

# **Creative Worlds**

## **Creative Freedom in Art and Ministry in a small Community**

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*a phenomenological description of the lived experience  
of creative freedom in art and ministry practices*

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## **Abstract**

The Integrative Paper proposes research in ministry as a detailed development and integration of theological and theoretical understanding of the idea of creative freedom. The paper also proposes a relationship between the idea of creative freedom and the need to remain motivated in professional art and ministry practices.

Development of research in ministry builds upon the unfolding of meaning in St. Stephen's prerequisite theology and theory courses, as well as electives and independent studies. Integrated research examines conversations as a result of a pilot project undertaken to inquire into the nature of innovative research and how to apply research findings to the practices of ministry. Innovative research is my journey of appreciative inquiry into the essence of experience of being an artist whose ministry is not art related, yet profoundly affected by creative freedom in my art practices.

My research is based on the assumption that there is a significant relationship between the experience of creative freedom and the practices of ministry, as relevant to the significant relationship between experience of creative freedom and personal spiritual growth.

I will use a systematic and disciplined process of reflective inquiry to make these relationships explicit. By writing about my lived experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom, I consciously make the experience meaningful to my own analysis as well as meaningful for the readers of my research findings. My lived experience is included as a practice of phenomenological writing, integrated as story into the content of this paper. Creative freedom also offers a novel opening and closing to my research in the form of a *prologue* and *epilogue* drawn from the autobiographical grounding of my experience.

A phenomenological approach is proposed as an effective methodology for exploring the meaning of theological, theoretical, as well as philosophical foundations for the experience of creative freedom.

Four predominant themes have emerged from my inquiry and analysis.

They are dynamic, inspirational, contextual, and enduring themes.

These themes have led to a clearly defined issue: namely, the emergence of a need to sustain and maintain motivation for the practice of art and ministry. One way to meet this need is my practice and experience of creative freedom. The issue emerges as primary when I examine the meanings of my lived experience of being an artist as well as a spiritual leader in a small island community. My description of lived experience embodies the essence of creative freedom.

Art and ministry in a small island community are both a lonely space and a fulfilling place. As well, there is a recurring secondary issue of how I plan to deal with the erosion or loss of motivation.

### ***Prologue***

Every morning before the sun rises, I leave the house for my Benedictine walk.<sup>1</sup> Outside, among the giant trees the silence is broken by my footsteps and the wakeup call of songbirds. This is my time of divine communion. When my heart is overwhelmed, I am strengthened by His voice. When my soul delights, I am motivated to engage the new day with resolve. Yesterday was an overwhelming day as I remembered the pressing needs of others. Two teenagers are oppressed by thoughts of suicide. Another family has broken apart. Another marriage dissolves. A friend suffers from liver cancer and another from MS. I pray for wisdom and I pray for healing. I question if the weight of it all comes with the calling to ministry?

*“My load is light and my burden is easy,”* He answers.

My words sound like a monologue. But, I know He listens.

“But Lord, there are also days for celebrating the birth of a grandchild, the new birth of a fellow islander, and times when wings of healing touch our community of faith.

“Yes, thank you. There is victory in faith when adversity is resolved, and my heart is filled with peace. But, my studio clamors for occupation. Except for an occasional drawing or painting, my voluntary sabbatical has turned into years of graduate study. I long to renew *drawing upon* my creative source. You know writing poetry gives me release, and in the back of my mind a new novel stirs.”

My pace quickens down a slight grade of the road.

“Thank you Lord for prayer in the spirit.”

The experience of my Benedictine walk is fulfilling. Something rises within me. Now to find the words and the images with which I may share with others what delight I find in my creative worlds.

I reflect on my spiritual quest.

The tide of my progress is an alternating rhythm of separation and reunion and of promise and deliverance. A drawing, a painting, a prayer, a discipleship session, a place of solitary harmony and a place of community engagement, of suffering and endurance, I make my way home as the sun rises above the trees.

I am surrounded by my creative worlds. I pour myself a cup of hot coffee. The day has begun. And this is a day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.

## Introduction

*“I bring it up to my fellows, my fellow human beings – those, at any rate, however few, who may chance upon this writing, that we may express together, I and my readers, from what depths we must cry. My motive, in testifying not only to my past, but also to my present condition, writing here is for others to read what I am aware of day by day.”* Confessions of Saint Augustine.<sup>2</sup>

My practice of ministry is multi-tasked with special focus on the teaching of discipleship programs. However, my findings do not suggest a methodology for applying the idea of creative

freedom to processes of art-making as therapeutic or remedial strategies to sustain effective ministry practices. Instead, my findings suggest a foundational and philosophical underpinning to the experience of being an artist in ministry. While one coexists with the other, art and ministry remain mutually independent. They are distinctly positive environments where creative freedom can be experienced independently whether in the studio or on the pulpit. Yet, in a domain of spiritual transformation, to which I readily submit, one will have a profound effect on the other.

