this outcome. First, creating an environment that is conducive to and encouraging of intuition being exercised. A place where innovation is encouraged (Agor, “Finding and Developing Intuitive Managers” 69) and a helpful language is adopted to help introduce, discuss, and build awareness of intuition (Prince and Priporas 5). Second, instructing learners in the empirical basis of informed intuition. Providing examples and scholarly resources serves to validate the use of intuition and dispel any misconceptions learners may bring with them (Sadler-Smith and Burke 248–49, 256). Following these suggestions helps to remove obstacles and open the learner to begin trusting and developing their intuitive abilities.

### *Intuitive Practices*

In terms of specific techniques or practices for developing intuition, Sadler-Smith and his colleagues offer some of the most helpful insight from their research implementing intuition training with MBA students. Students were taught twelve different “Keys” or techniques to help develop their intuition and given freedom to select the ones that suited them best (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuition:

‘Becoming Smarter by Thinking Less’” C3; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuitive Awareness in Management Education.” 194). The twelve “keys” are outlined below in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Techniques Used to Develop Intuition**

No.	Name	Brief Description
Key 1	Go with your gut	Spontaneity exercise applied to trivial tasks
Key 2	Stilling the mind	Sitting meditation exercise
Key 3	Listen to your body	Somatic focusing exercise
Key 4	Relaxation	Lying or sitting relaxation exercise
Key 5	Inner journey	Guided visual imagery exercise
Key 6	Sleeping on it	Incubation exercise
Key 7	Looking meditation	A visual meditation exercise
Key 8	Walking meditation	A walking meditation exercise
Key 9	Mindfulness	Exercise in awareness through drawing
Key 10	Befriend yourself	Loving kindness exercise
Key 11	Morning pages	Exercise in spontaneous writing
Key 12	Intuition journal	Technique for recording intuitions

Stadler-Smith and Burke continued to develop and refine these techniques around six main themes to better equip instructors to develop the intuitive abilities of their students (Sadler-Smith and Burke 248–55). The six themes include: (1) Dispelling the Myths – that intuition is not some mystical, magical, or paranormal sixth sense and the myth that intuition is always bad and never to be trusted. Examples and case studies can be used to illustrate the point that intuition can work well and sometimes better than rational analysis. (2) Journaling Intuitions and Developing Cognitive Maps – to develop a systematic approach to recording, interpreting, and articulating intuitions. An intuition journal is the primary tool used here (see also Agor, “How to Use and Develop”). (3) Scrutinizing Intuitions and Giving Good Feedback – using appropriate questioning and inquiry techniques to scrutinize intuitions. Identify situations where intuition worked and

intuition failed – inviting feedback through a critical incident review. (4) Being Aware of Biases – recognize and counter any preconceived ideas, assumptions, and bias; especially the confirmation bias. (5) Give the Rational Mind a Reprieve – practice a technique for mental relaxation and contemplation. Quiet the mind so that it can become more open and receptive. Distinguish between insight and intuition (see also Klein, *Seeing What Others Don't* loc 523). (6) Understanding Exposure vs. Experience – superficial or ad hoc exposure in an experiential learning situation is not sufficient. Expertise is developed through deeper and more meaningful experiences, typically facilitated by a mentor/coach, and because it is desirable for students' intuitive abilities to improve, a series of appendices are provided with specific resources, tools, and techniques for implementation (Sadler-Smith and Burke 256–59).

Interestingly, similar themes exist in the literature related to developing intuition as with developing wisdom. Below are four specific practices encouraged in the development of intuition. The similarities with wisdom practices are also indicated.

*Reflection.* First, the emphasis on awareness and reflective practices mirrors the wisdom practice of “Observation and Experience” identified by Longman (see above, p. 47). Methods for developing intuition regularly encourage use of an intuition journal to capture and track the nature of the intuition experience, beginning to explore the process and means by which intuitive insights emerge, surrounding circumstances, and their accuracy (Agor, “How to Use and Develop” 222–23). The practice of journaling helps “to capture intuitions before they are censored by the rational mind” but also provide an ongoing record so any patterns can be observed over time (Sadler-Smith and Burke 249). The very act of committing thoughts to writing begins to integrate intuitive and analytical

processing (Prince and Priporas 3–4). Hence, active reflection practices feature in development processes for both wisdom and intuition.

*Instruction and Discussion.* Second, other people play an important role in the development of intuition. This includes sharing and discussing one’s intuitions with colleagues (Prince and Priporas 5), but especially recognizes the role of expert teachers, mentors, or coaches in developing intuition. There is a place for expert instruction offering examples and case studies help “dispel myths” or misconceptions students may have about intuition (Sadler-Smith and Burke 248–49). By observing instructors engage in and share their own experiences of intuition, “discussing their methods for active reflection, using self-checking mechanisms, multiple metaphors, and ways for dealing with fatigue and memory failings, business students can learn vicariously how to develop important intuitive abilities” (Burke and Sadler-Smith 179). Klein devotes an entire chapter to becoming a great coach of intuitive abilities where he explores both “barriers to good coaching,” and “three dimensions to great coaching” (Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 3673-3970). The notion that intuition is not developed in isolation of other people parallels the wisdom practice of “Instruction Based on Tradition” (see above, p. 48) where the development of wisdom is reliant upon parents/teachers providing instruction, and the wider community formation of character and a wisdom worldview. The similarities to intuition development are evident.

*Review.* Third, the development of intuition engages in review practices to learn. Essentially this is what is called for in “scrutinizing intuition” and “being aware of bias” (Sadler-Smith and Burke 251–53). The practice of review draws upon hindsight and analytical reasoning to evaluate the effectiveness of one’s intuition (Provis; Myers,

“Intuition’s Powers and Perils”). Two noteworthy review practices include Critical Incident Review, and recognizing and countering the confirmation bias (Sadler-Smith and Burke 251–53, 257–58). This practice relates to the wisdom practices of “Learning from Mistakes” (see above, p. 49), but also echoes similarities with learning from tradition and the experiences of others, “Instruction Based on Tradition.”

*Mindfulness and Contemplation.* Finally, mindfulness and contemplative practices are recommended for the development of intuition. Of the twelve keys suggested by Sadler-Smith and Shefy, more than half (7) are mindfulness practices involving meditation, awareness exercises, and relaxation techniques (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuition”; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, “Developing Intuitive Awareness”). Such practices have historically dominated discussions around the development of intuition (see Vaughan; Schmidt), but have also been critiqued as too esoteric and, at times, even linked with the occult (Klein, *The Power of Intuition*; Kahneman and Klein, “When Can You Trust Your Gut?”). There is no denying that the influence of New Age spirituality is replete throughout intuition research (Agor, *Intuition in Organizations*; Ryslinge). However, rather than making these grounds for dismissing such practices for Christian leaders, we might reclaim them discerningly as authentically Christian practices. After all, Christianity has a long tradition of contemplative practices including silence, solitude, stillness, prayer, and meditation. Such a reorientation also establishes the link with the wisdom practice of “Revelation” (see above, p. 50) which recognizes God as the ultimate source of wisdom (and all knowledge/truth). When framed this way, contemplative practices serve to foster a healthy “fear of the LORD.” This leads us to

some brief comments about the related concept of “Christian intuition” in the final section of our discussion of intuition.

### **Christian Intuition**

The study of intuition from a Christian perspective is not a new or novel endeavor. Theologians and Christian philosophers have wrestled with the nature of intuition for many years (Genung; Lyman; Mead; Stead). Intuition, it is agreed, is not infallible but, nevertheless, provides a valuable source of information, insight, and even revelation (Lyman; Stead). For Lyman, this comes to light through human experience and, like John Wesley, opens a seat at the table of theological reflection for personal experience (Lyman 449, 464–65). While cautiously acknowledging the many pitfalls of intuition, Stead maintains, “it does introduce us to an important locus of revelation... revelation through the whole mind, subconscious and conscious” (Stead 132). In short, Christian tradition recognizes intuition as part of God’s design for humanity and one way through which God is made known.

More recent research continues to explore the role of intuition in making God known. For example, Mark Mathewson advocates for ‘moral intuitionism’ from a Christian perspective. Taking up Romans 2:14-15 and the Apostle Paul’s notion of ‘the Law written in human hearts,’ Mathewson argues,

... a moderate moral intuitionism is a quite plausible explication of the internally existing moral law affirmed in Rom. 2:14-15. The innate intuitive ability each human possesses allows us non-inferentially to apprehend and know basic moral principles for which we are accountable.

This position, among other considerations, is consistent with the context of

Romans 1-2, corresponds to an orthodox theology of the image of God and the reality of sin, and accounts for at least some of our experiences concerning human knowledge of moral principles. (Mathewson 639)

Taking this a step further, Reichert proposes an intuitive apologetic as part of God's design for reaching lost people (Reichert). Other scholars point to the significance of intuition not only in God's work of justification, but also sanctification (Murdoch; Croteau-Chonka). In particular, Croteau-Chonka's dissertation shows how an improved understanding of intuition can improve the effectiveness of Christian education by promoting "a wholeness that leads to holiness." (Croteau-Chonka 1). Further, Robert Martin's work serves to reframe Christian education in light of the ultimate reality of God's self-revelation (incarnation) and an appreciation for the tacit element of learning (Martin, "The Incarnate Ground"; Martin, "Having Faith"). This brief brush of Christian intuition research illustrates a cautious embrace of intuition as a means of knowing God, but also for spiritual growth.

### **Context: Aotearoa New Zealand**

The exercise of ministry leadership never occurs in a vacuum. It always finds expression in a specific time and place; and as such is shaped by the historical, cultural, and socio-political values of the context. What follows is a discussion of relevant historical, sociological, and leadership literature as an introduction to Aotearoa New Zealand as a context for ministry leadership. As will be shown, this is a challenging and complicated context in which to lead and minister.

## **Religious Decline in New Zealand**

New Zealand is not known as a particularly religious country. Recent figures suggest a significant decline in the number of people affiliated with Christianity in New Zealand. The 2013 Census recorded 48.9% of the population who affiliated with Christian religions, down from 55.6% in 2006 and over 60% in 2001 (Stats NZ). The data reveals both a decline in religious affiliation, and an increase in those identifying as religiously unaffiliated. New Zealand ranked high among the “Least Religious Nations” in 2010 with 36.6% of the population being religiously unaffiliated (Pew Forum). By comparison, Australia was 24.2%, Canada was 23.7%, the United Kingdom was 21.3%, and the United States was 16.4% (Pew). This figure increased in New Zealand from 36.6% in 2010 to 41.9% of the population indicating they had no religious affiliation in the 2013 Census (Stats NZ). And, more recent data suggests this trend continues: “more than half of Kiwis (55%) do not identify with any main religion” (Wilberforce Foundation 7) – a statistic expected to be confirmed by the 2018 Census results (Crudge, “Faith and Belief”). These realities have resulted in widespread opinion that the church in New Zealand is dying.

The pattern of decline and increased marginalization of the church in New Zealand has drawn frequent comment from sociologists, historians, and public media. Kevin Ward goes so far as to suggest it has been the dominant storyline for religion in New Zealand since the 1960s (Ward, “Religion in New Zealand” 186–87). Prior to the 1960s, Christianity and the church played a significant role in New Zealand society. Jim Veitch offers this telling description:

The influence of Christianity on New Zealand life until the mid-sixties was extensive. It was a rare family who did not have some connection with the church. Women and children in particular used the church and its extensive social activities. It was in the Sunday School that children received moral education, and most parents... went to church in support of this... Christian influence still dominated Sunday and holidays, shaped attitudes to books and entertainment, and even controlled the language people used... The moral principles of Christianity... were sufficiently well known in the community to provide business, industrial and community leaders with a broad ethical framework. (Veitch 90)

Remarkably, this influence has been overlooked in much of the historical record (Lineham, "Trends in Religious History" 338; Lineham, *Sunday Best* 22). For instance, Michael King's extensive and popular *The Penguin History of New Zealand* hardly mentions religion (King). Surely this absence has bolstered the belief that the church in New Zealand is dying and has little to offer New Zealand society. Nonetheless, more recent literature is emerging that attempts to correct this oversight and argues the religious history of New Zealand "has a great deal to contribute to the understanding of New Zealand as a whole" (Lineham 338; see also Stenhouse; Newman). Two excellent examples of which include, *Shaping Godzone* by Laurie Guy and *Sunday Best* by Peter Lineham.

Laurie Guy makes a wonderful contribution by tracing the decline in influence the church has had on New Zealand society. He argues the Christian church was "one of the major institutional strands in the fabric of the nation" from 1840 until the 1960s (Guy 9).

In making his argument, Guy audaciously claims that the church has been a midwife to the nation through the early missionary influence in both signing and upholding the Treaty of Waitangi (29-40); a view shared and further developed in *Bible & Treaty: Missionaries Among The Māori – A New Perspective* (Newman). Church voices continued to play a significant role in issues as wide-ranging as alcohol restraint, voting rights for women, the use of Sunday for business trading, and the exploitation of workers. However, from the 1960s on Christian influence waned for a variety of reasons (Guy 18–21). One important reason being the Judeo-Christian worldview could no longer be assumed a self-evident truth; which resulted in the removal of religious beliefs from the public realm, viewing it as irrelevant. Guy aptly describes an element of this shift as the “privatization of faith” whereby the practice of religious beliefs is an appropriate part of personal or private life, but no longer suitable in the realm of public life (22). Guy concludes that the game is not yet over and the voice of the church is still needed in the public arena with an important role to play in helping reexamine the foundations and values of both individual and social life (481-82). Taking up Guy’s call is a challenging one for church leaders today in a time when Christian values and beliefs are not only not respected, but often considered irrelevant, or worse, untrustworthy.

In *Sunday Best*, Peter Lineham explores not only how the church has shaped New Zealand, but how the unique nature of New Zealand society has shaped the church. While it is certainly a historical work, Lineham makes it clear that “understanding religious culture is highly desirable for our understanding of New Zealand society and culture as a whole” (Lineham, *Sunday Best* 22). Lineham emphasizes the significant cultural resource churches are for both individuals and communities and the way in which it promotes

political mobilization, civic participation, and social incorporation. “If this is right,” Lineham argues, “then there may be ways to detect a decline in these various types of engagement in society. The evident losses that have occurred within the decline of communities of faith might then be shown to have impoverished society as a whole” (379). In the end, Lineham’s analysis concurs with Guy’s conclusion that churches in New Zealand have been sidelined in today’s world, but adds that they are not on their own in this struggle. Many other aspects of society, voluntary groups, and associations face a similar crisis (Lineham, *Sunday Best* 383; see also Ward, *Losing Our Religion?*). Further evidence of the marginalization of the church is found in the negative, often critical, voice of the media and public opinion.

The voice of the media certainly shapes public opinion, and media reports on census data paint a rather stark picture of the future of the Church in New Zealand. Kevin Ward begins his book, *Losing Our Religion?* with references to several headlines from major newspapers after census figures revealed a decline in religious belief in 2007. One major newspaper ran lines such as: “Christian Church Withering,” “Pākehā Quit Traditional Churches ‘in Big Numbers,’” “Churches on Slippery Slope,” while another ran an editorial under the title, “Withering Belief” (Ward, *Losing Our Religion?* 3). The *Christchurch Press* ran an article in 2013 under the heading, “Are we Losing our Religion to Modern Life?” The article drew upon the dominant storyline of the city from the previous two years – the destruction caused by the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. It began: “Christchurch's churches have taken a battering over the past few years, with many still lying broken and in pieces, and it seems the state of faith in the city has taken a hit too. The number of Christians in Christchurch is dropping, while those identifying as

non-religious is steadily on the rise” (Turner). Another article from December 2013 reports, “Kiwis are turning their backs on God in record numbers, instead opting for a life without religion” (Heather). As a result of this decline, mainstream Christianity is not as readily recognized as an aspect of culture, receives less protection, and “is more readily made into an object of ridicule and satire” (van der Krogt 84).

Undoubtedly one of the major trends in New Zealand over the past fifty years is one of decline, both in church attendance and Christian believing (Ward, “Religion in New Zealand” 197). It’s easy to assume, based on such decline, that the church in New Zealand is dying and one day soon will cease to have any meaningful presence at all. Nevertheless, it is worth asking: Is that really the end of the story? Are churches and Christian leaders simply to resign themselves to decline and death as inevitable? Is this the best interpretation of the data? Or, could there be something else going on?

### **Spiritual Change in New Zealand**

While the decline in traditional church affiliation is real, other interpreters suggest it is not the whole story and, in fact, may be overstated. Instead, it is more helpful to think in terms of the church in New Zealand changing, not dying (Patrick and Taylor 10–14). Agreeing with Lineham (*Sunday Best* 379), they point to a wider societal trend of people being less likely to make a binding commitment to any organization – political party, sports club, or church. What is really going on? Is the church in New Zealand slowly dying? Or, is it changing?

One of the dominant explanations for religious decline in western contexts has been the secularization theory. Secularization denotes the process by which a society rejects and moves away from the control of religious institutions, beliefs, or symbols

(Ward, *Losing Our Religion?* 12). During the 1960s and 1970s, the secularization theory was the dominant explanation for religious decline following the argument, “that religion was incompatible with modernity, where truth was determined by science and reason; as modernity progressed, religion was squeezed out and we became a secular people” (Ward, “Religion in New Zealand since the 1960s” 197). From the 1980s, however, the secularization theory came under significant scrutiny and exists today as a minority view among sociologists. The reason for this change, Ward argues, is that secularization did not result in religious decline but instead “leads to a pluralization of religion” (198). Strangely, this shift is not widely represented in New Zealand where the older interpretation remains the dominant view. Ward suggests this is due to the limited attention given to religion in sociology departments throughout New Zealand universities; when, in fact, a pluralization of religion is certainly true in New Zealand – especially in light of recent migration (198). It seems further New Zealand based research is required.

One such attempt to better understand the secularization process in New Zealand was made by a group of scholars from Massey University who initiated a study using a survey from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). Their study confirmed the process of secularization has indeed contributed to the decline of traditional Christianity in New Zealand. However, it also revealed “growing numbers of people refashioning religion as spiritual experience, without the need for central authority” (Vaccarino et al. 93). Their findings uncovered an interesting dichotomy between, (1) many New Zealanders who are not tied to a religious organization, but consider themselves spiritual, and (2) many who do belong to a religious organization, but do not consider themselves

spiritual. What this shows is the ineffectiveness of census statistics in capturing the strength of people's personal religion and predicting the future of religion (Vaccarino et al. 94). It is an interesting observation that, in recent years, has caused scholars to look beyond the data from census returns and explore other indicators such as "beliefs, spiritual awareness or engaging in other religious practices" (Ward, "Religion in New Zealand" 198).

Looking beyond census results has helped researchers better articulate some of the societal and cultural changes occurring. Kevin Ward provides an excellent framework for identifying such changes. Drawing upon extensive research from five western nations (New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Canada), Ward uses the distinction between religious believing and religious belonging to highlight the core of these changes: while religious belonging is certainly in decline, religious believing is not; and, in some cases, even shows evidence of increase (Ward, *Losing Our Religion?*). Hence, while writing with a predominantly North American context in mind, Leonard Sweet's commentary on the influence of postmodernism on Christianity offers an apt description of New Zealand: "We are living in a secular society but a spiritual culture. Postmoderns prefer a nonreligious spirituality – a spirituality that is not associated with organized religion" (Sweet 404). This distinction between belonging and believing helps pave a way forward for exploring spiritual changes as typical census data only reports on religious belonging, not on religious believing.

Ward unpacks five significant changes in cultural values and their impact on the life of the church. They are: (1) Individualism, understood as an emphasis on the self that, in terms of religion, can result in faith without community; (2) Privatism, a term referring

to the way in which people live their lives less in public and more in private; (3) Pluralism, the rapid globalization and exposure to many different peoples, lifestyles, beliefs, has resulted in a new ethic and diverse religious landscape that significantly weakens the plausibility structures of any one particular set of beliefs; (4) Relativism, the attitude that one can believe whatever they like so long as it doesn't hurt anyone else – an attitude that casts doubt on the whole concept of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and bad; and (5) Anti-Institutionalism, meaning the distrust and cynicism many have toward any kind of public institution, including organized religion (Ward, *Losing Our Religion?* 18–31). The implications of these value changes are enormous. Yet, in spite of the challenges, Ward concludes the future of New Zealand is not a churchless future, but one in which people's sense of belonging looks very different to traditional understandings of church involvement (249-250).