My research is based on the assumption that there is a significant relationship between the experience of creative freedom and the practices of ministry. This relationship comprises my domains or spheres of influence: art, critical thought, and spirituality. These are the spheres of influence that compete for my attention in shaping my worldview. It's where I live. I even drew a map of my creative worlds (Appendix 1).

However, by assuming there is a relationship between the experience of creative freedom and the practices of ministry, I risk becoming immersed in a very complex project that touches on psychology and sociology. In context of meaning for ministry in a small island community, the project may also suggest an ethnographic and social science approach. In addition, the idea of creative freedom suggests not one but two phenomena, creativity and freedom. Perhaps even three were I to include motivation as a phenomenon. Such complexities are outside the scope of my research and dissertation. I propose therefore, a hybrid phenomenon of *creative freedom* that is not psychological or sociological, nor is it ethnographic or scientific. Instead, creative freedom as a phenomenon is a *lived experience* of freedom of creative inspiration and expression rather than a *moral freedom* initiated by the mind through education. My creative freedom is an experienced freedom and not a moral freedom.

Dutch psychologist Frederick Buytendijk <sup>3</sup> who published a discourse on the subject of experienced and moral freedom, offers *experienced freedom* as the essence of “clarity of pure spirituality that opens a door to another climate,” <sup>4</sup> as would a small child experience such freedom. In some ways, I am like a child when I experience creative freedom in my studio or on location, whether I draw, paint or write. I search for the open door to another climate of deeper spiritual understanding of the creative freedom I have cherished for the most part of adult life. Yet, I can still remember my first experience as a child, when I saw a new open door that led to another climate known as art. I was five years old. The door led into an old 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch warehouse in Zwolle, the city of my birth. The warehouse was home to an artist who gave drawing lessons.

A phenomenological approach is proposed as an effective methodology for exploring the meaning of theological, theoretical, as well as philosophical foundations for the experience of creative freedom. Needless to say, the experience of creative freedom is rooted in my domain of art. But, the experience of art has also affected my critical thought and spirituality. Yet, I do not propose an indepth analysis of what is art. Many have done an exhaustive and better study of that subject than I have. Suffice it to say, art in my creative domain is the practice of disciplines and techniques to transform inspiration into a visual language of images and words. Brueggemann called it “prophetic imagination,” <sup>5</sup> and Wuthnow called it “creative spirituality.” <sup>6</sup> I have studied, practiced, and perfected those disciplines and techniques over many decades. Therein lies the secret of my motivation. Because I am competent in the practices of art-making, I am confident that ideas and inspiration will emerge as artwork. This emergence of artwork will continue to give me that profound sense of wonder to affirm the experience of creative freedom in my spiritual journey.



Four predominant themes have emerged from my inquiry and analysis.

They are dynamic, inspirational, contextual, and enduring themes.

I have indentified a *dynamic* theme of wonder in the creation of art in my private studio space. I have experienced a profound wonder when the dynamic theme extended beyond the studio to a public place where I heard my poetry performed as music. I have also indentified an *inspirational* theme of positive pleasure as a result of appreciating art, and a *contextual* theme of motivation in art and ministry as a result of creative freedom. An *enduring* theme of self-care in ministry permeates the process of doctoral studies and the rigours of academic research.

Needless to say, an over-abundance of motivation has its antithesis in a recurring condition of erosion or loss of motivation. By this I mean, that ensuring self-care must include practices of faith to bolster the human spirit. Nowhere are those practices more evident than during visits to major exhibitions of the masters in nearby galleries, or the discovery of a new book on the history of art. These visits are integral to my self-care.

I want to replenish my depleted creative energy. There are so many things I can do. All of them inspirational. I spend an hour or so browsing through my library. Nothing stands out.

In the drawer of my desk, stuffed into the back, I find a clear plastic folder containing a number of catalogues I have collected over the years. These are catalogues of prominent exhibitions of silverpoint drawings, mainly in the United States.

One catalogue is from Savanna, Georgia. It announces a silverpoint exhibition. The exhibition includes three of my drawings. I can feel excitement rushing through me. I want to draw. I begin the process of replenishment by engaging a ritual of preparation. I look for ideas for a new drawing. I look for the proper paper. I prepare the paper with a calcium-carbonate ground. I get ready to draw. Perhaps this drawing will be in gold or copper point, or silver, or all three in one drawing.

Tomorrow is a new day. I can hardly wait to begin drawing. My preparation ritual is finished. I am what the cliché claims to be *pumped*. My website says “welcome to my creative world.” <sup>7</sup>

In addition to reflecting on four themes, I add the lived experience of three spheres of influence or domains (art, critical thought, and spirituality) and three worlds (positive, invented, and functional). All these themes, domains, and worlds, their respective meanings and respective theological and theoretical soils, have an autobiographical grounding in my research. After all, this is *my* story, the aggregate of which comprises my creative worlds, at times as complex as an adventure of faith, and at other times as simple as a day in the life of an artist.

### **Autobiographical Grounding of the Research**

This Integrated Paper is a prelude to phenomenological writing as I *pull my pen across the page and join the real time* of my lived experience.

It’s early in the morning. Dawn is but minutes old, born into a world of sandstone cliffs and still sleeping trees. Fir and cedar and hemlock. I am awake in the lineup, ready to board. Once settled in the passenger lounge of the ferry, I relax for the crossing. It is time to slip into my imagination outside a starboard window. The ocean draws me to a reservoir of abundant meaning. Words come like *concetto* ideas carried on infant sunbeams and the rush of a cold wake. I sail between the rusting hulls of floating freighters waiting for their turn at the loading dock. I am free at last to soar with eagles. Finally it’s just me and my paper.

I have been captivated by the world of art and spirituality long before I undertook my Doctoral journey. In what would come to be known as creative worlds, my captivation began as a young child of five when I first attended formal drawing classes in an old medieval 17th

Century warehouse. My earliest recollection of art's role in spirituality was also at age five. My father took me to a Benedictine Monastery in my city of birth, Zwolle, the Netherlands. There we watched monks create magnificent paintings on the walls of their chapel.

Sixty years later, I entered a chapel of another kind. St.Stephen's College in Edmonton offered a sacred space of graduate studies in art and spirituality to nourish the creative thirst in my spirit. I embarked on a renewed journey of inquiry that manifested in my progressive transformation as artist, author, and mentor.

This is the story of my lived experience of ministry in a small community on a small island on Canada's west coast. This is the story of my lived experience as an artist. The story is embedded with memories of events and people past and present. The experience focuses on my need to stay motivated during ministry. The need extends to include the motivation of others. I recommend the experience as transferable to those who practice ministry in small and often isolated communities. Needless to say, the transference of my experience is not restricted to small or isolated communities.

Transference applies to all those involved in human service. In particular, the unfolding of my story concerns the experience of creative freedom. Central to the gradual unfolding of ideas are thoughts concerning what is it about the experience of creative freedom that keeps me motivated in ministry in a small island community?

Prophetic words from times past echo in my mind. *"If you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free... and you shall be free indeed."*<sup>8</sup>

Creative freedom is presented as a lived experience description that embodies a daily spiritual and creative practice of ministry in its broadest sense of the term. The experience also

examines the role of poetry in my story.<sup>9</sup> This broad sense comprises an integration of theological, theoretical, practical, personal and professional approaches to life as an artist and teacher. Creative freedom is the reason for my motivation in ministry. But, creative freedom is not confined to those who are themselves artists. Instead the experience is posited as motivational for all who desire a deeper understanding of creativity's role in concepts and practices of spirituality.

### **Key Elements that form the Research Question**

#### **Phenomenological Questioning:**

My interest is creative freedom. It is the essence of my experience of the creative worlds in which I live. Creative freedom is the freedom to experience creativity in everything I do, without constraints of theological, theoretical, cultural, even material impositions. Therefore, creative freedom as a phenomenon appears to be grander than a simpler phenomenology of sleeping or eating for example. Neither is it two phenomena of creativity *and* freedom. Creative freedom is one phenomenon, albeit it a hybrid. Creative freedom appears to transcend other, perhaps more complex, phenomena such as the act of creating art or acts of ministry practices. Thus begins my journey into phenomenological questioning. Central to my phenomenological questioning are the thoughts concerning what is it about the experience of creative freedom that keeps me motivated in ministry in a small island community? What is the essence of that experience?

What is it really like to live in my creative worlds of spontaneous ideation, frequent illumination, *wonder*-full innovation, disciplined incubation, diverse expression, and manifold fruition? What is the experience like as a synthesis of my domains of art, critical thought, and

spirituality? It has never been my intent to boast about the experiences of my creative journey, but profound those experiences are nevertheless. From common everyday routines to grand adventures, from daily faith to divine intervention and miracles, from small sketches to large paintings, from poems to epics to novels, there is *never a dull moment*. And the experiences are very real and embodied in real people in real time. I can't help but want to shout it from the rooftops, despite a volume of questions that outweigh the answers.

It's as if there is a phenomenology of creative freedom.

It is a phenomenology of creative freedom in the lived experience of nearly  
seventy years.

What is it like to be an artist?

What is it like to be an artist and spiritual leader?