Not surprisingly, then, there is a growing consensus that the Church in New Zealand is not dying, but instead undergoing radical changes. Peter Lineham's extensive historical survey concludes with the reflection, "we are in a period of great cultural rethinking and change" (*Sunday Best* 383). Such cultural rethinking and change inevitably brings both challenges and opportunities, and determining a faithful Christian response, in light of these new challenges and opportunities, is the new reality for ministry leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand today.

### **Responding to Challenges and Opportunities**

Sadly, there is not a lot in the way of answers or direction available when it comes to determining a faithful Christian response in the New Zealand context. Most of the current literature is focused on naming and describing the changes, challenges, and

opportunities without offering guidance around the implications or how one might navigate or respond to these changes. While it is essential to understand the changes occurring and the nature of the challenges being faced, it is only the first step required of ministry leaders. The second, and equally important step, is to lead churches toward a faithful Christian response – one that is informed and suitable to meet the societal changes, challenges, and opportunities. The following paragraphs serve as an initial attempt toward that end.

One of the most significant challenges facing the church is her ability to reach younger generations. The *Faith and Belief* study shows significantly reduced numbers of young people affiliating with church when compared with older generations (Wilberforce Foundation). Young people in New Zealand have little knowledge about religion, faith, or church. While further research is required, some possible reasons for this include: “the lack of a religious tradition..., the increasing busyness of modern-day life, or the emphasis on individualism and self-created identity” (7). Van der Krogt adds the removal of religious education from the New Zealand education system as another reason for such widespread ignorance about religion (van der Krogt 85–86). A further challenge to Kiwi’s engaging Christianity are identified in this study as “belief blockers.” The church’s stance and teaching on homosexuality was the biggest blocker, followed by issues of gender equality, how a good God could allow so much evil and pain, and how a loving God could allow people to go to hell (Wilberforce Foundation 41–44). Coupling these blockers with issues of church abuse has caused a negative, or at least skeptical, perception of Christians and Christianity (43-44). Clearly much is at stake in overcoming

these challenges, and addressing them will require great wisdom, sensitivity, and courage on behalf of New Zealand ministry leaders. Still, it is not all bad news.

Intermingled with these challenges are some opportunities for the Church to (re)assert faithful Gospel witness in New Zealand. For example, while the lack of knowledge among younger Kiwis about the Church poses a significant challenge, it is also an opportunity. The same *Faith and Belief* study revealed younger people were more open to Christianity and spiritual conversations (Wilberforce Foundation 30–33). One might suggest using the challenging belief blockers or negative perceptions as conversation starters with younger people. It is possible, after all, for negative bias against the church or Christian beliefs to be adopted in ignorance. The opportunity, therefore, is to reframe the conversation by introducing a different narrative about who God is and what it means to follow Him – in other words, to inform the uninformed. This is only strengthened by the fact that “one in eight Kiwis (12%) are very open (‘extremely’ or ‘significantly’) to changing their religious views given the right circumstances” (17). A further 15% are “somewhat open” to changing their religious views (17). Hence, one in four Kiwis (27%) are likely to be open to spiritual conversations.

Other opportunities lie in the generally positive perception Kiwis have of Jesus who is seen as relatable and approachable by non-Christians – and commonly associated with love (Wilberforce Foundation 59-61). There also remains some latent social capital in the currency of favorable perceptions toward Christianity (8-9) and the positive influence of the church in our world (51-54). Admittedly, most of this favorable attitude is overshadowed by the negative perceptions dominating media portrayals of the church,

as mentioned above. Nevertheless, Christian leaders would do well to capitalize upon this opportunity with an increasingly active, visible, and life-giving presence in their city or community, while simultaneously being prepared for pushback and opposition from an increasingly secular society. What is called for is the same exhortation issued by the apostle Paul to the church in Philippi to be confident, assured, united, and “in no way intimidated by your opponents” (Philippians 1:28, NRSV).

The *Faith and Belief* study indicates one potentially fruitful way to navigate the challenges and opportunities identified. It states, “seeing people live out a genuine faith is most likely to attract Kiwis to investigate religion and spirituality” (18). Based upon this finding, it seems the greatest need in navigating the challenges and opportunities of the secular New Zealand context is for well-discipled followers of Christ. Furthermore, well-discipled Christ-followers are more likely to be equipped and prepared to engage in meaningful spiritual conversations with secular Kiwis as described above. Such data should not come as a surprise to Christ followers as it simply confirms the mission Jesus left to His Church in the Great Commission: “Therefore go and *make disciples* of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19, emphasis mine). The challenge facing ministry leaders today lies in how one goes about Christ’s mission of making disciples.

Part of what makes disciple-making so difficult in Aotearoa New Zealand is, what Mike Crudge has named, “a communication problem” between the church and society (Crudge et al. 94). Based upon Crudge’s own research he shows that the way in which the church presents itself to contemporary society creates a disconnect between the two resulting in the church being viewed as irrelevant (Crudge, “The Disconnected Church”). Therefore, those interested in exploring spirituality may not even consider the church or

Christians spirituality as being helpful in their exploration (Crudge et al. 94). The task of disciple-making is threatened before it even gets started. What makes matters worse is that Christian leaders are often indifferent or unwilling to accept this disconnection or their role in perpetuating it (Crudge et al. 114–16). Instead, a “connected church” shows it understands and appreciates the twenty-first context. It is competent and comfortable living with the tension between adapting to cultural change while retaining the theological and spiritual integrity in the essence of being Christian (Crudge, “The Disconnected Church” 243). Crudge’s aim is both honorable and helpful: “helping local churches identify their disconnectedness, and then engage in ways to seek connectedness” (247). His research makes significant advances in the former. What remains as a challenge for ministry leaders today is to “engage in ways to seek connectedness,” and hopefully, become a connected Church.

Forming meaningful connection between the Church and contemporary society is easier said than done. As the disconnected nature of the Church demonstrates, the *modus operandi* of Christendom is ineffective (Crudge et al. 118). It is time for change. It is time to try some new things as part of a season of experimentation for the Church. For Crudge, the Church ought to experiment in the area of communication so its message can be received by contemporary society (Crudge, “The Disconnected Church” 248–49; Crudge et al. 118–19). Jamieson’s original research into “church leavers” offers some helpful guidelines for future experimentation. He suggests “leaver-sensitive churches” would provide: safe spaces for people to explore, question, and to doubt; a theology of journey; resources for people in the dark places; models of other theological understandings; models of an honest Christian life rather than “shoulds”; and room for emotions and

intuitions (Jamieson 145–50). One interesting example of such an attempt is the “Spirited Exchanges groups” developed in response to Jamieson’s study (Jamieson et al. 70–78).

Perhaps a first step will be forming leaders with intuition for forming connections.

As we have seen, the challenges and opportunities facing ministry leaders are many and varied. It is no simple task to lead a church in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a challenging context. From the significant decline and marginalization of the church, to widespread negative perceptions, assumed irrelevance of the church, the cultural influences of individualism, privatism, pluralism, relativism, and anti-institutionalism. The size and scope of the challenge facing ministry leaders cannot be overstated.

Weston Agor argues for the value of intuition for top leaders of organizations facing such complex situations: “where there is a high level of uncertainty; where there is little previous precedent; where reliable ‘facts’ are limited or totally unavailable; where time is limited and there is pressure to be right; where there are several plausible options to choose from, all of which can be plausibly supported by ‘factual’ arguments” (Agor, *Intuition in Organizations* 11). Considering the preceding discussion of the New Zealand context for ministry leadership, it is obvious these descriptors readily apply to the situation facing New Zealand ministry leaders. And, further, reinforces the value of intuitive wisdom for ministry leaders in New Zealand.

### **Leadership**

This section provides a very brief overview of pertinent leadership literature. Far from being exhaustive, the resources here were selected based on their relevance to the purpose of this study and prioritizing leadership literature from New Zealand or

Australia. The following paragraphs aim to integrate some of the themes from wisdom and intuition into the practice of leadership, provide some context specific considerations for leadership in New Zealand, and explore some interesting attempts at developing intuitive wisdom in leaders.

Leadership is often described in terms of outcomes and influence. However, there has also been a growing concern around leadership as more sensitive to those one leads; or, to serve them (DePree; Greenleaf). As such, leadership requires more than mere skill, it is also a matter of emotion, identity, and character; issues which are traditionally associated with the soul (Cammock, *The Dance of Leadership*). Peter Cammock has continued to issue the call for soul in leadership as both an academic and consultant in the field of business leadership (Cammock, *The Spirit of Leadership*). Notably, and of particular relevance for this study, Cammock is also from Christchurch, New Zealand. Cammock contends that the dominant theme of the business literature for the past twenty years has been the need for business leaders “to create and sustain high performance in the face of ever-increasing pressure and rapid change... What has changed is the prescription for high-performance leadership” (Cammock, *The Spirit of Leadership* 7). No longer is skilled task performance sufficient to meet the challenges of our time. What is required, Cammock proposes, is soul:

For the first time in modern organizational history, there is a call for leadership that has a certain flow and economy of means, leadership that not only performs all of the rational tasks of traditional organizational leadership but is underscored by personal qualities such as creativity, passion, vitality, spirit, and soul. (Cammock, *The Spirit of Leadership* 8)

Cammock advances a three-part definition of soul as including: (1) Emotion and feeling as opposed to rationality and intellect, (2) A spirituality that acts as a guide to our identity and place in the world, and (3) Conscience and character and moral qualities such as passion, integrity, courage, humility, and faith (ibid. 16). Hence, Cammock's work provides an excellent example of the kind of integration required of intuitive wisdom in leadership.

### **Wise Leadership**

Linking wisdom and leadership is well-attested in the literature and continues to generate applied research projects (Ahn; Morse; Peterson). Scholars agree that leaders need wisdom – some even suggesting leadership as a function of wisdom (Strom; Smythe and Norton, “Leadership: Wisdom in Action”). In his book, *Lead with Wisdom*, Mark Strom unpacks why it is important to lead with wisdom, how one leads with wisdom, and applies it to specific contexts of where one leads with wisdom. Wisdom is understood in terms of “reading the patterns of life” and one grows wise by being attentive to said patterns and “drawing conclusions that help us live well” (Strom loc 449). Such attentiveness prepares one to enact leadership in the moment despite changing circumstances or uncertainty. This practical wisdom has been coined, *phronesis*; which is distinct from *techne*, or “know how” (Smythe and Norton, “Leadership” 2). Smythe and Norton's study shows:

Leadership that exudes wisdom amidst uncertainty, opportunity and threat stays attuned to ‘what is.’ The nature of ‘who’ the leader is as a person lies at the heart of wisdom. When the ‘who’ is rooted in values respected by the community, is humble in a world that demands answers, and is

courageous in the face of darkness, then the leader is possessed of wisdom. Such a leader is attuned always to the play, the mood of the moment, and keeps their eyes scanning the far horizon. Leadership wisdom cannot be taught in a classroom. It can only be imbibed amidst the exhilaration and danger of play. (Smythe and Norton, "Leadership" 8)

Since leadership wisdom can only be learned through experience, the implications are that "emerging leaders need to be exposed to the play of leadership and to be mentored by experienced leaders who can share their wisdom" (1). An additional requirement to developing leadership wisdom is to be a person of good character. Strom devotes an entire chapter to character where he describes character in terms of dignity one carries through their inner life and relationships; and wise leaders also help people deepen integrity, trust, and perseverance (Strom loc 2946-3422). These themes prove consistent with the previous discussion of wisdom (see "Development of Wisdom" section above, pp. 44-54).

### **Intuitive Leadership**

Intuitive leaders pay attention to their interior as much as their exterior world. This has been described as paying attention to "internal data" as much as "external data," and learning to harness the power of intuition is essential for leading well in our current context (Townsend 14). Townsend's book lays out principles to help harness the power of values, thoughts, emotions, and relationships resulting in personal transformation that will enable one to leave as a whole person. However, such a journey is not step-by-step process. It requires learning to trust intuition; something we have been culturally conditioned to be skeptical of at best, or distrust at worst (Keel 256). The cultural

conditioning of western societies causes one to seek out experts, manuals, instructions, and plans to execute. Instead, Keel suggests, pastors and leaders who will best navigate the complex and changing world in which we live will develop postures allowing them to “listen to your life” (Keel 255–59). Keel offers nine postures instead of a plan to execute (228-254). Each of these aims to foster trust in intuition, which Keel anchors theologically in the life of Christ, saying, “In order for each of us and our communities to access this life that is offered and promised by Christ, we will have to trust God *in us* – personally and corporately. For it is *Christ in us* that is the hope of glory” (Keel 265). Hence, intuitive leadership means learning to trust intuition and following it.

Embracing the value of intuition in leadership continues to generate lots of research. Scholars have particularly focused on the importance of intuition for leadership decision making (Church; Hussey; McNaught; Jon H Moilanen; Sadler-Smith; Whiting). Others have explored the process of thinking with leaders, not just the product of their thinking, revealing lots of intuitive processing (Smythe and Norton, “Thinking”). Intuitive abilities enable leaders to be present in the moment and attuned to the most pertinent issues – even when shrouded in ambiguity and uncertainty. This ability to think in the present has been coined, “negative capability, which comprises patience and the ability to tolerate frustration and anxiety. This capability can help the leader to retain the capacity to think in the present moment” (Simpson and French 245). The goal being to offer plausible and sensible explanations, which Pye describes as part of the “daily *doing* of leading” (Pye 33). Hence, intuition serves leaders not only in generating new ideas or recognizing new opportunities, but also in navigating ambiguity, frustration, and anxiety when things are uncertain.

## Leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand

The cultural and societal influences on leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand are undeniable. While parts of them exist in other countries around the world, the makeup proves unique to New Zealand (Kennedy). Tracing some of the dominant cultural and societal influences reveals New Zealand's unique *biculturalism* (which, as previously mentioned, is currently undergoing a renaissance); a deep commitment to *egalitarianism* which goes beyond the sense of equal opportunity to the idea that people should be considered as equal in all aspects of life; and a *pragmatism* emerging from a self-image of a "country of rugged individualists" that shows itself in a practical, problem-solving approach to life (Kennedy 399–400). The GLOBE leadership study showed perceptions of leadership to be consistent with these influences:

This implicit [leadership] model combines inspirational enthusiasm ("sunshine"), low assertiveness, pragmatism, and perseverance. Low Power Distance and the strength of egalitarian beliefs mandate a style of leadership that is participative, grounded in the team, and provides the opportunity for shared success. (Kennedy 424)

It's also interesting to note the recognition of intuition-based decisions in this study: "Leaders must be prepared to make decisions firmly and resolutely, whether based on logic on intuition" (Kennedy 417). Kiwi leadership is based in the team, not outside it; values "straight-talk" above hype or exaggeration; and has an expectation of high-performance. While inspirational leadership is desirable in New Zealand, it is a form of inspiration that does not rely on charisma. Ken Parry states, "You can just about forget about being 'charismatic' in Australasia. Honesty will do. Honesty about what you stand

for will lead to credibility... having integrity will do wonders” (Parry 204). However, it has also shown that differences exist between Māori, Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent), and Pacific Island perceptions of good leadership (Pfeifer; Chong and Thomas). Variations in perception and leadership style are typically attributable to cultural differences, especially in regard to task-oriented behaviors (Chong and Thomas 289–90).

### **Developing Intuitive Wisdom in Leaders**

Since intuitive wisdom relies on the inner world of the leader and leaders lead from the inside out, then intentional leadership development must be congruent with this reality. This is the motivation behind Russell West’s “Reflex Model” of leadership development which aims “for transformation at the core of a person’s being, at the place where values and reflexes convert to observable leadership actions” (West 174). While West does not use the term, “intuition,” his use of *habitus* as the core element of his model is conceptually close enough to be of value for this study. *Habitus* refers to the ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that shape how one perceives and reacts to the world around them. It is not static in nature, but dynamic, allowing one to be socialized, influenced, and to change; or, in other words, *habitus* is formative of persons. And, interestingly, one of the pedagogical tools recommended in re-shaping *habitus* are provocative games. West and Martin show the “pedagogical significance and transformative potential of well-crafted games that surface hidden conation and *habitus* frameworks of participants” (West and Martin 62). In other words, provocative play causes the inner thoughts, motivations, reflexes to be surfaced in the game situation allowing them to be critically engaged and processed for leadership learning. Such an

approach not only challenges traditional methods of leadership education, but also helps bridge the gap between the learning environment (leadership classroom) and the actual context of leadership performance (West 213).

Based on the preceding discussion, it is clear that forming leaders with strong intuitive wisdom is vital. This is what prompted this research project and why the researcher went out to talk with leaders about how they understand and exercise intuition.

### **Research Design Literature**

The purpose of the research was to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, in order to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders. A qualitative, pre-intervention, multi-method research methodology was determined the best approach to achieve the purpose of this study. Tim Sensing says, “Qualitative research is grounded in the social world of experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience” (Sensing 57). Uwe Flick expands upon this understanding of qualitative research as analyzing experiences (of individuals or groups), practices, interactions and communications, and by analyzing documents (Gibbs x). And, therefore, as intuitive wisdom is both an experience and practice (exercise), a qualitative research design was employed.

The type of research in this project is pre-intervention. The study measures and describes the phenomena of intuitive wisdom in order to develop some “best practices” for the exercise and development of intuitive wisdom among ministry leaders. While the study offers suggestions and recommendations, it does not implement or measure these recommendations.

The study followed a two-stage process of determining a purposeful sample of leaders who were then invited to an in-depth interview. Purposive samples “select people who have awareness of the situation and meet the criteria and attributes that are essential to your research” (Sensing 83). In other words, people are selected for study based upon meeting specific criteria (Creswell, *Research* 185; Creswell, *Qualitative* 125–9; Silverman 104–5). The value of this approach is such “information rich” cases can provide greater depth to the data (Patton 230–46). In this case, a typology of intuitive wisdom in leadership was developed based upon the literature review and widely dispersed as an Email Nomination Request (see Appendix A). Nominees were subsequently invited to participate in a REI pre-qualifying survey conducted as an online survey using Google Forms. The REI is a psychometric tool designed to measure one’s preference for processing information between cognitive-analytical and experiential-intuitive approaches. Including this quantitative psychometric survey ensured that a purposeful sample was selected.

The sample leaders were then invited to an In-Depth Interview. The interview followed “a semi-structured protocol of predetermined questions asked in a particular sequence, with freedom to probe and explore for more depth” (Sensing 107). Data collected from the pre-qualifying survey and the in-depth interviews was then analyzed using a process of thematic coding to identify common themes and patterns (Creswell, *Research* 190–5).

### **Summary of Literature**

The literature review for this project began with a discussion of Biblical Wisdom in an effort to provide a biblical and theological framework for intuitive wisdom. It

established the nature of wisdom as grounded in a creation theology and wisdom worldview of significant prudential concern. The wisdom worldview understands Yahweh created the world with a certain order. The order is knowable to human beings, although not fully knowable, and the way one comes to know God and/or His ordering of creation is through the posture described as “the fear of the LORD” (Prov. 1:7, 9:10, 15:33, 31:30; Job 28:28; Eccl. 12:13). The literature showed the exercise of wisdom to be living skillfully in the world according to God’s order. Hence, wisdom is exercised in making good decisions, providing insights, anticipating outcomes, identifying implications, and in understanding what is required; all of which, the wisdom literature assumes is humanly possible or achievable. Such skillful living involves more than simply “knowing the most,” or being “the smartest person in the room.” Biblical wisdom entails something more than cognitive knowledge or amassing information. The biblical wisdom worldview suggests it is possible for one to live wisely in the world while recognizing full wisdom or understanding belongs to God alone. Wisdom requires cultivating a particular posture or disposition of the heart. A dominant theme in the development of wisdom was that of forming godly character, and in particular humility. Four specific wisdom practices were described to help foster the necessary disposition for growing in wisdom, “the fear of the LORD.”