What is creative freedom like?

What is it like to be an artist and spiritual leader in a small island community?

What is it about my experience of creative freedom that may motivate others?

The purpose of my phenomenological study is not only to understand this phenomenon of creative freedom, but also to ask how others may understand this phenomenon as having meaning in their lived experiences. Whether their lived experiences comprise professional practices of engagement in ministry as spiritual care providers, sharing my experiences is the essence of ministry.

*"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."*<sup>10</sup> Although, having *"my bowels refreshed"*<sup>11</sup> is perhaps too archaic to properly express the outcome of sharing my lived experience with others.

At this stage in my research, creative freedom will be generally defined as: *the experience of expressing new ideas with the option to say yes or no without constraints that force one or the other*. Creative freedom is the freedom to experience creativity in everything I do, without constraints of theological, theoretical, cultural, even material impositions.

But, what is it that I am attempting to discover and describe through my experience of creative freedom?

In what ways can others in professional and ministry practices engage their respective communities through creative freedom?

What happens when people are inspired by creative freedom?

The answer is, they are motivated. Although not a phenomenon and probably more in line with psychology and sociology, people are motivated nevertheless.

But, how will this help me craft my phenomenological questioning?

The answer lies in the process of digging deep into my experience and unfolding the essence of my journey.

My life in art and ministry craves creative freedom.

Any act or practice of such creative freedom is the result of the birth of an idea, or *concetto* as Michelangelo called it. I like his use of the word *concetto*. It has that beyond-taken-for-grantedness sound to it. The expression of a *concetto* or idea focuses on dominant factors including the cognitive approach of a process that engages the idea. The *concetto* idea includes the attempt to fashion the idea into a product which is the nature of the creative person. And the place of crafting, wherever creativity may flourish in professional practices, for example in the studio, in the classroom, or in a church, is the space of my creative worlds.

My ideas need space.

And it all begins with the idea, the *concetto*, planted in the imagination where there are no limits, and where incubation is watered by inspiration.

In September of 2000, the *Ontario College of Art & Design*, now known as *OCAD University* from which I graduated in 1968, launched an expansion initiative titled, *Ideas Need Space*. It was a capital campaign to raise \$14 million dollars from the private sector to build the university's ambitious expansion project. The project, although always in need of more space, was completed in 2010.

Their ideas need space, and so do mine.

The Doctor of Ministry program is a valuable space in which to reflect on my ideas of discovery and transformation.

My research and the proposed Dissertation to complete the St. Stephen's College Doctor of Ministry Program are a description of my lived experience designed to give my ideas of creative freedom a scholarly space in which to motivate and inspire myself and others.

## **Identification of Themes**

As stated in my Introduction, four predominant themes have emerged from my inquiry and analysis. They are dynamic, inspirational, contextual, and enduring themes. Underpinning these themes are the values and purposes of my experience of life that determine the meaning I ascribe to my spiritual journey and artistic journey. This meaning has as its mentor the theological and theoretical soil in which my roots are planted.

By a **dynamic theme** of creative freedom I mean the experience of creating art with a sense of wonder. That wonder is expressed in a variety of media and a wide range of topics in whatever genre of my choice. Creative freedom liberates me to examine myself and discover

who I am in my passion for all things creative, from the material to the divine. It is a *dynamic* theme of wonder in the creation of art in my private studio space. I experienced a profound wonder when the dynamic theme extended beyond the studio to a public place where I heard my poetry performed as music.

The **inspirational theme** of positive pleasure recognizes I have the discipline and professional skills with which to communicate through the artwork itself. In addition I am inspired by the positive and cognitive pleasures of art connoisseurship and criticism. One need not be an artist to experience this pleasure. The invitation is open to all who desire to immerse themselves in an aesthetic of beauty embedded in art. That positive pleasure accumulates in a density of affirmative self-awareness sufficient to nourish the human spirit for years to come. Researchers such as Rolf Reber and Christian Unkelbach have contributed extensive research on subjects of “processing fluency and aesthetic pleasure as well as beauty in the perceiver’s processing experience,”<sup>12</sup> and the question, “the density hypothesis: why positive information is processed faster?”<sup>13</sup>

The **contextual theme** of motivation is the result of creative freedom and its positive pleasure integrated in the experience of ministry practices. I will explain this further on in the *context of ministry*.

By an **enduring theme** of self-care I mean the practice of impressing upon myself and others the need to take care of ourselves during our respective spiritual journeys. Motivation for self-care is a *wonder*-full aspect of the spiritual journey, as is motivation for professional practices. But, motivation also calls for self-control to ensure that transformation is practiced in manageable bites, less it becomes overwhelming and thus render oneself incapacitated or burned-out.



As I reflect on these four themes, there emerges a pattern of study that has prevailed throughout the Doctor of Ministry program. It is a transformative pattern that draws me more into a process of transformation rather than the anticipation of an end result. As such, my approach to and my experience of the Doctor of Ministry program changed because I changed. That change is one of personal self-discovery. It's not that various course studies and assignments were no longer significant, but that I am becoming more dynamic and more inspired. I am more aware of the context in which I find the essence of my *being*, as artist and ministry worker, evolve in a small island community. It's not just that the program is one of endurance. I have embraced the DMin journey as one of endurance *and* transformational in personal growth of creative freedom. The Dissertation will be my work of art. It's evocative and expressive style aims to draw me and others deeper into the description and appreciation of my lived experience.

### **The Issue**

These themes have led to a clearly defined issue: namely, the emergence of a need to sustain and maintain motivation for the practice of art and ministry. One way to meet this need is my practice and experience of creative freedom. The issue emerges as primary when I examine the meanings of my lived experience of being both an artist as well as a spiritual leader in a small island community. Therefore my description of lived experience embodies the essence of creative freedom.

### **Research Focus and Purpose**

My focus is a greater understanding of the meaning of my creative worlds and how these worlds transform me in the process of exploration and discovery.

However, “*Feedback for Dissertation proposal or Design*” (St.Stephen’s College) relies extensively on the project part of the Doctor of Ministry program. This may be especially suited for those in careers of professional practices such as health care, chaplaincy, art therapy, education, and denominational ministry practices, etc.

But, when I began the Doctor of Ministry program it was established and agreed by the Department that what I proposed to aim for in my research was not typical of a project-like methodology. For that reason I chose research in ministry as my focus.

As such, it was more philosophical and hence suitable for conversations surrounding a project that was by nature a lived experience of a phenomenon. Hence the phenomenological approach. However, the emergence of phenomenology as my research method did not become clear until well into the program.

Nevertheless, my purpose is therefore to demonstrate that my research comprises a progressive understanding of the phenomenon of creative freedom. The issue, themes and purpose, have led to formulating my research questions.

## **The Research Question**

*“And education begins with asking questions, because that’s how we invent the future.”* Drew

Gilpin Faust, President, Harvard University.<sup>14</sup>

The research question is birthed from a position that presumes my creative freedom as one phenomenon, being a hybrid of creativity and experienced freedom.

That position is a concept of my creative worlds embodied in creative freedom in art as motivation for ministry in a small island community. The research question unfolds as a

phenomenological description of the lived experience of creative freedom in art and ministry practices. The position explores the phenomenology of creative freedom. Like the proverbial logarithm of a parabolic curve, the phenomenology of creative freedom escalates into a progression of unfolding questions.

1. What is creative freedom like?
2. What is the experience of creative freedom like for spiritual care providers?
3. What is the experience like for artists especially in a small island community?
4. What is the meaning of creative freedom in my art and ministry practices?
5. What is it like to be an artist *and* spiritual leader in a small island community?
6. How may others understand creative freedom as having meaning?
7. How may others nurture and experience creative worlds of their own?

These questions should lead to a simple phenomenological question at the core of my research and methodology.

**The Core Question:**

What is creative freedom like?

**Clarification of assumptions that underlie the question:**

1. My experience of creative freedom deepens my understanding of ministry. The processes or activities of creating art and ministry practices are one and the same whether symbolically, metaphorically or realistically.

2. My experience of creative freedom such as writing poetry, helps me know myself better. My writing is phenomenological as a story of autoethnographic self, that is, my story is in context of me and my relationship to people.

3. Knowing myself better (in terms of human and divine experience of *presence*) enables me to be a more informed leader. By knowing myself better positionally, I am self-aware that I am *in the world and not of it*. By knowing my identity *in Christ*, I am able to engage my body, my mind and faculties, and my human spirit, in professional practices of art and ministry.

4. The experience of creative freedom keeps me motivated in ministry in a small island community. My studio is a place of retreat and inspiration where the process of personal transformation is expressed in drawing, painting, and creative writing. It is the residency of my *creative worlds*, where I return whenever the complexities of people in ministry overwhelm me. It is a sacred place of worship and meditation that motivates me to keep strong in my faith. When motivated, I am able to find joy and satisfaction in seeing the experience *transferable* to others through a process of discipleship and mentorship.

5. The issue of sustainable motivation in the practice of ministry in a small community is a valid issue. I posit that the issue is valid and common, as has been my experience.