The next section took an interdisciplinary approach to intuition research, including psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, management, and theology. Various definitions of intuition were considered before adopting Dane and Pratt’s definition: “intuition is a nonconscious process involving holistic associations that are produced rapidly, which result in affectively charged judgments” (Dane and Pratt 36). This helps to

identify what can be considered intuition, but also what is not. One notable contribution to this section was Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing. The literature showed decision making to be the primary context for the exercise of intuition where intuition's role in fear, expertise, heuristics and biases, and the speed of decision were explored. In the end, the scholarly consensus showed the need for integrating intuition with analytical processes. The development of intuition relies heavily on analytical processes but requires one first to overcome their own culturally-conditioned (western) skepticism and distrust of intuition. Four specific intuition practices were explored noting their similarities to the wisdom practices in the previous section. The exploration of intuition concluded with a brief survey of Christian literature on the topic showing Christian scholars have wrestled with the nature of intuition for a long time but, in the end, affirm it is a valuable means of knowing God and growing spiritually.

Next, a contextual section introduced Aotearoa New Zealand which was shown to be a complicated and challenging context. Historical and sociological research was discussed to give a sense of the influence and role of the church in New Zealand, revealing the dominant theme of decline and the marginalization of the church. More recently, however, scholars suggest a different narrative of the church changing, not dying. Research showed people may still be *believing* just not *belonging* to faith communities in the same way anymore. This section concluded by considering how the church might respond to the challenges and opportunities, illustrating the need for recognizing and developing intuitive wisdom among leaders (Quick).

Leadership studies were reviewed to explore how intuitive wisdom might be integrated into the practice of leadership. Peter Cammock's call for soul in leadership

provided a helpful (and local) example. Finally, qualitative research literature was consulted to strengthen and improve the research design of this project.

The literature review has significantly informed the research to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, in order to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders. The literature review has also shown that what is needed is work that links wisdom, intuition, and leadership in such a way that we can form leaders who can respond to the cultural situation of Aotearoa New Zealand.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this project. After a brief review of the nature and purpose of the project, the project's research questions are presented along with the instrumentation used to address each question. The ministry context of the project is then presented, followed by a description of the participants, the instrumentation employed, and the processes used for data collection and analysis.

#### Nature and Purpose of the Project

Ministry leaders often describe breakthrough moments in their personal lives or ministry leadership as the result of intuitive wisdom. Unfortunately, not much is known about intuitive wisdom in terms of how it functions, how it might be developed, or how to protect it from being abused or misguided. The purpose of the research was to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, in order to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders.

Due to the increasingly challenging and complex ministry context of New Zealand, harnessing the power while simultaneously protecting against the perils of intuitive wisdom is highly desirable. This project involved a two-step process: (1) Identifying Sample Leaders; and (2) Interviewing Sample Leaders. First, a purposive-sampling approach was used to determine suitability for the study. Once identified, the second step of the research process involved in-depth interviews with nineteen leaders.

The primary qualitative data for the project was drawn from these semi-structured interviews.

### **Research Questions**

In order to gain improved understanding of the nature, experience, exercise, and development of intuitive wisdom, the research was guided by four questions.

#### **RQ #1. How does intuitive wisdom inform the leadership decisions, problem-solving, and direction of the sample ministry leaders?**

The purpose of this question was to establish the credibility of the interviewee as one who regularly exercises intuitive wisdom and draw out pertinent examples or storytelling for closer examination. To collect data for this question, a researcher-designed semi-structured interview was conducted in person (see Appendix C).

Background and experience information identified formative experiences of intuitive wisdom. Questions 1.a-b addressed the leader's understanding of the nature and experience of intuitive wisdom. Questions 1.c-f addressed the leader's exercise of intuitive wisdom. And Questions 5.a-c provided opportunity for greater clarification or discussion regarding the leader's experience and exercise of intuitive wisdom.

#### **RQ #2. What language and/or processes are used to communicate intuitive wisdom to others on their team or in their congregation (sensemaking or rationalization process)?**

The purpose of this question was to identify any use of cognitive-analytical processes in clarifying and articulating intuitive wisdom. As above, a researcher-designed, semi-structured interview was conducted to collect data for this question (see Appendix C). Question 2.a addressed specific language or processes used to facilitate the

communication and understanding of intuitive wisdom. Question 2.b addressed research undertaken to justify intuitive wisdom. And Questions 2.c-d addressed results or outcomes of the interviewee's sensemaking process.

**RQ #3. Have the intuitive wisdom abilities of the sample ministry leaders improved over time? And, if so, what have been some of the most shaping influences (postures, practices, or experiences)?**

The purpose of this question was to identify ways in which intuitive wisdom was developed or improved. The in-depth interviews provided the primary data for this question. Question 3.a-b established whether or not the leader's intuitive wisdom abilities had improved over time. Question 3.c addressed influential elements in shaping one's intuitive wisdom. And Question 3.d addressed safeguards employed to protect intuitive wisdom.

**RQ #4. What common elements do these leaders use to successfully develop intuitive wisdom in emerging leaders?**

The purpose of this question was to identify best practices for developing intuitive wisdom among emerging leaders. Again, the in-depth interview provided the primary data for this question. Question 4.a addressed intentional approaches employed by the interviewee. Questions 4.b-c attempted to draw out examples and stories in order to discover unintentional approaches employed by the interviewee.

#### **Ministry Context(s)**

The sample leaders in this study are from a variety of contexts throughout New Zealand. They are from New Zealand's three major cities: Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. So, ministry contexts are predominantly urban and suburban, rather than rural

or regional. Twelve of the nineteen sample leaders serve in a pastoral leadership capacity in the context of a local church. Nine of the sample leaders serve in ministry leadership outside of the local church context, including regional or national roles within their denomination, theological education, chaplaincy, or NGO/parachurch organizations. Nine different denominations were represented. Yet, despite significant differences in local ministry contexts, some national trends proved consistent. Namely the challenge of leading and ministering in a post-Christian, highly secular society, and the need to raise up leaders who are well prepared to face these challenges.

The social and cultural context of New Zealand is an increasingly complicated one to navigate (as discussed in Chapter 2). As the literature revealed, it is no simple task to lead a church or ministry organization in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a challenging context. From the significant decline and marginalization of the church, to widespread negative perceptions, to the assumed irrelevance of the church, and the cultural influences of individualism, privatism, pluralism, relativism, and anti-institutionalism. The size and scope of the challenge facing ministry leaders cannot be overstated.

The need for raising up leaders who are well-equipped to face and navigate these challenges is greater than ever. The problem being that the way forward is largely uncharted territory and previous approaches to leadership development may no longer suffice. Leaders with intuitive wisdom abilities are required in order to perceive things in culture and society that others do not, recognize ways forward in terms of gospel witness and disciple making, and anticipate problems before they arise. Hence, without knowing specifics around what the future holds, developing leaders who have harnessed the power of intuitive wisdom will be well-positioned to navigate such uncharted territory.

## **Participants**

### **Criteria for Selection**

Seventy-six leaders were initially identified and nominated to participate in this study by their friends and colleagues in ministry. These leaders were nominated on the basis of matching the description of a leader who exercises intuitive wisdom to great advantage, who agrees that intuitive wisdom is a valuable leadership asset, and who believes intuitive wisdom can and should be developed among emerging ministry leaders (see “Email Referral Request” in Appendix A). Each of those seventy-six leaders were invited to complete the REI as an online survey. Fifty-seven leaders completed the online survey, from whom a sample of twenty leaders were selected for in-depth interviews. These twenty leaders were selected based on their mean score being four (4) or higher on both of the experiential subscales of the REI Inventory (EA and EE) (see Appendix B). One of the twenty pre-qualified leaders was unavailable to participate during the interview timeframe resulting in the final sample of nineteen interview participants.

### **Description of Participants**

The nineteen leaders come from a cross-section of the wider body of Christ in New Zealand. The nineteen leaders’ age range was from thirty to seventy years, and they represented nine different denominations. There were two females and seventeen males. The vast majority were of Pākehā/European descent, with one Pacific Islander. Of the nineteen, twelve were involved in pastoral leadership in a local church context, whereas the other seven were involved in a variety of other ministry leadership contexts including regional or national roles within their denomination, theological education, chaplaincy, or NGO/parachurch organizations. All nineteen leaders had completed some form of higher

education (post-secondary school), with four having completed some form of certificate or diploma-level training, nine completing undergraduate degrees, and six having pursued further postgraduate study (Masters or Doctoral work). Those interviewed were located in the three major cities throughout New Zealand with seven based in Auckland, one in Wellington, and eleven in Christchurch.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Potential participants were informed of the nature of the study through a series of informed consent forms and letter. Each consent form or letter included the title and a description of the project. Participants understood their participation was entirely voluntary and were able to withdraw their participation at any point. Consequently, additional consent was sought at each step as participants progressed through the various stages of the research (see “Instrumentation” below). A copy of the informed consent letter for interviewees is attached as Appendix D.

In order to protect the privacy and identity of participants, no specific names of persons, places, or other distinguishing characteristics of individual participants are reported in the study, including gender identifiers. Where individual responses are presented, generalized indicators have been used, such as, “Leader A,” “Leader B,” “Leader C,” etc. Raw data, including survey results, audio files, and transcripts of interviews, will never be shared or disseminated.

The researcher shared significant findings from his research in two settings: a postgraduate research luncheon with other postgraduate students and faculty at Laidlaw College’s campus in Christchurch and in a colloquium with D.Min. cohort colleagues and Asbury Theological Seminary faculty on Asbury’s Kentucky campus. Only research

findings were shared; no raw data including audio files, transcripts, and notes of interviews were ever dispersed.

Electronic data stored was stored on a password protected computer. Only the researcher and his wife had the password to the computer. The researcher's spouse aided with some of the transcription work and was the only other person (other than the researcher) with access to the raw data; in this case, audio files and transcripts. Any hardcopy data was kept in a locked file box in the researcher's office with the lock code in the sole possession of the researcher. All electronic data was permanently deleted, and any hardcopy data was shredded within 6-12 months after the conclusion of the research project.

### **Instrumentation**

Three instruments were used in the research project including an "Email Nomination," a "Pre-Qualifying Assessment," and an "In-Depth Interview." The Email Nomination and the Pre-Qualifying Assessment were used to identify and determine suitability of leaders for the purpose of the study. Or, in other words, establish a purposeful sample. The In-Depth Interview provided the primary data for exploring how intuitive wisdom informs the leadership decisions and direction of the selected leaders, but also how to develop intuitive wisdom among emerging ministry leaders. A copy of each instrument is included in Appendixes A-C.

The researcher-designed Email Nomination described an ideal candidate for this study and invited recipients of the email to nominate any ministry leader/s whom they consider to fit the description. The purpose of this step was to mitigate the risk of researcher bias through this step of randomization by removing it immediately from researcher's ability to control the sample leaders to be studied. Respondents sent through

names and contact details for each nominee. The researcher sent thank you notes along with a consent request for the respondent's identity to be shared with nominees.

The Pre-Qualifying Assessment used the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) administered as an online survey using Google Forms as the online platform. The REI was used as a validating psychometric to assess the nominee's preferences for information processing. The REI consists of forty questions using five-point Likert Scale ratings where: "1 = definitely not true of myself," and "5 = definitely true of myself." The forty questions are spread across four subscales consisting of ten items each. The purpose of this step was to verify whether or not the nominee exercised intuitive wisdom and to ensure purposive sampling. Nominees were invited to participate via an email link provided by the researcher. The survey included an introductory page indicating that participation is voluntary and providing the option to participate or not participate. A checkbox at the end of the instructions was used to indicate the participants' understanding and consent to participate in this portion of the study. These instructions were also repeated in the "Thank You" page upon completion of the survey. The Pre-Qualifying Assessment also collected the following demographic information: name, email address, phone number, age, gender, and additional demographic information related to the participant's ministry context such as role/position, voluntary or paid, full or part-time, location and scope of church/ministry (local, regional, national), size of church/ministry, education level achieved, and education format. This information was known only to the researcher and will never be shared or disseminated.

The researcher-designed In-Depth Interview followed a semi-structured format to collect qualitative data for coding and analysis. A copy of the In-Depth Interview

protocol is included in Appendix C. The purpose of the interview was to learn about the purposive sample leaders' understanding, experience, exercise, and development of intuitive wisdom. Each interview was conducted in-person in a convenient and private location for the participant. Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. These recordings were transcribed and sent to participants via email to allow opportunity for clarification or amendments along with a final consent question to confirm their willingness for the transcript to be used as part of the data in the study.

### **Pilot Test and Expert Review**

The researcher engaged one expert review on the design of the instruments used on this project. The researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Thomas Tumblin reviewed each of the instruments and revisions were made on the basis of his feedback. Revisions included slight rephrasing of the description in the Email Nomination, clarification of questions in the In-Depth Interview protocol, and adjustment of the interview length to a shorter timeframe to be respectful of the participants time.

One pilot test of the Pre-Qualifying Assessment (REI) was conducted as an online survey. The pilot test verified the smooth operations of the online platform and scoring accuracy.

### **Reliability & Validity of Project Design**

The research instruments utilized in this project were administered in a consistent manner. The two-step purposive sampling process involved the Email Nomination and Pre-Qualifying Assessment (REI). The Email Nomination was sent with the exact same wording and timeframe to a wide network of New Zealand ministry leaders through denominational and network leaders. The researcher did not nominate any potential

participants, hence, this randomization step removed the risk of researcher bias or manipulating the sample. This first step generated seventy-six nominees. The Pre-Qualifying Assessment (REI) invited participants to complete the REI as an online survey administered through Google Forms to ensure consistency. Responses were captured electronically and immediately exported into a Google Sheets (spreadsheet) for review and analysis. Fifty-seven of the seventy-six nominees completed the Pre-Qualifying Assessment, a 75% response rate.

The multi-method approach used in this study was deemed most appropriate for exploring the exercise of intuitive wisdom and ways in which it might be developed. The two-step purposive sampling process added validity to the study as participants had been identified by their peers as one who exercises intuitive wisdom to great effect, and also verified by the REI psychometric assessment. The REI played an important part in this study as a quantitative measurement, so participants were not selected solely on the basis of opinion. The REI has been used to assess preferences for information processing by distinguishing between two cognitive styles: a Rational style emphasizing a conscious, analytical approach; and an Experiential style emphasizing a pre-conscious, affective, holistic approach (Pacini and Epstein; Epstein). It has been widely used by scholars researching intuition and is shown to satisfy validity requirements of a psychometric assessment (Björklund and Bäckström). Further research shows the REI to be more reliable than other intuition measures; for instance, the Preference for Intuition or Deliberation scale (PID); or, the Agor Intuitive Management survey (AIM) (Ballová Mikušková et. al.; Akinci and Sadler-Smith, "Assessing"). Based upon their own reliability testing, Pacini and Epstein report high reliability scores for the REI scales:

Rationality,  $\alpha = .90$ ; Experientiality,  $\alpha = .87$  (Pacini and Epstein 1995). For these reasons, the REI was selected as a validated psychometric assessment to use in the purposive sampling for this study.

The In-Depth Interview followed a semi-structured interview protocol to ensure the same questions were asked of each sample leader (see Appendix C). A semi-structured interview was selected as the most appropriate way to explore the exercise of intuitive wisdom as it allowed participants to describe their own experience of intuitive wisdom. Tim Sensing suggests interviews allow people to share their own particular views and perspectives that would not otherwise be knowable to the researcher by observation. And, they “also recognize the legitimacy of their views” (Sensing 103). The researcher conducted all nineteen interviews and intentionally avoided giving any indication of agreement or disagreement during the interview in an effort to mitigate the risk of researcher-bias or influence. Interviews were recorded using the same digital audio recorder and transcribed using Temi (<http://temi.com>), an internet-based transcription service.

### **Data Collection**

The type of research in this project is pre-intervention. The study measures and describes the phenomena of intuitive wisdom in order to develop best practices for the exercise and development of intuitive wisdom among ministry leaders. While the study offers suggestions and recommendations, it does not implement or measure these recommendations. The research was conducted in two stages over a period of four months. The first stage of purposive sampling involved two steps, Email Nomination and Pre-Qualifying Assessment, and occurred during September 2018. The second stage

involved nineteen In-Depth Interviews with sample leaders during November and December 2018.

The study involved a qualitative approach despite the use of a quantitative measurement tool. The quantitative Pre-Qualifying Assessment (REI) measured participant's preference for information processing and was used to validate the purposive sampling process. Creswell states the distinction between quantitative and qualitative data is quantitative data involves random sampling, whereas qualitative data uses purposeful sampling:

Recognize that quantitative data often involve random sampling, so that each individual has an equal probability of being selected and the sample can be generalized to the larger population. In qualitative data collection, purposeful sampling is used so that individuals are selected because they have experienced central phenomenon. (Creswell, *Research Design* 220)

The qualitative In-Depth Interviews followed a semi-structured interview protocol to collect detailed views from participants (see Appendix C). Qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln as, "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 3). Hence, a qualitative approach made sense for this study which attempts to make sense of the phenomena of intuitive wisdom as experienced and exercised by ministry leaders.

During July and August 2018, the two researcher-designed instruments were developed and reviewed. The Email Nomination included a description of an ideal

candidate for this study. The descriptors used were based upon themes from the literature review. The In-Depth Interview protocol was developed specifically around the research questions for this project and informed by the literature review. These two instruments were reviewed by Dr. Thomas Tumblin (Asbury Theological Seminary) prior to initiating the research.

The first step of the purposive sampling stage was to send Email Nomination requests as widely as possible among networks of ministry leaders throughout New Zealand. Heads of denominations were approached and invited to share this with their clergy. Any networks accessible to the researcher directly, or by means of ministry colleagues were utilized. The email recipients were asked to respond with any nominations within a period of two weeks. Self-nominations were permissible; however, the researcher did not make any nominations. This meant the sample was immediately removed from the researcher's ability to control. This resulted in seventy-six nominees. Those making nominations received a follow up email thanking them for their nomination and confirming their willingness to be identified to their nominees.

The seventy-six nominees were then invited to participate in the second step of the purposive sampling stage. An email was sent inviting the nominees to participate in the Pre-Qualifying Survey (REI). Informed consent forms were embedded within the survey which was administered online via Google Forms. Responses were requested within a two-week timeframe. The researcher sent a response reminder one week after the initial request, and a second reminder two days before the survey closed. This resulted in fifty-seven respondents (75%); a very strong return rate. Respondents were thanked for

their time and participation and informed that, once results were confirmed, a sample of leaders would be selected to participate in In-Depth Interviews with the researcher.

Results of the REI were calculated and a sample of twenty leaders were selected on the basis of scoring an average of four (4) or above on both of the experiential subscales of the psychometric tool. This resulted in a purposive sample of leaders who were invited to interview. Their suitability for this study had been affirmed by: first, being nominated by a colleague or friend; and second, verified through the REI psychometric measurement.

The twenty sample leaders were then invited to participate in an In-Depth Interview. Due to schedule conflicts one leader was unable to meet within the designated timeframe and withdrew from the study. The researcher then arranged times for one-on-one interviews with the nineteen remaining leaders during November and December 2018. Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix C). Kvale offers this description of the nature and value of semi-structured interviews:

A semi-structured life-world interview attempts to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspectives. This interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees' lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena. It comes close to an everyday conversation, but as a professional interview it has a purpose and it involves a specific approach and technique; it is semi-structured – it is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire. (Kvale 10–11)

Because the nature of this study was not built around a shared understanding of intuitive wisdom, the ability to probe and explore was an important part of the interviews. And a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer freedom to probe and explore for more depth or clarification (Sensing 107). For these reasons, semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of leaders was determined the best means of answering the research questions in this study.

A digital audio recording of each interview was captured and later transcribed. Interview transcripts were forwarded to the interviewee for their review and an opportunity was given to make amendments or add further comments. Transcribing and reviewing occurred during December 2018 and early January 2019. As a result of the New Zealand summer holiday period, the researcher had to follow up several participants on this final step. In the end, only minor amendments were received from the interviewees. Each transcript was approved by the interviewee and consent was given to be included in the final data set for this study. The final data set included the results from the Pre-Qualifying Survey (REI) and Interview Transcripts.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis took a data-driven approach by focusing on themes emerging from the research data. To accomplish this, I first examined the transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews. While listening to the interview audio recordings, I followed along on the transcripts making notes in the margin. Patterns and themes began to emerge. I selected three transcripts and reread them highlighting specific portions of text. After doing this with three transcripts, I categorized and the common words, themes, and patterns that emerged and created codes for each one. I organized the codes according to

the four research questions for this study. I then coded the remaining transcripts, making sure to add new codes as required.

I developed a codebook using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Each code was given a definition and illustrative quotes were extracted from the transcripts. The codebook was examined in-depth and data was analyzed in light of the research questions. Throughout the analysis I made notes on the similarities and differences between data points within the same code/theme. These provided the primary insights and findings reported in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

Ministry leaders often describe breakthrough moments in their personal lives or ministry leadership as the result of intuitive wisdom. Unfortunately, not much is known about intuitive wisdom, how it functions, how it might be developed, or how to protect it from being abused or misguided. The purpose of the research was to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, in order to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders. This chapter describes the nineteen participants interviewed for the study and their demographic makeup. The coded qualitative data from interview transcripts for each of the research questions is then presented before concluding with a brief summary of the major findings.

#### **Participants**

Seventy-six leaders were initially nominated and invited to complete the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) as an online survey. Of those seventy-six, fifty-seven completed the online survey and a sample of twenty pre-qualified leaders was selected for in-depth interviews. These twenty leaders were selected based on their mean score being four (4) or higher on both of the Experiential subscales of the REI Inventory (EA and EE). One of the twenty pre-qualified leaders was unavailable to participate during the interview timeframe resulting in nineteen interview participants. The mean REI scores of all nineteen sample leaders are shown in Table 4.1.

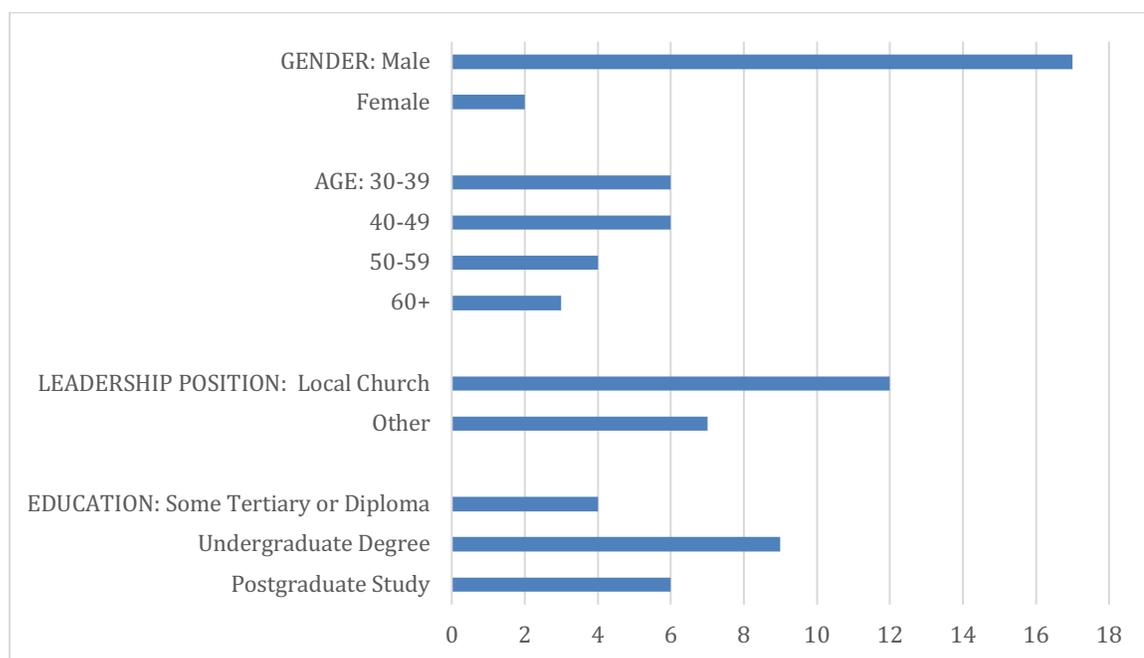
**Table 4.1: Mean REI Scores of Sample Leaders**

LEADER	RATIONAL	RA	RE	EXPERIENTIAL	EA	EE
LEADER A	4.65	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.3
LEADER B	3.8	3.7	3.9	4.65	4.8	4.5
LEADER C	3.25	3.4	3.1	4.5	4.9	4.1
LEADER D	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.3
LEADER E	3.6	3.4	3.8	4.65	4.5	4.8
LEADER F	3.9	3.6	4.2	4.2	4	4.4
LEADER G	3.9	3.7	4.1	4.8	4.6	5
LEADER H	2.4	2	2.8	5	5	5
LEADER J	3.75	4.2	3.3	4.4	4.4	4.4
LEADER K	3.3	3.2	3.4	4.1	4.1	4.1
LEADER L	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.15	4.3	4
LEADER M	4.55	4.3	4.8	4.1	4.1	4.1
LEADER N	2.7	2.8	2.6	4.35	4	4.7
LEADER O	4.15	3.9	4.4	4.25	4.5	4
LEADER P	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
LEADER Q	4.05	3.2	4.9	4.55	4.5	4.6
LEADER R	4.2	3.8	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.8
LEADER S	4.1	3.3	4.9	4.1	4.1	4.1
LEADER T	3.6	3.5	3.7	4.1	4.1	4.1

**KEY:** RA – Rational Ability                      EA – Experiential Ability  
RE – Rational Engagement                      EE – Experiential Engagement

The nineteen leaders interviewed came from a diverse cross-section of the wider body of Christ in New Zealand. They were between thirty and seventy years of age, represented nine different denominations, and included two females and seventeen males. Of the nineteen, twelve were involved in pastoral leadership in a local church context

whereas the other seven were involved in a variety of other ministry leadership contexts including regional or national roles within their denomination, theological education, or NGO/parachurch organizations. All nineteen leaders had completed some form of tertiary education (post-secondary school), with four having completed some form of certificate or diploma-level training, nine completing undergraduate degrees, and six having pursued further postgraduate study (Masters and Doctoral work). Those interviewed were located in the three major cities throughout New Zealand with seven based in Auckland, one in Wellington, and eleven in Christchurch. The demographic profile of the nineteen interviewees is represented in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1:** Demographics of Interview Participants (N-19).

### **Research Question #1: Description of Evidence**

How does intuitive wisdom inform the leadership decisions, problem-solving, and direction of the sample ministry leaders?

Qualitative data from nineteen in-depth interviews provided insights into how intuitive wisdom has been experienced and exercised by these leaders. My coded data analysis showed several common themes, but also disparate understandings of the nature of intuitive wisdom.

### **Formative Experiences**

Most of the leaders shared an experience of intuitive wisdom during their formative years from childhood to young adult (early twenties). Some offered multiple examples. A significant number of these experiences involved one's sense of vocational calling, often resulting in a departure from an existing vocational trajectory. For some, these were described using spiritualized language as an encounter with God, such as "God speaking" (Leader H) or "God leading" (Leader M), whereas for others it was described as an inner compulsion. For example, Leader E described being drawn out of a career as a lawyer and into vocational ministry as "a compelling moment in which I just knew I needed to be part of it." Leader L had a similar experience resulting in a career move away from banking to vocational ministry. And Leader P moved from working as a music teacher to pastor guided by an inner compulsion triggered by circumstances when the other pastors/leaders were unwilling to take up the role of point leader. In each of these circumstances, God was actively involved. The difference being in how some made explicit attribution to God, while others implied God's involvement.

Others expressed intuitive wisdom being involved in their call to ministry even from very young ages:

- 1) I probably sensed a call into ministry, which I could not articulate at the time, but could only articulate it later, upon reflection. It was at about

the age of five. I just sensed this call into the local church and into ministry... But when I look back, it was just, kind of, this intuition, I suppose you would say, that I just really feel drawn into this space.

(Leader N)

2) ... when I was about nine. So, from a young age I felt a call to teach and disciple. And so that's kind of what my journey into ministry has been. Yeah. I guess [it was like] a desire or attraction, like a moth to the light, of just wanting to teach and disciple... I couldn't explain it to people, which was hard... (Leader S)

3) I'd grown up... intuition, I guess. I had growing up saying I would never be a minister; right from the time that I was little... But who says that? Who thinks they have to proclaim to everybody that they will never be a minister unless there's something going on internally, calling you to that? (Leader K)

Feeling a sense of “fit” was another way several leaders described knowing they were in the right role for them. Leader J’s experience working with at-risk youth was “not a perfect fit but moving from there to ministry felt like I was being fully used and I was fully engaged.” Leader N described the experience of ministry as fitting “like a hand in a glove.” It is interesting to note that for each of the early formative experiences Leader N shared, intuitive wisdom dominated the sense of direction and decision-making.

Experiencing a ‘good fit’ was consistently described as something that was felt more than as a cognitive idea or thought. Or, in other words, these experiences were said to have ‘felt right’ more than ‘made sense.’

One surprising discovery was the high proportion of the sample leaders with backgrounds in the creative arts and/or media. Thirteen of the nineteen sample leaders told of their past experience in music, art, drama, or media to a reasonably high standard (more than a casual hobby). Five leaders had previously worked in the music industry, one studied at a drama school, and another was a comedian and writer. Three of the leaders described their previous work as radio broadcasters as heavily relying upon intuition. For example, Leader K said, “live talkback radio requires a huge amount of intuition... Because you’ve got to engage with the callers... have a sense of what a listener might be thinking... [and] have a sense of where you’re going to take that, flying by the seat of your pants.” Similarly, Leader T described working as a breakfast show radio host and having “to go with your gut... to perceive and feel.” The challenge was “trying to be a friend in a one-way conversation with people... while also trying to draw out conflict in any given situation... being both likable and creating conflict is a very intuitive thing.” While not all of those with creative backgrounds explicitly referenced it as formative in their experience of intuitive wisdom, most did.

Finally, eleven of the nineteen leaders articulated the significant influence of others on their own experience and exercise of intuitive wisdom. This influence was described in two main ways – by example, and by affirmation. Interviewees readily identified role models, whom they sought to emulate, from their formative years and, in a couple of instances, negative examples they learned to avoid. Eight of the interviewees referred specifically to the exercise of intuitive wisdom in the life and leadership of their mentor/s. Leader O’s father displayed amazing ability in pastoral situations to “know just what to do or say.” Leader G’s most influential mentor was said to be “incredibly

intuitive.” And role models were often described as “seeing things in me” that others didn’t see (Leader C, Leader M, Leader Q).

Mentor-type figures also had a significant influence through their encouragement or affirmation of the interviewees during their formative years. A number of leaders acknowledged their parents as a significant voice affirming their sense of intuitive wisdom at young ages. For instance, Leader S’s parents support and belief (even when others didn’t) gave a greater sense of confidence and assurance to follow the sense of calling: “I had parents who were very proactive and so they got a tape recorder and I used to do sermons into the tape recorder. And so, from a young age I felt a call to teach and disciple.” Leader Q’s mentor was described as “very significant in my life” in affirming and giving opportunities as a young leader. Overall, the data clearly shows that affirmation by other people was a powerful force for the interviewees in accepting intuitive wisdom as part of who God made them to be, but also learn to embrace it as “an acceptable way to lead” (Leader T).

### **The Exercise of Intuitive Wisdom**

The exercise of intuitive wisdom resulted in an ability to see gaps, anticipate opportunities, and foresee new direction/vision. This was by far the most common theme in the interview data. All nineteen leaders shared stories or examples of seeing a way forward amidst a wide variety of circumstances where others did not. Some saw opportunity in terms of vision/direction, projects, and new programs. Some saw opportunity to pioneer a new ministry. Some saw opportunity to move forward in terms of property and buildings. Some were able to predict outcomes. Some were able to anticipate problems or critique. Some saw opportunity and potential in people that others

did not see. And some saw deeper needs in people's lives. What follows is a small sampling of the abundant examples in the data:

- 1) I'm really good at discerning the right people... and spotting giftings where other people can't see them. I can see that this person is really great over here. No one else is going to identify that because it's linked with that [bad] thing, but if I address that issue... [she or he will be amazing]. (Leader Q)
- 2) I said, 'I think this thing has real legs. I think it's more than an [annual event]... we're getting speaking requests from all over the place. I think there's a massive set of problems that [ministry organization] is not; it's not its mission to solve... so it might be time for a change. (Leader R)
- 3) When I do consultancy with local churches or with other charitable organizations, what typically happens is I will form a really quick view from reading the data or listening to people. Like, sometimes within seconds, sometimes minutes ... and I'll see the pieces drop into place... and most of the time it turns out to be right. (Leader E)
- 4) I had a sense that there was something missing in terms of [ministry organization] and what they were doing at the time. They were fundraising really well, but they weren't doing a great job of connecting the dots for people of faith in New Zealand. So, I said, 'Hey, I get the sense that there's this gap here for you...' He said, 'that sounds really good. Would you write your own job description?' So, I did and they gave me the job. (Leader K)

- 5) I've always seemed to know what it [church] needs to look like in the next few years and that's really driven me the whole way through... My view is, well, if I can't see what or where we need to be in five years' time, I'm probably not the [one] to be leading in the next five years. (Leader P)
- 6) My gut feel was for the next year or longer we need to focus on, 'In Christ Alone.' It was in a meeting when someone dropped that line and I just went, 'Woah! That feels like a really great summary of where we need to be.' And that wasn't even in the context of talking about the next season for the church... [and it all came together in that moment]. (Leader A)
- 7) You pretty much know where it's going to end up, but you have to go through the consultation process... and, I guess intuitively, I tend to know where it's going to end up and what people are going to say. (Leader L)

Other examples of moving forward involved knowing when to end, or leave, or bring something to a conclusion: "I led a small mission agency for eight years and succeeded in helping wind it up, which is what I thought it should be doing all along" (Leader F). "I have always made the choice to leave before the next step was clear, or before circumstances forced or other people were suggesting... In each case, there were people who thought it was premature to do this, but I just had a sense of, 'Yeah, I've done what I was meant to do and now it's for somebody else to take it forward...'" (Leader B).

And, further examples showed interviewees knowing just what was needed in order to either move things forward or to avoid future pitfalls:

- 1) Sometimes I can just see where it's leading and have a gut feeling about it... and I think there's a few situations where I go, 'this is so avoidable.' And so, I'm learning to be more confident in trying to avoid something that hasn't actually happened, but I think will happen.  
(Leader S)
- 2) [When interviewing/hiring people] I just sit there and think, 'this isn't going to work.' I can just tell. I can usually tell within five minutes.  
[Whereas, other times] I will meet people and think, 'you're going to have something to do with our future... there's something about you...'  
(Leader G)
- 3) [In the context of board meetings, others would say...] intuitively I just name stuff... I put names to stuff that other people feel, but they can't find names for... and find ways ahead in the midst of complicated situations... intuitively I seem to know and anticipate stuff that other people don't see. (Leader B)
- 4) And when they're not going deep enough, I will start to steer things... because you can tell when people are just skimming the surface and not getting to the deeper issues. (Leader H)

The ability to anticipate a way forward or preempt issues that others did not see was the most common way in which leaders exercised intuitive wisdom in their ministry

leadership. However, while this was a shared theme among the sample leaders, the experience of intuitive wisdom was not.

### **The Experience of Intuitive Wisdom**

Leaders described their experience of intuitive wisdom in a number of different ways: gut feelings, inexplicable knowledge or insight, feeling uneasy, and the role of hindsight.

#### *Gut Feelings*

More than half of the sample leaders (twelve) referred to their experience of intuitive wisdom as a “gut feeling” or “gut instinct.” Leader R’s experiences of gut feelings were described as a “quite instinctive conviction that something’s the right way to go.” Leader K bases almost all major decisions on gut feeling. And both Leaders S and T would often refer to having a “hunch” interchangeably with “gut feeling.”

#### *Inexplicable Knowledge or Insight*

Several leaders described their experience of intuitive wisdom as inexplicable insight or illumination by which they knew something with deep conviction, and often compelled them to action. Leader L told a story of knowing they needed to purchase adjacent property for their church’s future. Leader G shared a couple of experiences of profound insight coming through dreams. And both Leaders E and M told of complicated transitional seasons in their personal lives where they “subconsciously knew” something with certainty. Some of these experiences were directly attributed to God, but not all.

#### *Feeling Uneasy*

A bad or negative feeling of discomfort or uneasiness was another way the sample leaders described their experience of intuitive wisdom. This was typically the case when

sensing that something was wrong. Leader O shared several examples of feeling uncomfortable around a particular person or situation that later proved to be for good reason. Leader F stated that “despite all the data stacking up on a particular candidate, I felt terribly uneasy about appointing that person.” Leader G spoke of feeling really uncomfortable about certain strategic plans and at times described it as a “check in my spirit.”

### *Hindsight*

Nine of the nineteen sample leaders said they had difficulty identifying intuitive wisdom in the moment, and it was only in hindsight that it became clear for them. Leader H told of a major life changing circumstance and “feeling unsure whether I was experiencing intuitive wisdom, depression, or a mid-life crisis.” In hindsight, Leader H reflected, it was likely a combination of all three. Leader J told of some property decisions their church made that, at the time, was considered “common sense,” but later came to acknowledge it as intuitive wisdom. And, Leader L stated it was difficult to describe intuitive wisdom and was only able to describe it in hindsight.

### **Defining Intuitive Wisdom**

While each of the sample leaders could readily identify the exercise of intuitive wisdom in their ministry leadership, as with the experience of intuitive wisdom, most had a difficult time defining or describing what it actually is. Leader P stated not having ever thought about it until asked in the interview. And, hence, didn't know what intuitive wisdom was: “I can do it, I just haven't got a clue how.” Leader H was unsure how to define it. And, struggling to articulate a definition, Leaders J and Q described it as simply following “the vibe” or gut feeling.

The data shows a range of diverse understandings of intuitive wisdom. Four of the sample leaders referenced theoretical understandings of intuition including tacit knowledge (Polanyi) and the mental scanning process known as thin slicing (Gladwell). Leader O described it as the “forming of an impression,” or “some kind of illumination... where all of a sudden something has light on it.” This was understood as “some sort of fusion between the affective and the cognitive.” Leader C suggested intuitive wisdom involves “reading far more than the information presented.” It also involves reading the wider and implicit cues. Leader A described intuitive wisdom as a whole-being experience or “wholeheartedness... and then having the mix of risk and courage to follow it.” This notion of intuitive wisdom as a catalyst of agency was shared by six leaders. And, three different leaders described intuitive wisdom as providing “a sense of coherence” (Leader R), or rightness/appropriateness.

Admittedly, no consensus emerged to define or describe intuitive wisdom, but there were two common themes among the diverse understandings shared. The first and most common understanding suggested intuitive wisdom involved “having a sense of what needs to be said and what needs to be done without necessarily being able to explain how you arrived at that” (Leader B). This definition was common among ten of the sample leaders. Leader R offered, “I jump to conclusions and have to backfill the reasons.” Leader E described it as “a conclusion, decision, idea, or impression... [that] happens quickly and consciously, but I’m unaware of the process by which that happens.” Leader T defined it as, “something that you know in your bones but you couldn’t say out loud why you know it... it’s a hunch or an instinct that is often beyond your cognitive awareness.”

The second most common theme came from seven of the sample leaders who explicitly linked their understanding of intuitive wisdom with being led by God or hearing God's voice. Leader K described intuitive wisdom as tuning into the Holy Spirit's whispers. Both Leader M and Leader G began by describing intuitive wisdom as sensing God's leading and testing it in prayer, however as the interviews progressed, they offered a further dimension suggesting intuitive wisdom also involves a natural or human element. In the end, they both wanted to hold together the combination of the natural and supernatural.

### **Intuitive Wisdom vs. Discernment**

The linking of intuitive wisdom and being led by God or hearing God's voice invited the opportunity to explore discernment. This was not part of the initial interview protocol but was included after the first three interviews. Interviewees were asked to discuss the relationship between intuition and discernment. Were they the same? Similar? Different? Sixteen of the nineteen sample leaders offered responses to this question. Leader O suggested a spectrum as a helpful way of framing these responses, rather than considering the options as mutually exclusive.

On the one end of the spectrum, Leaders H and J both said they were unable to distinguish between intuition and discernment. They understood them to be so enmeshed or intertwined that they were unable to be separated. Leader D stated there probably was a difference between intuition and discernment but was unable to name it. On the other end of the spectrum, Leader R stated there was a difference in that intuition is the initial sense that pulls you in and discernment then becomes the process by which the intuition is tested. Leader E suggested a more physical response (unprovoked elevated heart rate)

associated with discernment than with intuition. Leader T draws the distinction around spiritual gifting in that discernment is a spiritual gift or invisible work of the Holy Spirit and states, “I could not ground my intuitive wisdom into that [spiritual gifting] space... it’s more of an unconscious competence thing.” Leader Q differentiates between them on the basis that discernment serves the specific purpose of edifying the church, whereas intuition can have a much broader scope.