### **The Context of Ministry**

*“It’s finally just me and the paper. To pull a line across the page is to feel a quickening of brain and muscle. To draw is to join real time.”* John Gould <sup>15</sup>

The context of ministry is the position that my creative worlds are one and the same, whether influenced by art, critical thought, and spirituality, or experienced as a positive environment, a world of invention, and a world of functionality. They intertwine as a heuristic web of engagement, immersion, incubation, inspiration, and illumination that touches every aspect of my life. Hence the experience of creative freedom is integral to everything I do. Van

Manen posits that phenomenology is *doing*. In doing phenomenology, “even writing itself is a reflective component of the phenomenological method. To write is to reflect.”<sup>16</sup> Ministry is *doing*. I do ministry as an artist, author and mentor. Reflection is therefore looking back and looking ahead to my ministry practices of *doing* as a self-awareness of *being* an artist and *being* in ministry.

### **Reflecting on creative freedom in art:**

“Phenomenology craves creativity,” said van Manen.<sup>17</sup> Creative freedom according to scholars such as Mumford,<sup>18</sup> Ferlic,<sup>19</sup> Nelson and Rawlings,<sup>20</sup> van Manen,<sup>21</sup> Moustakas<sup>22</sup> *et al*, support the idea that creativity and freedom are phenomena. I posit, however, that creative freedom is a hybrid of creativity and freedom as one phenomenon embracing the essence of an experience of inspiration. That essence is the birth of an idea, the *conchetto*. The essence of the experience is an inspirational abandon to the cravings of creativity, cravings that are virtually impossible to explain. I cannot be creative unless I am free and I cannot be free unless I am creative. Creative freedom is *being* me. Spirituality is being creatively free in Christ.

A young and aspiring art student once asked me, “*how can I be so inspired as you are and do what you do?*” My answer was not a litany of how-to’s, nor a plethora of theoretical explanations. In the spirit of *doing* phenomenology my answer was simply three words. “*Draw, draw, draw!*”

Scholars also conclude that research on the essence of the creative experience and its expressive freedoms is scant.

My experience has always been to spend more time drawing and less time trying to explain myself. The Doctor of Ministry program at St.Stephen’s College, however, has reversed the experience into spending more time explaining myself instead of drawing. Therefore I crave

a return to drawing (and writing poetry) in the studio. Creative freedom is a phenomenon that is *just me and the paper*. I came across a note about freedom in one of my journals. It looks back to my experimentation with a series of spontaneous drawings I titled *the concetto drawings*.

“I suddenly sense a freedom I have not known before in my work. It is as if the *concetto* drawings have ushered in a new season of abandonment. Who cares what’s in or out, vogue or traditional, old or new, representational or abstract, popular or not? I simply don’t care anymore. I will draw and paint what brings me joy and pleasure, and what gives me satisfaction and fulfillment with no quotas, no dictated styles, no box, and no constraints.”<sup>23</sup>

I return again and again to that very first act of creative freedom namely the doodle. Or, in my style of writing poetry, simple word juxtapositions jotted down in a small notebook. The process is a like a thought progression of *doing* phenomenology to affirm the position that phenomenology *is* doing, and to posit a phenomenology of doodling. Hence, one experience of the phenomenon is doodling. Doodling is that primal child-like step towards creative freedom whether in images or in words. I doodle every day and have since I was young enough to hold a pencil. At the age of five I began taking formal drawing lessons. Sixty-nine years later, I am still doodling. The doodle is the essence of the first step in creating a visual or word picture. Then come the sketch and after that the drawing. My reflections on creative freedom in art are transferable to the experience of creative freedom in ministry.

### **Reflecting on creative freedom in ministry:**

Creative freedom in ministry has its *doodling* as well, albeit a form of *prophetic* doodling. Similarly, the doodle is an inspirational thought from the spirit of God, a prophetic glimpse. Then comes the study and after that, the preparation, the meditation, and finally the outline of a message.

My journals and notebooks are filled with spiritual inspiration from meditating on Scripture and from the experiences of daily life. The phenomenon of creative freedom is the experience of divine inspiration that leads to a greater sense of wonder as the spirit-led life is manifest in the essence of the experience itself. I crave a spirituality that posits “the ordinary human world and everyday life as the principal context for the spiritual path (in ministry) and for the quest of authenticity.”<sup>24</sup>

My context of ministry is defined by who I am and how I minister in our small island community. Ministry is also defined by how I minister to the community at large using online media for discipleship and mentoring. In keeping with St. Stephen’s definition of ministry, my ministry embodies a lived experience in our island community of faith as a respected artist and spiritual leader. I am inspired by the proliferation of arts and crafts on the island. Such inspiration motivates me to press on with my journey of faith despite recurring feelings of isolation and alienation. Inspiration motivates me to hear the spirit and write and teach new discipleship material, and to interact with the community.

Whether my inquiry discovers more of Jones’ theological worlds, Sheldrake’s spiritual world,<sup>25</sup> Bright’s kingdom of God,<sup>26</sup> and Huntley’s divine proportions,<sup>27</sup> the collective experience is one of creative freedom. When studied from a philosophical and applied perspective, creativity emerges as a significant and uniquely human experience. The phenomenological method is the philosophical method best suited to the study of human experience. The phenomenological method is recognized by scholars such as Max van Manen and Bas Levering.<sup>28</sup> He and Max van Manen became increasingly interested in the problem of communicating online by writing with students in the context of a seminar. I will use the phenomenological method from a philosophical and applied perspective to organize my research

and to interpret its findings. My reflections arise from conversations concerning the experience of creative freedom as I perceive the nature and meaning of the creative act itself, and how my interpretations extend beyond the artistic to embrace the interaction of ministry with a small island community.

This interaction is best demonstrated in context of ministry as the engagement of culture in a small community – culture being the environment in which a community of faith grows. My ministry as such is integrated into the activities of the *Church On the Rock*, the *Hope Centre*, and my art studio. My activities include contributing art and spiritual writings to the local newspaper. I participate in ecumenical activities. I participate in art education activities in the local elementary school. As an artist, I mentor young people who wish to pursue the arts. As a spiritual leader I counsel people of all ages to take steps of faith on their respective journeys of life. I officiate at marriage ceremonies and funerals. I preach and teach in the church, and I retreat to my studio to create art. At least once a week I venture to favourite coffee shops to sketch people and interact with the public.

The context of ministry embodies a distinct freedom to give birth to the *conchetto* idea in the form of teachings and discipleship initiatives that embraces *just me and the divine*. I will preach, teach, and write as a result of the experience of creative freedom to bring me joy and pleasure. I am filled with divine satisfaction and fulfillment with no specified liturgies, no prescribed doctrines, and no dogmatic boxes. The essence of the phenomenon as a spiritual practice is creative freedom.

*“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* <sup>29</sup>



I cannot be in ministry unless I am free and I cannot be free unless I am creative. Creative freedom in ministry is *being* me. Being me, is intrinsically and inseparably tied to being *in Christ*. Spirituality is being creatively free in Christ.

These activities affirm St. Stephen's definition of ministry as comprising my involvement in human service in which I am self-reflectively aware of the nurturing quality of my activities. As a result, I am committed to the improvement and nurture of people in our island community and beyond. My commitment is specifically related to such fields as education, organizational management, church services, counseling, mentoring, spiritual practices, and the arts. My lived experience of ministry in a small island community together with my St. Stephen's Doctoral journey, have emerged in proper phenomenological questioning.

*How can my experience of creative freedom have meaning for others who are artists and spiritual care providers in communities of faith especially in small communities?*

Yet, the experience is not limited to small communities, or communities of faith, nor is it limited to artists and spiritual care providers. It is equally important to ask, *how can my experience of creative freedom have meaning for others?*

### **The Lived Experience of Art and Ministry in a Small Island Community**

Gabriola Island is a small community of 4000 people who in many ways comprise a culture of their own. That culture is expressed in a diversity of arts and crafts, religious beliefs, and demographics that include a large proportion of seniors and retirees. Yet, more and more young families are moving to Gabriola to get away from it all. They come with more children including teens. The island's community of faith is represented by four traditional

denominations, and a selection of other faith traditions. Annually, my wife and I, as founders of the *Church On The Rock* (1993),<sup>30</sup> participate in or host two interfaith events: the *International Women's Day of Prayer*, and the *Annual Church Unity Service*.

My lived experience in this community of faith is as a respected artist and spiritual leader. I am inspired by the proliferation of arts and crafts on the island. The island's spectacular natural surroundings forests and ocean are a daily inspiration as well. Whether I choose to express myself in abstract or representational art, or through the writing of fiction and poetry, I am able to sustain a vibrant experience to continue the journey. Inspiration motivates me to press on with my journey of faith despite recurring feelings of isolation and alienation.

The lived experience of over thirty-three years, since I first entered the ministry and my subsequent ordination as a minister, have demonstrated that the creation of art has profoundly affected my motivation to remain committed to the journey of faith. Motivation also includes the lived experience of being surrounded in my home by a rich environment of drawings and paintings, as well as art books in my collection. My home is like a gallery.

I recall how the issue of motivation was illuminated by my experience of the performance of Joseph Glaser's tone poem "*Cerulean*" by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO). Creative freedom resulted in a *wonder*-full interaction between myself and the young composer Joseph Glaser, as we shared mutual *flights of fancy*. As I continued with writing the unfinished epic, and Joseph Glaser began composing the music, the act of chronicling our communication kept me motivated. Embodied in my creative worlds is the position that the creation and appreciation of art are primary sources of motivation.