More than half of the sixteen leaders indicated intuition and discernment were not the same thing but were closely linked, “I see my intuition as a gift from God that the Holy Spirit works within. I don’t see my intuition as the Holy Spirit per se, because I can get it wrong” (Leader A). Leader M suggested an understanding of intuition as a subset of discernment and continued on to say intuition occurs in the moment whereas discernment involves more time. A number of different leaders differentiated on the basis of intuition being an individual experience, whereas discernment is a collective experience involving other people.

In summary, the data showed that the ability to see or anticipate what others did not (such as a way forward, or preempt problems, or clarifying issues) was the most common way in which leaders exercised intuitive wisdom in their ministry leadership. However, leaders differed in their understanding of the nature and experience of intuitive wisdom.

### **Research Question #2: Description of Evidence**

What language and/or processes are used to communicate intuitive wisdom to others on their team or in their congregation (sensemaking or rationalization process)?

Qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews provided the primary answer to this question; however, correlated quantitative data in the form of REI responses offered additional insight into answering this question. My coded data analysis shows that the sample leaders repeatedly identified the following elements as part of their rationalization process.

### **Sensemaking by Reflection and Processing**

Twelve of the Interviewees described practices of self-reflection or intentional mental processing of events in order to make sense of their intuition. Nine of those leaders described their practice of sensemaking as active, whereas three described their practice as more passive in nature.

Active processing involved practices like prayer, making time and space, writing, and internal dialogue. Some of these occurred in the moment of experiencing intuition, whereas others required stepping out of the immediate moment in order to reflect. Leader M spoke of adopting a posture of prayer in the moment. Leader G described the value of conversational prayer asking God questions to test and clarify intuitive wisdom. Both Leaders E and O said finding time and space for prayerful reflection helped them most. Leader O explained how time and space away from normal rhythms and routines consistently proved generative for ideation and was “often when lots of things will start to bubble up within me.” Leader O continued to underscore the significance of this point saying, “The ability to take time aside in prayerful reflection, I think, can really actually build one’s intuitive capacity.” In terms of active self-reflection, Leader R spoke of the need to “listen to yourself” and be attentive to any “strong internal reactions.” Reflection

upon these cues (often aided by reflective questioning) provided the process to move something from unconscious to conscious.

Other forms of active reflection and processing involved the use of writing. For Leader L this took a more formal process of writing position papers which would often then be shared with others. For others, less formal forms of writing were used. Leader S frequently uses mind maps: “I will write something I feel quite strongly about and then write everything associated with it around [gesturing to whiteboard] to see if I can see patterns in order to communicate it.” Leader Q writes lots of notes, diagrams, pictures, and lists. Leader T spoke of writing headlines to capture key phrases or key quotes and then seeks to form them into some kind of framework (often using simple diagrams: triangles, squares, etc.). And others engage in a form of internal dialogue as a means of understanding intuition. Leader K stated, “I practice conversations in my head all the time... it’s just how I process. And if something still stands or feels solid after going through that internal dialogue for a while, then it will come out.”

Passive processing was described using phrases like, “mulling things over,” or “subconscious processing.” Leader T offered a very descriptive journey of learning to trust this kind of subconscious processing:

I've found that the way my cognition works is: I feed key data in, then I step away and just allow my subconscious to process. [It's] almost like a computer doing stuff in the background, and then at an unknown time, it's like the oven goes, 'ding!' And I discover that there are now [well-formed thoughts and structure, almost like] bullet points of how the thing starts to fit together... I'm not aware of it at all. And I've had to, slowly, learn to

trust that if I can feed the right problem into the front end of the machine, and then trust that my intuition's working away, more cognitive understanding pops out at the other end. But I'm quite unaware of that processing... it's not a very active mulling.

Interestingly, both Leader C and Leader Q offered very similar descriptions of their own process. Leader C described the experience as different thoughts rising to the top with a final outcome of "forming a case." And Leader Q added a longer period of feeding in information on the front end (admittedly a somewhat active beginning to the process) but also admitted to not being a very pleasant person to be around during this process.

### **Sensemaking by Collaboration**

Many of the sample leaders described collaboration with other trusted people to be part of their sensemaking process. Talking things out with others proved beneficial for testing, validating, refining, and improving upon intuitive wisdom. On the one hand, several leaders were quick to share their intuition with others as a way of testing or validating it. When becoming aware of an intuition, Leader R would often "start describing it to the team and see if it resonates with them." Leader K will quickly "throw an idea on the table... and then watch how it lands for people." And, based on how people respond, will determine how these leaders progress forward with the idea (or not). Leader R further added walking out of a meeting and straight into a private conversation with a trusted colleague to talk things over and test intuition. Finding trusted people was a common theme and Leader J will often seek out other senior leaders with a proven track record to test intuition. On the other hand, Leader T is much slower to share intuition and very guarded/selective about who to talk to. Leader C is also slower and more selective in

who they talk to adding, “I’ve learned it is smart to test with others, but that’s not my natural inclination.”

Going a step further, the data showed several leaders not just “testing” intuition with others, but actually seeking out others to collaborate with them in refining and improving their idea/s. Leader S relies heavily on the input of others to bring clarity and exhibits very high trust in that process. Leader P described a longstanding, close, and strategic working relationship with another staff pastor who brought the analytical refinement needed to implement big picture vision. Leader D admitted to an almost complete dependence on other people to help tease out and clarify intuition; and actually, showed no evidence of self-reflection or processing individually. Leader D even offered a theological claim for this approach, “I just really believe that if the same Spirit that dwells in you dwells in me then there should be some continuity.”

Further insight was offered in terms of inviting collaboration from a wider leadership team. Leader R said it was important to regularly invite pushback, challenge, and for the team to question things. Furthermore, it was important for Leader R to hold intuitive wisdom lightly and acknowledge that ideas will journey and progress through changes as it is worked on. Leader P spoke of the value of maintaining “a high culture of review providing opportunity for the team to feed into that.” Leader A intentionally solicits collaboration from their core leadership team to help clarify intuitive wisdom: “We meet once a week and we will bounce everything around... and by no means do my hunches always win; not at all. Sometimes there’s far better thoughts in the room and it gets changed or rearranged.” A similar process is followed by Leader G who often arrives quickly at a conclusion but then intentionally slows things down to give others time for

their own processing/reflection and to contribute. The end result, according to Leader G, is often “way better than the original thing I came up with. And the good thing is that they all own it more deeply because they’ve played a part in putting different bits and pieces into it.” In order to collaborate well, leaders spoke of the need for shared understanding and common language.

### **Sensemaking through Common Language**

Several leaders shared language tips and tools they have found most helpful in explaining intuitive wisdom to others. Some suggested it starts simply by sharing what their experience of intuition was like in hopes of building understanding with members of their team. Leader O said, “I’ve tried to articulate what it’s like for me to operate in this way... acknowledging how difficult it is and the margin of error... and being aware of my own weaknesses and anxieties around not always getting it right.” Leader D underscored the importance of sharing with vulnerability and transparency. And Leader F seeks to build mutual respect, “I value your perspectives. These are my perspectives... Let’s use our respective strengths. I respect your approach and I hope you will respect mine. I can’t quantify everything.” Leader S offered the interesting suggestion of giving a suitable title to the role played by intuitive wisdom as a way of explaining it and making room for it to operate within a church context.

In terms of the specific language used to communicate intuitive wisdom, leaders had some differing responses. Some spiritualized the language to say, “I think God is saying this... or, I think that the Spirit might be leading us here” (Leader S). It is interesting to note, however, that those leaders who did use spiritualized language were also quick to insist their use of such language be done tentatively, rather than forcefully

as “Thus sayeth the Lord” (Leader G). During the interview, Leader S came to the realization that the use of spiritualized language was “in order to get heard... Because maybe they can handle the mystery of it better if you say, ‘I think the Spirit might be leading us here.’”

Other leaders sought to use particular language cues to make space for intuitive wisdom to be expressed (Leader C). Leader O uses language of “I’m sensing” or “something is stirring” to indicate intuitive wisdom as something to hold a little more firmly than a random idea on the one hand, and yet less than the direct word or leading of God on the other hand. Leader S has often felt a great deal of pressure to present intuitive wisdom as a complete package, and has recently found great freedom: “I’m learning not to feel that pressure but to present it in terms of ‘where I’m up to’ and then just... trust the process from there.” Leader B shared the importance of learning to communicate in different ways than your own preferred mode of communicating. This means, “the people who are analytical need rational reasons” and as many as you can give them; whereas, “if you just offer rational stuff for people on the other end of the spectrum they’ll think, ‘this is just boring... I want to be fired up!’” (Leader B).

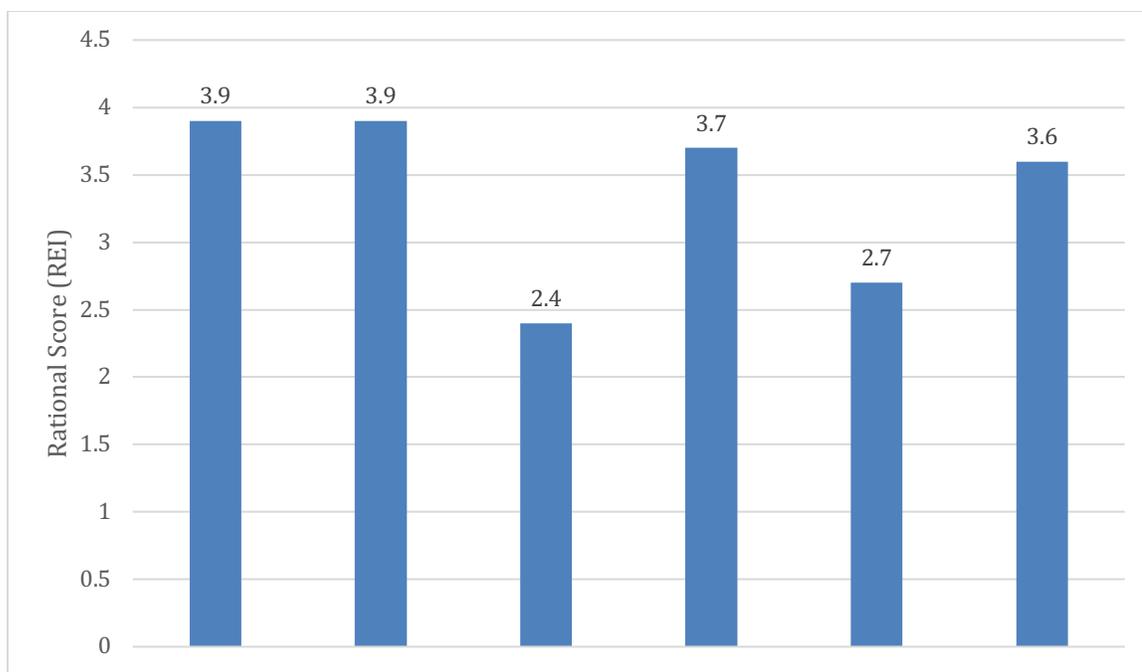
Leader A offered the insightful comment that postgraduate study in Sociology coupled with extensive study and training in Ignatian Spirituality has provided a language for talking about intuitive wisdom. The tools of sharper or more precise language around intuitive wisdom “allows people to listen a little longer” than if one were to simply say, ‘I just feel like...’ (Leader A).

### **Sensemaking through Research**

Five of the sample leaders engaged in some form of research in order to test, validate, and strengthen the rationale of their intuitive wisdom. Leader G said there is an internal joke around their leadership circles because despite often going on gut feel, Leader G has also earned a reputation “for doing an enormous amount of research about anything we do. Which almost sounds like a contradiction” (Leader G). Leader R will quickly jump to conclusions based on intuitive wisdom and then uses various research methods to test whether the conclusion was right. And Leader N talked about not feeling comfortable or ready to bring intuitive wisdom to other levels of leadership without having garnered sufficient supporting facts from research.

### **Undeveloped Sensemaking Process**

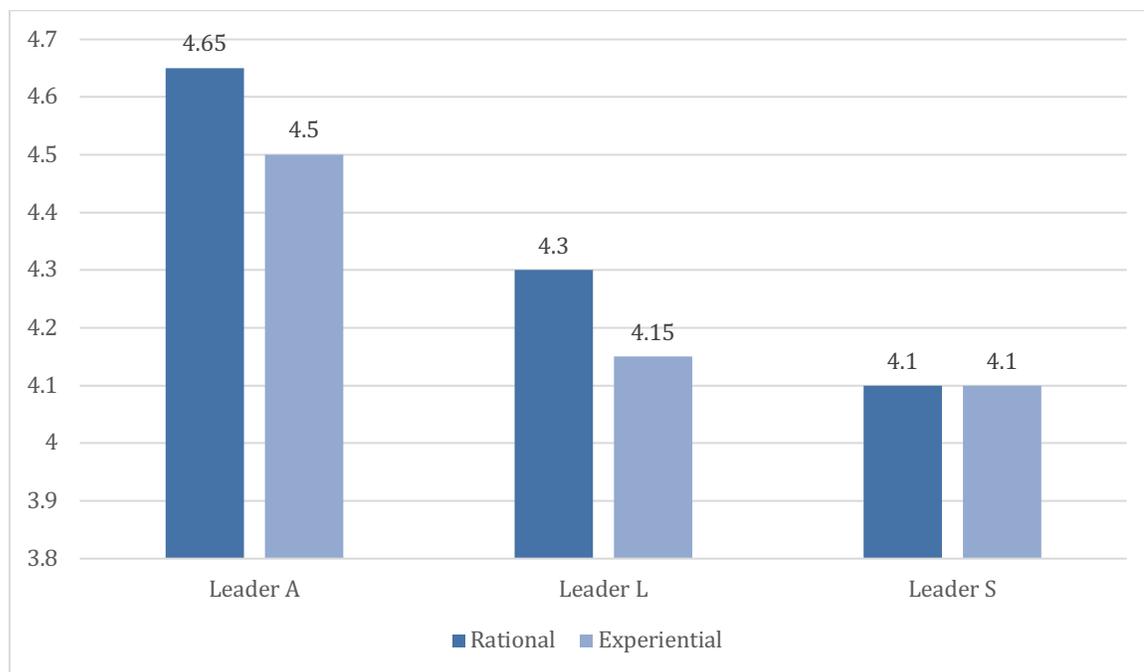
Six of the sample leaders indicated a lack of intentional effort to clarify or justify their sense of intuitive wisdom. Leader F confessed, “No, I haven’t spent a lot of my life thinking about how I process stuff. I just get on and do it.” While Leader F and Leader N managed to articulate some of the ways they process their intuition, it was clearly undeveloped and ad hoc in nature. And it is interesting to note that each of these six leaders had scores lower than four (4) on the Rational scale of the REI; with two scoring significantly lower than the rest with scores of 2.4 and 2.7 respectively. A representation of the combined RA and RE scores for these six leaders is shown in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2:** Rational Scores (REI) for Six Leaders

Three of the sample leaders, on the other hand, articulated a clear, step-by-step process for sensemaking. For example, Leader L outlined a four-step rationalization process involving (1) incubation period of personal reflection and prayer, (2) writing it out often as a position paper, (3) testing ideas with a few select people, and (4) inviting collaboration from wider team to refine and improve original idea. Leader A described a similar four step process for sensemaking: (1) tuning in and being attentive to cues, (2) daily prayerful reflection often involving journaling, (3) allowing time to test intuition and, if it continues to grow, (4) test and collaborate with other key leaders. For Leader S, the process followed a series of filtering questions: “(1) Does it align with God’s Word? (2) Has someone else identified or named it? (3) Has it come up more than once?” And, interestingly, each of these leaders scored higher than four (4) on the Rational scale of the REI. In fact, two of the three had higher R scores (4.65 and 4.3) than they did E scores (4.5 and 4.15 respectively); whereas the third had the same scores across both scales

(Leader S). A representation of the combined Rational and Experiential scores for these three leaders is shown in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3:** Rational and Experiential Scores (REI) for Three Leaders

In summary, the data showed that time and space for processing and reflection, collaboration with other people, and developing some common language were helpful ways to clarify and explain intuitive wisdom. The data also revealed the intriguing correlation between interviewees with higher Rational scores (REI) being more adept at articulating a rationalization process, whereas those with lower Rational scores (REI) were less able to articulate ‘how’ they made sense of their intuitive wisdom.

### **Research Question #3: Description of Evidence**

Have the intuitive wisdom abilities of the sample ministry leaders improved over time? And, if so, what have been some of the most shaping influences (postures, practices, or experiences)?

To answer this question, qualitative data was collected from in-depth interviews with nineteen sample leaders. My coded data analysis shows that the sample leaders have a growing confidence in their intuitive abilities and identified several postures, practices, and experiences as helpful in improving the exercise of intuitive wisdom. These are presented below as five thematic learnings.

### **Learning to Trust**

When asked if their intuitive abilities had improved over time, the vast majority of interviewees responded, “Yes,” but it was a qualified ‘yes.’ What had grown or improved over time was the leader’s confidence or trust in their intuitive abilities. In other words, “I don’t know if they’re improving or if I’m listening better” (Leader D). Interviewees conveyed similar responses saying, “I think I just know how to understand them more” (Leader C). Leader A described the difference was less about intuitive abilities improving, and more about confidence or trust in them strengthening. And, because a number of leaders understood this as fundamentally related to who God made them to be, it was also described as “becoming more at ease with myself” (Leader H). Leader F said, “I’ve actually learned to respect it [intuition]. It’s part of how God has wired me and it’s important that I use it appropriately.” This journey of learning to trust intuition further necessitated growth in self-awareness.

Two leaders offered particularly revealing insights into how their self-awareness has grown as part of learning to trust intuitive wisdom:

- 1) I have only recently learned to trust it [intuition]... it took a while for me to feel comfortable accepting, ‘Well, that’s just how I’m wired. So, I best get onside with how I am rather than let my anxiety push me

around.’ And now [I have to] make sure my emotional woundedness has a clear voice and that it’s separated from this intuitive thing that’s bubbling up... [because] one of my core lies is that ‘I am my ideas.’ And so, when [my] ideas are rejected, it can feel like something deep in [my] identity is being rejected... and that’s where I can become overly-defensive... and bad behavior can occur. And this is particularly dangerous if you are emotionally unwell. (Leader T)

- 2) I am really good at building coherence, and recognize I might also have some self-deceiving tendencies. So, while I would never intentionally lie to or deceive my board, my ability to backfill rationale quickly enables me to fill the gap. For instance, someone may challenge me, and I’ll fill in a plausible explanation which I may have made up on the spot. (Leader R)

Greater awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses proved to consistently strengthen one’s confidence and trust in the exercise of intuitive wisdom.

### **Learning Christlike Character**

Forming godly character proved to be, by far, the most common influence on improving one’s exercise of intuitive abilities. Some leaders described this in terms of biblical and theological understandings. For example, Leader N quoted John the Baptist, “He must increase and I must decrease” (John 3:30) and explained how this means that as the character of Christ is increasingly formed in Leader N, the more trustworthy Leader N’s intuition will be: “as He increases in my life... that the intuition ought to be trusted more now than what it may have been fifteen years ago when there was more of me in the

mix” (Leader N). Or, offering a more theological framework for character formation, Leader S said:

I really do believe that the Father has sent the Son who unites us to Him and we’re united through Christ by the Spirit. And that Spirit draws us into this active participation... and so if I am to participate in His work, all of me participates. Every part of me is wrapped up in His story. So, surely God would use that intuition, which feels very natural to me, to be how the Holy Spirit meets me.

Others described character formation on the more pragmatic grounds of regular engagement in spiritual practices. Scripture immersion was the most common spiritual practice. Three leaders acknowledged contemplative spiritual practices of silence, solitude, and stillness as helping to improve intuitive wisdom. For example, Leader K said, “I dove into those practices and I think those practices matured it [intuition] quite a bit. They slowed me down and made me more aware of what was going on internally.” The Prayer of Examen<sup>3</sup> was named by three leaders as significant in helping them identify and process intuition (Leader A, Leader K, Leader T). Leader E described the value of doing some work around “vocational calling and developing a pattern of life... from a paradigm of wise living sourced in the wisdom literature.” The end result was “learning to be more courageous... own more of who you are and having the practices in place to live that out consistently” (Leader E). In the end, regular and consistent

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<sup>3</sup> The Prayer of Examen involves prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God’s presence and discern his direction for us. This prayer practice was described by St. Ignatius of Loyola in his *Spiritual Exercises*. For more information see *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works (Classics of Western Spirituality)*, or <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>

engagement in spiritual practices which enabled one to live close to God proved powerful in nurturing intuitive wisdom. Leader S put it this way:

When I haven't been engaged in spiritual practices, my intuition can come more from my own desires than a life lived with God... [whereas] when you do have strong spiritual practices, you can also trust where your intuition is coming from, and that, to me, is very important.

Humility proved to be the particular character attribute leaders identified as most valuable in shaping intuitive wisdom. Sixteen of the nineteen Interviewees specifically encouraged growing in humility. Leader P stated, "growing in Christlike character demands humility and servanthood, as we see in Philippians 2." Leader M said, "humility is the very best safeguard for intuition" and continued to unpack an understanding of humility as "recognizing that you have genuine power, or agency, or authority, and choosing to push pause on that for a greater purpose" (also referencing Philippians 2). A posture of humility demonstrates that "you recognize that you're not infallible and you do get it wrong... [and] I think that's cultivated by building your relationship with God" (Leader O). The data also showed mutual submission and teachability to be the most desirable expressions of humility – more on that below, see "Learning to Protect."

### **Learning from Experience**

The data revealed expertise or depth of experience helped improve intuitive wisdom. This theme showed up in a number of different ways. Previous occupations and training provided analytical skills which helped make intuition more acute by allowing some leaders to see some things more clearly. Leader E said, "I learned some analytical processes and thinking processes... and I put it down to my training and experience [as a

lawyer].” Leader B said, “The analytical thing is partly due to my scientific background and it’s more of a learned skill; whereas the intuitive thing is a much more native skill for me.” Learning from the experiences of others was another way in which leaders went about building their own experience bank (Leader J, Leader P).

One of the more common ways in which experience improved intuition was in terms of pattern recognition. In fact, Leader E described experiencing intuition along these lines: “it makes me wonder if sometimes what intuition is for me is this higher-level sorting of data that’s happening at a pre-conscious level.” With more experience, leaders were more apt to recognize patterns, connectedness, and coherence, and to develop frames of reference to guide their intuition. For example, Leader A shared about having a certain experience and realizing, “Oh, I’ve been there before. This feeling or combination of senses; I trust that... [because] this feels like that [referring to past experience/s of intuitive wisdom].” Leader S spoke in similar terms of developing a “frame of reference” by which previous experiences help to clarify current experiences of intuitive wisdom. Recognizing patterns allows one to quickly determine how or why something feels out of place, or to find something missing. Leader R spoke of this kind of pattern matching as “the cultivation of taste” – more on that below, see Research Question 4.

### **Learning from Mistakes**

Interviewees were asked if and when their intuition was wrong or misguided, and their responses show some interesting results. Surprisingly, nine different leaders said their mistakes were actually the result of failing to heed intuition as opposed to intuition leading them astray. Leader A shared an example of hiring a person despite intuitive warnings against it, and it turned out to be an absolute disaster. Leader D spoke of a time

when failing to heed intuition ended up destroying what was a vibrant, thriving youth ministry. Leader K had “a moment I truly regret... and it’s more because I didn’t go with my gut.” Only three of the nineteen leaders shared examples of their intuitive wisdom being wrong or misguided. Regardless of whether mistakes resulted from misguided intuition or failure to heed intuition, the most important thing is to learn from the mistakes.

The data did show a number of valuable lessons and insights resulting from these mistakes. More than simply learning to “heed intuition,” leaders offered reflections upon why they got it wrong. Leader O talked about how “fear or the expectations of others, real or imagined... might have led me not to follow through and trust [my intuition].” Leader A suggested getting it wrong was in relation to intuitive wisdom being distorted by competing values of appearance or comfort. For Leader E, intuitive wisdom can be misguided by an overestimation of people or ideas. And, Leader C identified two instances in which intuitive wisdom is often wrong regarding people, “One is when a leader is similar to me and I’m threatened, so then my gut goes, ‘No, avoid them.’ Or, the second is when they are really different and I perceive different as a character issue when actually it’s just a shaping difference.”

### **Learning to Protect**

The data showed a consistent theme of recognizing the incredible power and potential of intuitive wisdom, while also recognizing it is potentially dangerous. Leaders were asked what safeguards they used or recommended to protect intuitive wisdom. Four safeguards were identified as helpful in mitigating the associated risks and enhancing the potential of intuitive wisdom.

### *Plurality of Leaders*

Fourteen of the nineteen sample leaders affirmed the role of other people in protecting intuition through means of collaboration and accountability (Leader R). Leader E spoke of this in terms of “remaining somewhat surrendered to your board or leadership team” and Leader M encouraged “constantly submitting intuition to a wider discernment process.” Leader F spoke in terms of seeking to persuade rather than impose. Leader A and Leader T suggested it was important to get the right people speaking into the journey with intuitive wisdom. For example, Leader A said, “if it’s personal, I’ll take it to my spiritual director... And if it was more about church, then I’ll process it with at least two or three groups of leaders independently... and I’ll be listening closely to their initial reactions.” Leader C honestly reflected, “it’s not safe for me to decide things alone. And the bigger the decision, the more people I should allow to speak into it.” As mentioned above, one of the best ways to embrace the leadership of others is by adopting a posture of humility. Specifically, in this case, humility expressing itself in mutual submission (Leader O).

### *Avoid Over-Spiritualizing*

Eight of the nineteen leaders cautioned against over-spiritualizing intuitive wisdom. Several shared of witnessing this being abused or other such negative experiences. The danger is by attributing God’s authority to human intuition gives it too much power in decision-making (Leader C) by manipulating people (Leader L). The phrase, “Thus sayeth the Lord” was frequently used as an example of what to avoid (Leader B, Leader E, Leader F, Leader G, Leader L, Leader P, Leader S). Leader M expressed significant concern on this point saying, “So many times [it] has been deployed

as weaponized intuition... and the problem with that is, within the Christian context, it's impervious to reasoning. Because the intuition is given an anointing [spiritual]." Leader F also cautioned of over-spiritualizing intuition "because it can be a weapon." When intuition is presented like that, it cannot be questioned (Leader M). And, in fact, is the opposite of a humble posture. In a sense, this safeguard works hand-in-hand with the one above (Plurality of Leaders) because involving others invites accountability and collective discernment. And, as mentioned above, the best way to avoid over-spiritualizing is to develop a posture of humility expressed as remaining open and teachable.

#### *Slow Down*

Six different leaders said slowing down and allowing some time was a helpful way to protect against intuition being wrong or misguided. Leader J acknowledged, "when I make decisions too quickly, that's when it can backfire." Leader A urged slowing down and making time to process in daily prayer, "The bigger the decision, the longer it sits on the table. Move slow, don't rush." And, Leader N expressed a high degree of trust in allowing time to filter and protect intuitive wisdom from making mistakes.

#### *Embrace Structure*

Three different leaders made the interesting observation that intuitive wisdom functions best within the context of healthy structures or processes. It needs to be grounded. Outside of such structures it can be terribly dangerous. Leader M offered this telling description of the danger to be avoided:

One of the reasons I'm so wary of the whole intuition thing is because our postmodern culture is all about, 'what feels right.'... Like that 1970s love song says, 'how can something that feels this good be wrong?' or something like that... I think that's a version of intuition which is so unhealthy and so unhelpful. And, perhaps I instinctively hold intuition at bay in other people lest it be some sanctified version of that. Because the Christian life is one where probably, more often than not, it's about not following the first thoughts that come to mind. (Leader M)

What is needed is to "provide some order within which intuition can function" (Leader O). And, Leader T talked about the need for intuition to be "tethered" to certain structure or boundaries in order for it to function best. This seems paradoxically true in the sense that "an unstructured leader needs some kind of structure to find freedom... And I think it might be a quite interesting thing that, actually, intuitive knowledge needs to be grounded... needs to be tethered somehow" (Leader T).

In summary, the data showed the inner work of self-awareness and character formation, particularly a posture of humility, to be the most effective means of improving intuitive abilities. Additionally, it was shown that learning from experience and learning to protect intuition can provide the necessary support to see intuitive wisdom grow and thrive.

#### **Research Question #4: Description of Evidence**

What common elements do these leaders use to successfully develop intuitive wisdom in emerging leaders?

Qualitative data from nineteen in-depth interviews provided insights into how intuitive wisdom abilities can be developed in emerging leaders. My coded data analysis revealed the following themes.

### **Neglect**

Eight of the nineteen sample leaders acknowledged they have not intentionally sought to develop the intuitive abilities of emerging leaders. One of these eight leaders proved to be an outlier, as the only one of the nineteen sample leaders who did not consider intuitive abilities something that could be nurtured or developed:

When I think of intuition, I think it's my heart speaking. It's my spirit speaking. It's not so much my head speaking. So, intuitively, as I look at a leader or potential leader, what do I see? What do I feel? What is their heart like?... And to develop that some more, I think you can teach anybody practically what to do, but you can't teach a heart. You can't teach a heart for ministry or heart for people. That stuff feels like it needs to be a move of God in somebody's life... (Leader N)

The irony, of course, is that Leader N is relying upon intuitive abilities to ascertain the goodness of one's heart. Leader N continued by suggesting one might look to identify leaders as those who have a "high spirituality" about them. There was a noticeable lack of development-type language (such as coaching, or growing) in Leader N's response as if, instead, looking for the finished product.

The other seven of the eight leaders each recognized the need for developing intuitive wisdom abilities and were typically doing something about it. However, this was more accidental and ad-hoc in nature, not intentional (Leader T). Leader A readily

identified a number of leaders who were deeply valued and appreciated because of their intuitive wisdom but admitted, “I’ve done nothing to enhance or develop it.” A couple of the sample leaders realized they had not even thought about this (Leader D, Leader K), while Leader M’s reflections reveal both a sense of remorse for the neglect and a desire to change:

I think I've neglected it, actually. I think I need to pay specific attention to honing healthy intuitive processes in the people I am responsible for developing... [Because] I don't think I've actually named it, and I think I will from this. I think I will start to actually name it. Because I use it all the time myself. Isn't that interesting? In the process of having to articulate to you what it is, how I use it, and how I guard myself against the abuse of it. I'm realizing that I need to actually incorporate all of that as part of my teaching and fostering of leadership in others. (Leader M)

When these leaders did suggest developmental practices for emerging leaders they may have been accidental and ad-hoc, but they were also congruent with the more intentional practices shared by the remaining eleven leaders. The common ground being that the sample leaders consistently utilize similar elements to their own leadership formation.

### **Cultivating Christlike Character**

Twelve of the nineteen sample leaders identified a deep devotional life with God as one of the best ways to develop intuitive wisdom in emerging leaders. Seeking Christ through scripture immersion, prayer, and worship were the typical means by which sample leaders recommended cultivating a close relationship with Jesus (Leader D, Leader H, Leader J). Leader E stated, “leadership development is just a specialized form

of discipleship.” Several leaders made the link between the need for godly character in order for intuitive wisdom to be trustworthy (Leader H, Leader J, Leader P, Leader S). Leader J said, “I would strongly emphasize the personal relationship with God” and continued to share being inspired by the Smith Wigglesworth quote, “I’m a thousand times bigger on the inside than I am on the outside” (Wigglesworth). Leader C made this link even more explicit suggesting character formation, while important for all leaders, is even more critical for those who rely on intuition:

I think one of the core elements for intuitive leaders is they need to develop their character really, really intentionally. And I don’t think that link has been made strongly enough – that the more intuitive you are, the more you must ensure you don’t lie, that you don’t cheat, that you don’t steal, and that you don’t manipulate. Because I think sometimes intuitive leaders get more slack because they’re usually right... at times they are honored and put in places they shouldn’t be. I think because their ability to read something is high, people trust them or are enamored with them and so then they progress through the ranks of leadership quicker without having done the necessary inner work to become a person of high character and integrity. (Leader C)

Because the process of intuitive wisdom is such an inner world thing in that it comes from within, the inner world must be a place of health for it to be healthy and helpful. Leader Q spoke in terms of finding emerging leaders who were “oriented towards Christ.” In fact, this served as the primary filter for determining who to invest time in:

If someone is facing towards Christ and journeying towards Christ, then that seems of more solid discipleship than, say, someone who's inside the fence, but facing away from Christ. I've seen so many people in churches who were 'inside the fence' – said the sinner's prayer – but were facing away from Christ and [living] like, 'What can I get away with?' And I learned personally that is super dangerous and my perspective is a person who is facing away from Christ and slowly journeying away from Christ, even if they are technically inside the fence, it doesn't mean anything. The only thing that matters is your orientation towards Christ. So that's the filter I use for analyzing anything. (Leader Q)

Leaders also offered more specific insight into how they cultivate Christlike character in emerging leaders; namely through addressing core issues of identity and fostering a posture of humility.

The need to deal with the core issue of identity featured in the data from three different leaders. Leader S observed, "I often find people with high intuition have a strong narrative of who they've been told to be, but they feel they are probably someone else... and I would say their identity is really wrapped up in a strong feeling of where they need to go." When coaching and teaching emerging leaders, Leader L primarily addresses issues of identity. In the particular context where Leader L serves, there are very high societal (and often parental) expectations being imposed. And Leader L seeks to help these emerging leaders understand their identity in Christ, "who God has created them to be and the plan or purpose He has created them to pursue. And I think those two

things go hand in hand.” This brings us to the other specific way sample leaders talked about cultivating Christlike character – cultivating a posture of humility.

As above (see RQ 3), a posture of humility was something sample leaders sought to cultivate in emerging leaders they were working with. This was often described in terms of “teachability” (Leader L, Leader Q, Leader T). However, Leader M saw it as an outcome of addressing core issues of identity and insecurity. By providing counseling and spiritual direction for leaders on the team, Leader M intentionally “focuses on the person’s insecurity.” And by addressing their insecurity and identity issues (through the support of counseling or spiritual direction), Leader M hopes to “foster in them more of a posture of humility... and, therefore, I gain a greater confidence for them to make decisions by intuitive means.” As with the sample leaders (see RQ 3), cultivating Christlike character proved one of the best ways to develop the intuitive wisdom abilities of emerging leaders.

### **Cultivating Taste**

Sample leaders shared a variety of other means for developing intuitive wisdom, however, they were consistently reluctant to adopt any kind of formalized curriculum approach (Leader B, Leader E, Leader F). Instead, Leader R described the development process using the analogy of, “the cultivation of taste.” Because intuitive wisdom is not something entirely natural, it requires development. Leader R continued, “I don’t think it’s just natural... I think you cultivate intuition in the same sense that someone cultivates an artistic sensibility – or, develops a taste for a particular kind of wine or art or something like that.” Leader O added this is also part of the role played by theological education as it “opens up a world and cultivates a particular sensibility.” This proves a

helpful framework within which to place the following themes emerging from the data as they all contribute to the development of taste and sensibility (Leader R, Leader O).

### *Permissive Culture*

Six different leaders spoke of the importance to affirm and encourage intuitive wisdom in emerging leaders when you see it (Leader C, Leader D, Leader G, Leader O, Leader R, Leader S). Leader O emphasized the importance of this saying, “often others who operate in this way don’t really know what to do with it, or worse, are leery of it and suppress it.” Instead, it can be developed through creating an intentionally permissive culture in which intuitive wisdom is affirmed, valued, and even expected (Leader C, Leader J). Leader C has developed several practices to foster this kind of culture, including a portion of the monthly report to elders in which “weird, crazy ideas I’m thinking about” are listed. This practice is also then expected of staff members in their reports to Leader C as the Senior Pastor. And, if there is nothing listed in that section of the report, Leader C refuses to accept it and sends it back. Leader G said they regularly “push people into the intuitive side” by encouraging and expecting emerging leaders to “have a go and give things a try.” Because they value intuitive wisdom, Leader G says they have intentionally cultivated “a permissive culture which serves us well.”

### *Role Model*

Providing an example of healthy intuitive wisdom lived out proved another repeated way in which to develop emerging leaders. However, being a role model is not something that can be done at a distance. Emerging leaders “must be allowed access to your life” (Leader P). And when a good model has been witnessed, “name it so others learn to recognize what they’re seeing” (Leader R). Leader S added an insightful nuance

around being a role model who exhibits high trust not only in your own intuitive wisdom, but also in the intuitive wisdom of those you are developing (even when poorly formed).

#### *Conversation Partner*

Finding a conversation partner to maintain ongoing discussion about intuitive wisdom as a way of operating was suggested a valuable means of developing emerging leaders. Of course, it is important to find the right person – someone who “gets it” and is able to engage in helpful ways around the nature and exercise of intuitive wisdom (Leader F, Leader K, Leader R). Leader O described it as “ongoing conversation partner with that person... exploring intuitive wisdom as a way of being... of how we are in the world.” Leader S cultivates taste for intuitive wisdom as a conversation partner who brings curiosity and lots of reflective questions.

#### *Action-Reflection Model*

Facilitating space and opportunity for action-reflection proved another consistent means of cultivating intuitive wisdom among emerging leaders. Leader C said they intentionally create space for emerging leaders to experiment and “try out” their intuitive wisdom. Leader G is also quick to empower emerging leaders to “have a go.” Leader L and Leader J spoke of emerging leaders “showing initiative to follow through on their ideas” as something they specifically look for. There were, however, a couple of the sample leaders who expressed concern (even frustration) over intuitive leaders who stay stuck in dreaming and conceiving without moving to action (Leader Q, Leader T). Leader T said,

I think there’s a real piece of work that needs to be done to help people become more grounded with the doing side of discipleship [discipleship is

understood in terms of becoming clear on two things: What is God saying? What am I going to do about it?] I think a key piece is that the integrated, authentic life is one where you get those two things working. And I think often for younger leaders, one of those levers isn't working. I think often for some of the intuitive people I'm around, it's the doing that's really very rusty and they just don't know how to make friends with it... And, in my worst moments, I just want to scream at them, 'Get some agency back! Stop blaming everyone and everything else for your ideas not taking flight... and do something about it.' (Leader T)

Other sample leaders suggested "throwing them in the deep end" as one way to instigate some action and experience for emerging leaders (Leader K, Leader H). And one of the most common opportunities sample leaders would provide emerging leaders was Holy Spirit ministry – offering prayer, praying for healing, prophecy, and sharing words of knowledge (Leader D, Leader G, Leader H). However, action alone was not the recommendation, it was an action-reflection model these leaders recommend.

Facilitated reflection upon action/experience proved to be necessary for emerging leaders to cultivate intuitive wisdom abilities. Leader E said, "I've been surprised at what they come back with when you send them away into some reflective space." The danger, Leader E, explained is "they typically don't live any kind of examined life. They're just lurching from one distraction or pursuit to another... So, what I try to do is to help them create space for the examined life." Leader A specifically suggested using reflection spaces in which emerging leaders have opportunity to "listen to their own story. So, you go back through your own life..." paying attention to

moments of intuitive wisdom in the past in order to form a “frame of reference” for future decisions. This is a powerful approach because it is drawing “truth from your own experience” (Leader A). And understanding, “Why did that work? Why not? And, what was going on inside of me?... I think these are ways of developing the capacity [of intuitive wisdom]” (Leader O). Hence, the recommendation is for facilitated reflection that ties in with the role of a Conversation Partner (see above). And, finally, Leader Q cautioned, “You’ve got to give people time for them to do their building... learn to view things in a longer timeframe.”

In summary, the data showed a number of leaders had not intentionally sought to develop intuitive wisdom among emerging leaders. For those who have, they typically defaulted to methods and approaches they were familiar with from their own formative experience/s.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

Several major findings emerged from the data analysis. They are listed here in summary form and will be further discussed in the next chapter:

- 1) The ability to see or anticipate what others did not (such as a way forward, or preempt problems, or clarifying issues) was the most common way in which leaders exercised intuitive wisdom in their ministry leadership.
- 2) Leaders differed in their understanding of the nature and experience of intuitive wisdom.

- 3) Strong cognitive-analytical skills greatly improve one's sensemaking or rationalization process and result in a more holistic and integrated leader.
- 4) Developing Christlike character, and particularly a posture of humility, was the most consistent means of improving intuitive wisdom.
- 5) Intuitive wisdom is both potentially powerful and potentially dangerous, and thus, requires safeguards in the life of a leader.
- 6) Leaders defaulted to their own formative experiences when suggesting best practices for developing intuitive wisdom abilities among emerging leaders.
- 7) The notion, "cultivation of taste," provides a helpful framework for greater intentionality in the development of emerging intuitive leaders.

## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of the research was to ascertain how intuitive wisdom informed the leadership of nineteen pre-qualified church and ministry leaders from New Zealand, in order to propose a framework for developing intuitive wisdom capabilities among emerging ministry leaders. Fortunately, this study was successful in providing a better understanding of the nature, exercise, and development of intuitive wisdom as shown in the previous chapter. This final chapter discusses the major findings of this study through the lenses of personal observations, the literature review, and the biblical and theological foundations of the project. Following this discussion, the chapter concludes by considering the implications for the future practice of ministry leadership, limitations of the project, and recommendations for further research.

#### Major Findings

##### **Intuitive Wisdom Anticipates What Others Do Not.**

The initial interest in exploring this topic resulted from hearing ministry leaders describe leadership breakthroughs stemming from what is here termed intuitive wisdom. This finding validates and confirms that previously untested hypothesis. During interviews with leaders in this study, I observed their initial reluctance or uncertainty around intuitive wisdom dissipate into increased comfort and confidence talking about it. For most, they had not seriously thought about intuitive wisdom in ways prompted by my interview questions. Nevertheless, the more they shared, the more appreciative they became of this capability and perhaps even experienced their trust in it increasing during

the interview. Such comments were even shared by a few interviewees via email when approving the interview transcripts. When prompted, leaders readily offered examples of seeing or anticipating what others did not. Such stories were often shared with a sense of enthusiasm or pleasure which further prompted leaders to reflect on wanting to trust intuitive wisdom more in the future.

This finding supports the growing appreciation of intuition within the literature in three ways. First, it confirms Daniel Pink's prediction that intuition (and related faculties) will dominate the future landscape of thought and leadership (Pink 2). Second, it supports Keel's argument that ministry leaders need to overcome their culturally-conditioned Western skepticism and distrust of intuition and, instead, learn to trust it (Keel 256). And, third, it contributes specific examples of intuitive wisdom anticipating what others do not from the context of ministry leadership. Many similar examples are found within the literature from other performance contexts (de Becker; Gladwell; Gigerenzer; Klein, *The Power of Intuition*; Michaud; Payne; Graham-Hannah et al.; Jon H. Moilanen).

The biblical and theological framework offered in biblical wisdom also supports this finding. Recognizing the undergirding creation theology for a wisdom worldview, Ansberry has shown how wisdom plays an instrumental role in creation. Such instrumentality, it was seen, is often described in terms of agency (Ansberry 177–78). Fox's study of the various Hebrew terms used for "wisdom" revealed the ability to anticipate problems or outcomes (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* 30–38). Building upon this idea, it was further suggested that such exercise of wisdom carries a revelatory aspect (Genung 117, 120–21). Hence, Barton affirms wisdom cultivates in a person "a way of seeing" the world that is not common to all. And, ultimately, the NT attests to Jesus Christ as the

embodiment of wisdom. Reading the Gospel witness shows Jesus' remarkable ability to see below the surface/presenting issue to deeper issues, anticipate problems or outcomes, and see a way forward where others did not (Barton; Goldsworthy; Witherington).

**Intuitive Wisdom is Understood and Experienced Differently.**

The disparate understandings and experiences of intuitive wisdom described in chapter four were not surprising because most of the interviewees had not spent much time studying, reflecting, or thinking about intuitive wisdom prior to the interview. Consequently, I often found myself serving as a facilitator of their reflection upon intuitive wisdom which was easier for some than others. Providing examples of their use of intuitive wisdom proved, on the whole, much easier for these leaders to discuss than defining what intuitive wisdom actually is. And, in a few cases, it was almost like I had a front row seat to observe their intuitive wisdom in operation during the interview as they attempted to articulate their understanding and experience of intuitive wisdom. Additionally, it was interesting to note the different experiences of intuitive wisdom. For some it was very feeling based; whereas for others it made sense based more on coherence or fit. For some it came out of nowhere; whereas for others it seemed to emerge as they were thinking and reflecting about the specific circumstance. For some, their intuitive wisdom seemed most accurate around people/relational issues; whereas for others it was most accurate around task or vision/direction issues.

This finding is supported by the literature which also showed differences in how intuition is understood and experienced. Historically, it was shown, intuition was often understood to be rather ethereal or like some form of extra-sensory perception (Agor, *Intuition in Organizations*; Vaughan; Wild; Bastick; Schmidt). Against such views,

others have preferred to describe intuition using less mystical conceptions of nonconscious pattern-matching, mental-scanning, thin-slicing, and often based upon experience (Gigerenzer loc 127; Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 139, 217; Tversky and Kahneman; Kahneman 12–14; Epstein). Furthermore, the literature shows intuition to be a holistic form of information processing (Sinclair 378; Evans 313–14; Dane and Pratt 36–40) which, perhaps, offers an interpretation of the different experiences of intuition shared by leaders as expressions of different personality traits, background, experiences, and contextual factors.

This notion of holistic and integrated information processing resulting in differences also coheres with biblical wisdom. Since biblical wisdom is grounded in a creation theology which affirms a Creator, we ought not be surprised to witness creativity and differences within creation, including human beings. Additionally, the wisdom worldview was also quick to acknowledge and teach that not all of life and reality was knowable (Prov. 20:24). Some of life remains inscrutable to humans because human knowledge is limited and imperfect as a result of our fallen state – one of the effects of sin being the inability to understand reality accurately (Estes 34–35).

**Sensemaking Greatly Enhanced by Cognitive-Analytical Skills; Necessary for Holistic Integration.**

When I asked leaders how to make sense of their intuitive wisdom, I observed that several leaders really struggled to answer. It was almost as if they did not understand the question; or at least did not recognize the relevance of the question. On the other hand, there were a few who easily spelled out a step-by-step process. Hence, I was intrigued during data analysis to find the various REI scores corroborate this finding. And

it was noteworthy how leaders with low Rational scores (RA and RE) compensated for this deficit, typically espoused in a heavy reliance upon other people with strong preference for cognitive-analytical information processing. And, finally, during one interview (Leader T) we jointly observed how counteracting the dominant preference for cognitive-analytical skills by tipping the scales in favor of intuitive information processing was equally unhelpful; nor was it holistic. In order to be truly holistic, an integration of both the Rational and Experiential scales of the REI is necessary.

The integration of cognitive-analytical skills with intuition proved a dominant theme in the literature providing strong support for this finding. Much of the intuition research considered was based on some kind of ‘dual-process’ theory which distinguished between two types of mental process where type 1 process was fast, intuitive, high capacity; and type 2 process is slow, reflective, low capacity (Evans 313; Kahneman 12–13; Epstein 299; Provis; Bortolotti). And, while people tend to prefer one over the other, they are best considered on a continuum with type 1 (intuitive) on one end, and type 2 (analytical) on the other (Epstein 299; Hammond 330). This recognizes the presence of both intuitive and analytical processing in most human thought; or, in other words, it would be a very rare occasion for one to operate in isolation of the other (Hammond 330).

The very existence of wisdom literature lends support to this finding. After all, cognitive-analytical skills are essential for the task of distilling wisdom into short, pithy, memorable proverbs that were written down to be preserved and passed down from generation to generation. And, as was shown, the diversity present within the wisdom literature has led biblical scholars to conclude that the wisdom tradition was not some

rigid or static set of judgments, but rather an ongoing reflective conversation as new insights and experiences emerged (Murphy, *The Tree of Life* 1–13; Brueggemann 234; Ansberry 179). Such an ongoing reflective conversation is also evident in Jesus’ interactions in the four Gospels, and particularly with the Pharisees (Witherington 155ff.). The very dynamic of drawing from the wisdom tradition to engage in the present is only possible through an integration of both intuitive and analytical skills.

### **Christlike Character and Humility Best Way to Develop Intuitive Wisdom.**

In part, this finding was expected, but not with the force in which it came through. Leaders consistently suggested character formation to be a core element in developing intuitive wisdom for themselves, but also for others. The really interesting observation was how character formation was stated almost flippantly as a “pat answer” a pastor ought to give. And then I observed a number of interviewees grow discontent with their trite response. This prompted further reflection on their part and resulted in much deeper and richer responses, but also galvanized their commitment to the importance of character development for intuitive wisdom.

Support for this finding can be found in a number of different places in the literature review. First, the practice of mindfulness and contemplation recommended for developing intuition closely parallels Christian contemplative practices of silence, solitude, stillness, prayer, meditation, journaling, and the like. Such practices cultivate a posture of humility and “fear of the LORD.” Second, the leadership literature affirmed depth of character as an essential part of leadership, but also for the fostering of intuitive wisdom (Cammock, *The Spirit of Leadership* 7–8; Strom loc 2946-3422; Townsend 159–193). And, third, Croteau-Chonka argued for this finding in the reverse direction where

intuition is considered instrumental in cultivating character, “a wholeness that leads to holiness” (Croteau-Chonka 1). Surely this implies a reciprocal relationship by which holiness (character) also leads to greater wholeness (intuitive wisdom).

The cultivation of godly character has been shown to be the consistent focus and primary aim of the wisdom tradition (Brown, *Character in Crisis*; Brown, *Character & Scripture*; Clements; Crenshaw; von Rad; Estes; Fox, “The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2”). Such a formational purpose is evident in Proverbs 1:1-7. And character formation in the wisdom tradition finds its theological anchor point in the life of God. Godly character reflects the life of God. And, as Davis points out, “confidence that is not grounded in fear of YHWH [is] the disposition of the fool” (Davis, “Preserving Virtues” 199). Godly character is the result of inner transformation and is considered a good, mature, responsible, integrative force that unites and directs the whole person (Estes 68). Such an ‘integrative force that unites and directs’ provides a helpful link to intuitive wisdom. And, it was shown that according to wisdom, humility is an essential ingredient and, perhaps, the greatest expression of godly character.

### **Safeguards Mitigate Risks Associated with Intuitive Wisdom.**

Most of the leaders studied were very concerned to ensure appropriate protection and safeguards were in place to mitigate the risks associated with intuitive wisdom. However, there were a few who seemed relatively unconcerned, and exhibited a very high trust in intuitive wisdom as typically being accurate and reliable. Two further observations were particularly intriguing to me during the interviews. First, a number of leaders who initially described their understanding of intuitive wisdom as related to God’s activity in their life (such as God speaking to them) began to change their view at

this point. I assume this is because they had experienced times when intuition had been ‘over-spiritualized’ and they were uncomfortable with that. Second, it was intriguing to observe leaders who were more willing to trust their own intuitive wisdom than others. The implication being, they were more concerned with ensuring safeguards were in place for others than themselves. There could be several reasons for these apparent contradictions or changing views. One reason could be due to some degree of discomfort around sharing so openly and vulnerably about themselves with me as someone they did not know very well – for about half of the leaders studied this was the first time I met them in-person.

This finding has strong support in the literature. Two figures in particular have consistently cautioned against the dangers of intuition. Myers is well known for his research into “the power and perils of intuition” (Myers, “Intuition’s Powers and Perils”; Myers, *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils*). Myers consistently calls for suitable protections and safeguards to test intuition. The other figure is Kahneman who has often been critical of intuition, although not dismissive of it (Tversky and Kahneman; Kahneman). One of Kahneman’s critiques is that people can easily become overconfident in their intuition without solid justification for such confidence (Kahneman and Klein, “When Can You Trust Your Gut?”; Kahneman and Klein, “Conditions for Intuitive Expertise”). Again, his call is for rigorous and deliberative thinking to provide suitable justification for trusting intuition.

One of the most common ways the wisdom literature describes the exercise of wisdom is in avoiding folly (Prov. 1:7b, 8:5, 10:21, 12:15, 14:15-18, 26:1-11). Folly, of course, being the antithesis of wisdom. And the frequency of folly terminology in the

wisdom literature illustrates humanity's proclivity toward folly; and, thus, recognizing human limitation. Wisdom affirms humans are not infallible. Fox provides an analysis of six different terms used to denote folly or "the fool" in Proverbs (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* 38–43). Each of the folly words suggest a general lack of good judgment. Hence, if human flourishing is experienced by living in accordance with the normal and orderly way of creation, then the exercise of wisdom serves as a safeguard. Wisdom is exercised to protect life and human flourishing with all kinds of personal, social, and moral implications. Which also explains why the development of wisdom invites other people to serve as safeguards, especially parents and teachers. As shown, wisdom is developed as one accepts "discipline" or "correction" (Prov. 10:17; 12:1).

**Personal Formative Experiences the Default for Developing Intuitive Wisdom Abilities.**

The data showed leaders defaulting to their own formative experiences when asked how they might develop intuitive wisdom abilities among emerging leaders. And, I suspect, this is because for many of the interviewees they had not intentionally thought about developing intuitive wisdom (as shown in the data for RQ4 above). The theme of neglect of developing intuitive wisdom was evident in the data. I asked those who admitted neglect what kinds of experiences, education, exposure, postures, or practices they might recommend or suggest for leadership training. In responding to this question their own formation featured heavily. And, perhaps, we might understand this finding as more of a reflection of what was known or understood by these leaders than a recommendation upon which to build. However, I observed not only neglect, but a sense of remorse and a desire to change going forward. For those who were more ad hoc in

their approach to developing others, I observed a growing conviction around the need for finding intentional ways to develop intuitive wisdom.

If my suspicion here is correct, then similar themes of neglect when it comes to developing intuition were present in the data. This is the primary critique and motivation for much of Sadler-Smith's research (Burke and Sadler-Smith; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, "Developing Intuition: 'Becoming Smarter by Thinking Less'"). Otherwise, if the interpretation of this finding offered here is inaccurate, there is little support in the literature, and this constitutes new knowledge for the practice of ministry leadership development.

This finding does, however, relate to the biblical and theological framework found in wisdom. As discussed, one of the ways wisdom was developed was through instruction based on tradition. This practice allows one to "rely on the learned analysis of others" along with their own observations and experiences (Longman 76). And there are many examples throughout the wisdom literature of a learner being encouraged to learn wisdom from those who have gone before (Prov. 4:1-4; 7:6-23; 22:17-21). In particular, Proverbs 4:1-4 provides the example of a father passing along lessons of wisdom to his son that he learned from his father. Or, in other words, this father was continuing the formative experiences and practices from his own childhood. Conversely, the fool resists or rejects wisdom instruction (Prov. 12:15).

### **Developing Intuitive Wisdom Through Intentional "Cultivation of Taste."**

During interviews, I observed participants become rather uncomfortable talking about specific methods for developing intuitive wisdom in emerging leaders. Upon reflection, I suspect the discomfort was evidence of inner turmoil, or a tension being

wrestled with. On the one hand, I noticed clear reticence and almost resistance of anything formulaic or systematic. On the other hand, there was a simultaneous desire for something intentional in this space. While far from being a consensus, a few of the leaders spoke of intentional development in terms of “cultivating a taste.” And the helpful analogy offered around cultivating an artistic sensibility – or, develop a taste for a certain kind of wine or art or something like that (Leader R). This analogy provides a helpful framework within which to work on intentionally developing intuitive wisdom (see Chapter 4, “Cultivating Taste”). And I experienced my own sense of relief to discover this piece of guidance emerge during data analysis.

Without explicit reference to “cultivation of taste,” the literature shows implicit support of this finding. For instance, Keel talks about leaders adopting postures (distinct from acquiring skills) that allow them to “listen to your life” (Keel 255–59). The section on “Intuitive Practices” encouraged instruction and discussion in order to develop intuitive wisdom (Prince and Priporas 5). Collegial discussion with peers is encouraged, but so is expert teachers, mentors, or coaches who are able to offer examples from their own life and leadership in order to help develop a sensibility for what healthy intuitive wisdom looks like. This kind of vicarious learning is invaluable (Sadler-Smith and Burke 248–49; Burke and Sadler-Smith 179; Klein, *The Power of Intuition* loc 3673-3970). And perhaps the most helpful support is found in West and Martin’s provocative play pedagogy for leadership development (West; West and Martin). Following their approach enables inner reflexes to surface allowing them to be analyzed and discussed resulting in learners receiving valuable feedback on their performance.

While the literature support may be more implicit, the biblical and theological support for this finding is clear. It was shown that the sages of ancient Israel held to a “coherence theory” whereby wisdom was understood to be a multi-dimensional and holistic thing that held together the cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic. Fox explains this in the way Israelite sages would exercise and teach wisdom:

The sages of wisdom recognized coherence not by logical testing but by their sense for what fits the system, what I have called moral aesthetics... It is what the sages of Proverbs teach their disciples, not by pounding doctrines, or not by that alone, but in the way that an artist conveys an ineffable sense of color, proportion, and shape to an apprentice: by pointing to what he himself sees. In fact, wisdom *is* an art, not a science, and the sages of wisdom are artists... The sages are artists painting a world whose realities often lie beneath the visible surface. (Fox, “The Epistemology of the Book of Proverbs” 684)

Here we see very similar language, and even a similar analogy, used to express how wisdom was exercised and taught. Learning wisdom involved “cultivating a taste” for wisdom, and what was not. And, thus, we see the development of wisdom uses a similar framework as suggested by this finding.

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

This study has established the value of intuitive wisdom in leadership and offered insights into how intuitive wisdom might be better understood, practiced, and developed. The need for intuitive wisdom in leadership has been shown as essential for times of

ambiguity, complexity, and for the future. The following implications of the findings are provided in relation to three different groups of people (or contexts).

1) The first implication of this study concerns study participants and other ministry leaders around New Zealand. This study generated a great deal of interest among ministry leaders, as evidenced by the exceptionally high response-rate/s, and many expressed a desire to read the findings. The implication is that intuitive wisdom offers powerful potential for leaders to anticipate things that others do not if it is healthy and well-protected. Ministry leaders can confidently embrace their intuitive wisdom as a God-given gift. In practical terms, this would mean things like: (a) fostering a permissive culture where intuitive wisdom is welcomed, not dismissed; (b) developing better language to share and articulate intuitive wisdom; (c) taking safeguards seriously; (d) embracing cognitive-analytical processes to improve sensemaking/rationalization process; and (e) giving greater access to one's life for emerging leaders to "cultivate a taste" for healthy intuitive wisdom in leadership. And, perhaps most significantly, continuing to cultivate Christlike character expressed through humility.

2) The second implication of this study concerns emerging ministry leaders who naturally tend to be type 1 (intuitive) when it comes to processing information. The study revealed intuitive wisdom to be relatively deficient in leaders' understanding and neglected in their approach to developing other leaders. The implication here is for emerging leaders to be proactive rather than waiting around for their leader to initiate. Instead, be on the lookout for leaders who exercise intuitive wisdom well and get around them. Find ways into their life and world. Ask them to mentor or coach you, or to be an ongoing conversation partner with you around intuitive wisdom. Learn all you can from

them. Simply from being around them consistently you will begin to “cultivate a taste” for healthy intuitive wisdom. And, as above, do not underestimate the importance of Christlike character. As shown, the greatest way to develop intuitive wisdom is through your life becoming increasingly like Jesus.

3) The third implication of this study relates to leadership training programs and materials for pastors and ministry leaders. Here I have in mind denominational leadership programs, Bible colleges, leadership training schools, conferences, and the like. The lack of understanding around intuitive wisdom among ministry leaders is concerning and may be a significant contributor to some of the abuses and excesses present in the data – such as “over-spiritualizing” intuitive wisdom. This study opens the door to introduce intuitive wisdom into the training and development of ministry leaders in these more structured contexts as something essential for the future.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study were relatively minor and inconsequential. The primary limitation was time. For example, one of the pre-qualified leaders was unable to participate in the interviews due to time constraints. This resulted in a reduced sample size of nineteen leaders instead of twenty which is unlikely to have made a significant impact on the findings.

In hindsight, there are two things I would do differently to improve the study. First, I would state my understanding (definition) of intuitive wisdom up-front. I chose not to do this as I was interested to learn how these leaders understood intuitive wisdom without my bias. However, due to the vague and elusive nature of intuitive wisdom, too much time and effort was spent trying to articulate what was meant. It would have been

more expedient to articulate my definition up-front and then invite their feedback. Because I did not take this step, there were times when the study veered towards a descriptive instead of the intended pre-intervention research model.

And, second, if time permitted, I expect it would be really beneficial to share the findings of this research with the sample leaders and then do follow-up interviews or focus groups. I expect the dynamics of time, additional reflection, and interaction with others would further refine the findings already presented, and potentially shed light on some new avenues for exploration.

### **Unexpected Observations**

One unexpected observation I had was the high proportion of the sample leaders with backgrounds in the creative arts and/or media. Thirteen of the nineteen sample leaders told of their past experience in music, art, drama, or media to a relatively high standard (more than a casual hobby). Five leaders had previously worked in the music industry, one studied at a drama school, and another was a comedian and writer. Three leaders worked as radio broadcasters. While beyond the scope of this project, I could not help but wonder if there might be a connection between creativity and intuition? And, potentially, valuable resources in creativity training for developing intuitive wisdom?

Furthermore, it was interesting to observe leaders attempting to distinguish between intuitive wisdom and discernment. This was not part of the original interview protocol, but was included after the first three interviews, as I recognized the repeated theme. The results of this exploration were inconclusive. For some, they were unable to distinguish between them preferring, instead, to think of them as so intertwined they were

unable to be separated. Others provided interesting reflections on the differences between intuitive wisdom and discernment, as shown in the data.

My third research question provided another unexpected observation. The question was, “Have the intuitive wisdom abilities of the sample ministry leaders improved over time?” And it was expected leaders would respond affirmatively. While the majority did respond, “yes,” it was a qualified “yes.” What had grown or improved over time was the leader’s confidence or trust in their intuitive abilities, not necessarily their intuitive abilities. This was further reinforced by the fact that the majority of times when leaders were misguided or “got it wrong” was when they failed to heed their intuitive wisdom. This was as true in their younger years as it was in their later years.

### **Recommendations**

This study generated good results and value. However, due to the exploratory nature of this research project, there are several ways in which it might be expanded and built upon. I have summarized five recommendations below:

- 1) Introduce intuitive wisdom into the development of ministry leaders.
- 2) Develop a leadership development program based upon the findings of this project and implement an Intervention research project to test and validate best practices.
- 3) Conduct further research to integrate the doctrine of the Holy Spirit into the biblical and theological framework presented here.
- 4) Carry out further research into the distinctions between discernment and intuitive wisdom.

- 5) Do further research exploring intuitive wisdom among leaders from non-western contexts where intuitive wisdom might be more readily accepted.

### **Postscript**

My journey through this research project has been much longer than anticipated, yet I have grown in some significant ways. This project has been pursued in conjunction with planting a church in Christchurch, New Zealand which has tested (and continues to test) my leadership in ways not experienced to-date. And I emerge from this research project feeling both encouraged and challenged by the leadership lessons I am learning.

As one who tends to be more intuitive in my thinking, this has been quite a personal journey in which I have been deeply encouraged by the validation and affirmation of intuitive wisdom as a helpful construct for leadership. As a result, my confidence is growing as I learn to trust and share intuitive wisdom as a gift I bring to others, rather than suppressing it. I am encouraged by the avenues opening up to proactively learn to trust this more through safeguarding it, pursuing ways to further “cultivate the taste” for healthy intuitive wisdom, and fostering a permissive culture where intuitive wisdom is welcome with those on my team.

I have also been deeply challenged by the associated risks and dangers of intuitive wisdom. I am learning how to better integrate analytical-cognitive processing to make sense of intuitive wisdom; and relying on other people when I find myself unable to achieve clarity on my own. I am intentionally creating more structures in and around my life and leadership for intuitive wisdom to operate within. And, ultimately, have been

challenged afresh to pursue Christ above all in recognition of the finding that Christlike character is the greatest contributor to healthy intuitive wisdom.

I am also convinced of the need for intuitive wisdom among leaders for leading churches and ministries into the future. My sense is things are only going to become increasingly complex, uncertain, ambiguous, and fast-paced. In such contexts, intuitive wisdom can be a wonderful leadership asset.

As I write this postscript, our city and nation are marking two-weeks since New Zealand's first terrorist attack with a National Remembrance Service. Fourteen days ago, we experienced the atrocity of a mass shooting in two local mosques while people were gathered in prayer and worship. Fifty people lost their lives and fifty more were injured. Many have been impacted by, what some have described as, New Zealand's 9/11. Of course, there has been an amazing outpouring of compassion, love, and support for the Muslim community. People are hurt and grieving, but also confused and angry.

This tragedy has raised all kinds of questions and challenges for ministry leaders, as we lead people in a faithful Christian response. For instance, our Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, issued a national "call to prayer" led by Muslims, and women have been encouraged to wear a hijab as a sign of solidarity and support for many Muslim women who are afraid to be out in public post-attacks. These expressions of support have raised concern as to whether or not they are appropriate for Christians, and they are looking to pastors/leaders for guidance. Others are wrestling with theological issues around eternity and hell – for example, did those fifty people who died go to hell? And, if so, many young people have said they are not interested in a God who would send innocent victims to hell. And, because this act of violence was live-streamed on social media as an

expression of hate by a white-supremacist extremist, it is raising all kinds of questions around racism, hate, extremism, and the political ramifications. This is one case-in-point of the difficult and complicated situations in which intuitive wisdom might serve ministry leaders well.

It is my hope and prayer this research might, in some small way, better equip leaders to skillfully lead and navigate the future for God's Kingdom purposes.

## APPENDIX A

### EMAIL NOMINATION

Dear   [name]  ,

My name is Clint Ussher. I am the founding pastor of The Well Church in Christchurch, NZ. I am also a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Asbury Theological Seminary (USA). My doctoral research is looking at the exercise of intuition and wisdom among ministry leaders and I'm hoping you might be able to help with my research.

***Do you know a ministry leader in New Zealand who matches this description?***

- *A leader who exercises intuitive wisdom to great leadership advantage:*
  - *Can usually sense when someone is right or wrong, even if they can't explain how they know.*
  - *Typically knows what to do or where to go before they are aware of why they know.*
  - *Makes good snap judgments.*
  - *Perceives and understands things others might miss or overlook.*
  - *Exhibits increased (or improved) accuracy and reliability of their intuition over time.*
  
- *A leader who agrees that intuitive wisdom is a valuable leadership asset:*
  - *Believes in trusting their hunches or "gut-feelings"- and finds them very useful in solving problems.*
  - *Trusts their initial feelings about other people.*
  - *Follows their instincts when deciding on a course of action.*
  - *Thinks there are times when one should rely on one's intuition.*
  - *Hardly ever goes wrong when they listen to and follow their deepest "gut feelings" to find an answer.*
  - *Utilizes intuition as a means for discerning Holy Spirit prompts and direction.*
  
- *A leader who believes intuitive wisdom can and, perhaps, should be developed among emerging ministry leaders:*
  - *Seems to attract emerging leaders to their team/church/organization who are also quite comfortable trusting their intuition.*
  - *Has a track record of developing intuitive abilities among emerging leaders.*

- *Has developed a language or means of expressing their intuitions so that others can understand.*
- *Can offer unique insight into how intuitive abilities might be developed (i.e. through certain postures, practices, experiences).*

***If so, please send me their name and contact details via email: [email address]***

Your referral is greatly appreciated! I'll be receiving and following up on these nominations from now until Friday, 7 September 2018.

My hope for this research is that we might learn ways to equip leaders to navigate the increasingly complex and confusing times in which we live. I hope and pray this will be useful in strengthening the Body of Christ in her ongoing witness here in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Got questions? Please contact me – I'd love to hear from you. Thank you in advance for your consideration and participation.

Grace & Peace,

Clint Ussher  
[email address]  
[phone number]

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### **Thank You Email**

Dear [name],

Thank you for your response and for nominating [name] to participate in my study. I am truly grateful.

When I contact [name], are you happy for me to inform them that you were the one who nominated them to participate in this study?

Once again, thank you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Grace & Peace,

Clint Ussher

**APPENDIX B**  
**PRE-QUALIFYING ASSESSMENT**

**Email Invitation:**

Dear   [name]  ,

My name is Clint Ussher. I am the founding pastor of The Well Church in Christchurch, NZ. I am also a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Asbury Theological Seminary (USA). My doctoral research is looking at the exercise of intuition and wisdom among ministry leaders and, hopefully, ways to develop intuitive wisdom among emerging leaders.

I'm contacting you because   [name]   suggested you were one who fits the description of a leader who exercises intuitive wisdom to great advantage. And, I'm hoping you might be willing to participate in my study.

My hope for this research is that we might learn ways to equip leaders to navigate the increasingly complex and confusing times in which we live. I hope and pray this will be useful in strengthening the Body of Christ in her ongoing witness here in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

The next step would be to take an online survey. It will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. ***Would you be willing to take this online survey?***

[ *insert survey link* ]

I will be receiving responses until Friday, 14 September 2018. At that time, a sample population of leaders will be selected and invited to participate in an in-depth interview.

Please note:

- Taking this survey is 100% voluntary. I will not think poorly of you should you choose not to participate.
- Survey responses will be used to ascertain suitability for further study.
- Only the survey responses of sample leaders to be interviewed will be kept; all other survey responses will be deleted.
- You should feel free to ask me (Clint) any questions at any time about the research project.

- You may withdraw from the study at any point without any hard feelings on my part.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response (either way).

Grace & Peace,

Clint Ussher

[email address]

[phone number]

**Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)  
Online survey via Google Forms**

**SECTION 1: Introduction & Consent**

Thank you for your interest in my research project. I hope this experience is rewarding for us both.

The following survey contains 40 questions and should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

This survey will only be available until Friday, 14 September 2018. At that time, a purposeful sample of leaders will be selected from the respondents and invited to participate in a one-on-one interview.

Please note:

- Taking this survey is 100% voluntary. I will not think poorly of should you choose not to participate.
- Survey responses will be used to ascertain suitability for further study.
- Only the survey responses of sample leaders to be interviewed will be kept; all other survey responses will be permanently deleted and not used in the study.
- You should feel free to ask me (Clint) any questions at any time about the research project.
- You may withdraw from the study at any point without any hard feelings on my part. Should you wish to withdraw, you may request your answers not be included in this study by emailing me directly: [email address]

Completing this survey does no obligate you to participate beyond this portion of the study. And your data will remain secure and confidential. Please check below to indicate you have read, understand, and agree to continue:

*I am agreeing to participate in this portion of the study.*

**SECTION 2: Personal Details**

Please tell me a little about yourself and your ministry context. Your information will remain secure and confidential.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:       Female  
                  Male

Ministry Leadership Role/Position:

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Voluntary or Paid Ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

Full-Time or Part-Time? \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry Context - tell me a little about where you currently serve... i.e. Name, Location, Scope of ministry (local, regional national), Size of church/ministry?

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### **SECTION 3: Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) – Survey Instructions**

The following survey is designed to assess your preference for information processing. Here are some quick directions before you begin:

- Please answer each question quickly and honestly – try not to overthink your response.
- Please answer each question using the designated 1-5 scale where:
  - 1 = definitely not true of myself
  - 5 = definitely true of myself.

#### **REI Items**

##### Rational Scale Items

I try to avoid situations that require thinking in depth about something. (re-)

I'm not that good at figuring out complicated problems. (ra-)

I enjoy intellectual challenges. (re)

I am not very good in solving problems that require careful logical analysis. (ra-)

I don't like to have to do a lot of thinking. (re-)

I enjoy solving problems that require hard thinking. (re)

Thinking is not my idea of an enjoyable activity. (re-)

I am not a very analytical thinker. (ra-)

Reasoning things out carefully is not one of my strong points. (ra-)

I prefer complex to simple problems. (re)

Thinking hard and for a long time about something gives me little satisfaction. (re-)

I don't reason well under pressure. (ra-)

I am much better at figuring things out logically than most people. (ra)

I have a logical mind. (ra)

I enjoy thinking in abstract terms. (re)

I have no problem in thinking things through carefully. (ra)

Using logic usually works well for me in figuring out problems in my life. (ra)

Knowing the answer without having to understand the reasoning behind it is good enough for me. (re-)

I usually have clear, explainable reasons for my decisions. (ra)

Learning new ways to think would be very appealing to me. (re)

### Experiential Scale Items

I like to rely on my intuitive impressions. (ee)

I don't have a very good sense of intuition. (ea-)

Using my "gut-feelings" usually works well for me in figuring out problems in my life.  
(ea)

I believe in trusting my hunches. (ea)

Intuition can be a very useful way to solve problems. (ee)

I often go by my instincts when deciding on a course of action. (ee)

I trust my initial feelings about people. (ea)

When it comes to trusting people, I can usually rely on my gut feelings. (ea)

If I were to rely on my gut feelings, I would often make mistakes. (ea-)

I don't like situations in which I have to rely on intuition. (ee-)

I think there are times when one should rely on one's intuition. (ee)

I think it is foolish to make important decisions based on feelings. (ee-)

I don't think it is a good idea to rely on one's intuition for important decisions. (ee-)

I generally don't depend on my feelings to help me make decisions. (ee-)

I hardly ever go wrong when I listen to my deepest "gut-feelings" to find an answer. (ea)

I would not want to depend on anyone who described himself or herself as intuitive. (ee-)

My snap judgments are probably not as good as most people's. (ea-)

I tend to use my heart as a guide for my actions. (ee)

I can usually feel when a person is right or wrong, even if I can't explain how I know.

(ea)

I suspect my hunches are inaccurate as often as they are accurate. (ea-)

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Note. Names of the scales to which each item belongs appears in parentheses.

ee = Experiential Engagement; ea = Experiential Ability; re = Rational Engagement; ra = Rational Ability.

A minus sign (-) denotes reverse-scoring.

## APPENDIX C

### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Below is a copy of the protocol that I used for the interviews.

One-on-one interviews will be conducted with the sample ministry leaders. Interviews will take approximately 45-60 minutes and follow a semi-structured interview methodology.

#### Step 1: Introduction

- Purpose of the study will be introduced and explained.
- Procedure for the interview will be explained – semi-structured: based upon specific questions prepared in advance, but with freedom for researcher to explore relevant topics/themes further in the course of the interview.
- Procedure for the study will be explained: (1) audio recording made of each interview, (2) audio recording will be transcribed, (3) transcription sent to interviewee for accuracy, (4) (once approved by interviewee) the interview transcript AND their survey responses will serve as the data set to be analyzed for the study.
- Opportunity for participant to ask questions before beginning.

#### Step 2: Informed Consent Letter

- Informed Consent Letter will be provided via email in advance of the interview.
- Informed Consent will be verbally described by the researcher at the beginning of each interview – including the use of audio recording and means of withdrawing from the study.
- Informed Consent Letter will be signed by participants before interview begins.

#### Step 3: Interview

- Confirm / Update Demographical Details:
  - Name:
  - Age:
  - Gender:
  - Contact: email, phone, address, etc.
  - Leadership Role:
  - Ministry Context:
- Background / Experience Details:
  - How long have you served in ministry leadership?
  - When, where, and how did you complete ministry training?

- What were some of the most significant/influential people or elements to your ministry training?
1. RQ 1 – How does intuition inform leadership decisions, problem-solving, and direction of the sample ministry leaders?
    - a. How do you define intuition when it comes to ministry leadership?
    - b. How do you distinguish discernment and intuition? Same? Similar? Different?
    - c. Do you consider your intuition to be trustworthy and reliable?
    - d. How would you describe your own use of intuition in the course of your ministry leadership?
      - i. Can you tell me about a specific example of using intuition in the course of your ministry leadership (i.e. decision making, problem solving, direction setting)? *Aim to get participant out of rigid Q&A and into more of a free-flowing storytelling.* Or, if further prompts are necessary:
        1. Tell me about a decision you've made in the last few days/weeks.
        2. In what ways did you use your intuition?
      - ii. Can you tell me about another example of using intuition?
    - e. Tell me how those decisions/examples proved to be right or wrong (good or bad).
    - f. How frequent is your use of intuition in leadership? Please explain/describe.
  2. RQ 2 – What language and/or processes are used to communicate intuitive wisdom to others on your team or in your congregation (rationalization process)?
    - a. Tell me how you feel about sharing your intuitive decisions with your team or congregation.
      - i. How do you prepare to share with others – ad hoc? Intentional process?
      - ii. How long do you typically wait before sharing with others?
      - iii. How do they typically respond?
      - iv. What language or processes have you found to be most helpful in making sense of your intuitive wisdom?
    - b. After you've made an intuitive decision, when do you feel it necessary (if at all), to back it up with data?
    - c. Can you tell me about a specific example of when this went really well – i.e. your intuitive wisdom was well-received and embraced?

- d. Can you tell me about a time when this did not go well – i.e. your intuitive wisdom was misunderstood, confused, rejected, not embraced?
3. RQ 3 – Have your intuitive abilities improved over time to become more reliable?
    - a. Do you find your greatest leadership moments in your early years or later years? Why? Please explain.
    - b. Do you find yourself relying on intuition more or less as you get older? Why do you think that is the case?
    - c. What have been some of the most significant and influential elements in shaping your own intuitive wisdom and/or leadership?
    - d. What safeguards have you put in place to mitigate the risks and enhance the power of intuitive wisdom?
  4. RQ 4 – How have you gone about developing intuitive abilities in emerging leaders?
    - a. Do you have an intentional plan/model/approach to developing emerging leaders? (Yes/No)
      - i. If yes, what are some of the core aspects of your approach?
      - ii. If no, can you describe some of the more common things you find yourself doing/saying/teaching emerging leaders?
    - b. Tell me about one of your favorite success stories of raising up another leader.
 

*Aim to get participant out of rigid Q&A into free-flow storytelling.*

      - i. What did you do in that journey?
      - ii. What did you say/teach in that journey?
      - iii. What did you model in that journey?
      - iv. What did you expose them to in that journey?
      - v. In your estimation, what were the most impacting things in forming that leader?
    - c. Can you tell me about another leader you experienced great success in developing?
  5. Final Roundoff:
    - a. Restate my definition of intuition and compare with their definition (response to question 1.a above). Based on our discussion today, would you stand by your definition of intuitive wisdom? Why or why not?
    - b. Is there anything else you'd like to say or include?
    - c. Were there any questions you expected me to ask that I did not ask?

Step 4: Conclusion, Thanks, & Consent

- Thank Participant for their time and insight.
- Review next steps from here: (1) audio recording made of each interview, (2) audio recording will be transcribed, (3) transcription sent to interviewee for accuracy, (4) (once approved by interviewee) the interview transcript AND their survey responses will serve as the data set to be analyzed for the study.
- Final Consent – “Are you happy for me to proceed with the transcription of this interview as described?” (Yes / No).
- That concludes our interview. Thank you very much. The audio recording will now be turned off.

**APPENDIX D****INFORMED CONSENT LETTER*****INTUITIVE WISDOM IN LEADERSHIP:******Exploring the Exercise of Intuitive Wisdom Among Ministry Leaders in New Zealand.***

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Clint Ussher from Asbury Theological Seminary (USA). You are invited because you have been identified as one who uses intuitive wisdom to great advantage in your own ministry leadership. This has been confirmed through your nomination by one of your ministry colleagues, and your own responses to the pre-qualifying online survey (REI).

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to meet with Clint Ussher for an in-depth interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will occur at a mutually agreed location where you will not be overheard (to protect your privacy). An audio recording of the interview will be made and later transcribed. A copy of the transcription will be sent to you to offer any further clarifications or amendments. All files will be kept securely under password protection and permanently deleted or destroyed 6-12 months after Clint's graduation in May 2019. Participating in this study will involve no cost to you other than your time.

The only people who will know that you are in the study are yourself, Clint Ussher, and those whom you tell. If anyone else is given information about you, they will not know your name. A generic indicator will be used instead of your name (i.e. Leader A; Leader B; etc.).

If something makes you feel bad or uncomfortable while you are in the study, please tell Clint Ussher. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want.

You can ask Clint Ussher questions any time about anything in this study.

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

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Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

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Date Signed

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