Using vocative terms explicated by Max van Manen and Clark Moustakas, my experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom turned into *ecstasy*<sup>31</sup> *as delight in inspiration*<sup>32</sup> *through art towards sustainable motivation for ministry in a small island community.*

“This ‘stepping outside of oneself’ of *ecstasy* ( Ekstasis, the Ecstatic Quotodian), is experienced as a deranged astonishment or distracted wonder: re-seeing the world ecstatically through the re-turning and re-focusing of the phenomenological glance to the world as lived.”<sup>33</sup>

“If I am investigating the meaning of *delight*, then delight hovers nearby and follows me around,”<sup>34</sup>

Creative freedom is the lived experience of seeing the world ecstatically as a delight in inspiration through my art, while a multitude of *conchetto* ideas hover nearby and follow me around. That experience of ecstasy, for example, as delight in hearing my poetry expressed as music had a direct effect on me. It motivated me to write a spiritual discipleship course titled: “*I Believe: Negotiables and Non-negotiables.*”<sup>35</sup> And all that in a small island community where sometimes the fog is so dense I cannot see the driveway. Or the people are so stubborn, I am tempted to voice my biased criticism towards all the causes the island’s residents chose to protest, over decades of suspicion towards my faith notwithstanding.

But, this proposal towards a dissertation is not about the art itself, or the writing of poetry, or music. Nor is it about a small island community. It is about the lived experience of ecstasy as delight that flows through me because of my practice of art forms. This inspires and encourages me as well as others, especially those in ministry. The phenomenon *is* the source of my energy, grounded in a rich description of my lived experience.

## **Rationale for the Research**

My research is based on the assumption that there is a significant relationship between the experience of creative freedom and the practices of ministry. This experience is relevant to the significant relationship between experience of creative freedom and personal spiritual growth. The experience of creative freedom encourages the nurture of a positive environment that is carefully constructed. I have demonstrated this *construction* over the length of my lived journey, through art-making and art appreciation. Nevertheless, I am careful not to presume that art-making and art appreciation are the only characteristics of a significant relationship between the experience of creative freedom and the practices of ministry. There are many other characteristics which are outside the parameters of my research and experience. However, it has also been my experience that in the broad context of creative freedom, the *art of ministry* is as diverse as it is relevant. Therefore the rationale for my research is a journey of continuity and unfolding as if I wish to *draw to attention* <sup>36</sup> the very real experience of creative freedom in all of life, and not just in art and ministry.

### **Description of body of literature**

In general the body of existing literature in my research comprises a number authors and topics that I have identified as integral to my research. My focus is towards a more personal and practical experience based on my extensive research into art, critical thought, spirituality, and the lived experience of their influences in my life. My review of literature will demonstrate the contemporary work done in phenomenology, theology, and theory. The literature also reflects upon the experience of a specific phenomenon of creative freedom. Scholars, authors, theologians, artists, etc., both past and present, are represented in my literature review. Selected

literature will focus on my personal experience of ministry that looks inward to self-awareness, self-examination, and self-discovery.

Literature includes *Theological Worlds* by Paul Jones, and the writings of Tillich, Bright, and Sheldrake. Writings by and about art and artists include: Saslow (Michelangelo), Kandinsky, and Rothko. Philosophical writings include: Langer, Huntley, Tyson, and McLuhan. The theoretical world of processing positive information includes Reber and Unkelbach, as well as phenomenological reflections by Max van Manen.

These writings are examined in light of a phenomenological method of qualitative research design by researchers such as van Manen, Moustakas, Craig & Muller, Daft, Armstrong, and Creswell. Included are the writings about interpersonal communication by Charles Berger, Richard Calabrese, and Mark Knapp.

As for critical artwork, I have chosen the experience of writing the epic poem *Cerulean Odyssey* to extend awareness of my existing body of visual arts. The experience of writing is related to motivation for ministry in the pivotal experience of the performance by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. In addition I have chosen Michelangelo's poetry and the artwork of Mark Rothko.

I have drawn from this body of literature a support for dealing with the issue of my need to sustain and maintain motivation for the practice of art and ministry. That support aims to become evident through the description of my lived experience as practice and experience of creative freedom. A phenomenology of practice supports the themes I have identified as dynamic, inspirational, contextual and enduring. The literature further supports the *conchetto* idea of my creative worlds as comprising three worlds. These are my positive world, my invented

world, and my functional or practical world. Together, these themes and worlds are influenced experientially and philosophically by such domains as art, critical thought, and spirituality.

Yet, I am reluctant to claim the literature has provided sufficient support, as the issue itself raises more questions than answers. Especially, when I reflect on the essence of phenomenology as *doing* rather than just knowing, as well as the concept of a hybrid phenomenon. And there's something about *doing* that exceeds the contribution of literature. *Doing* is my story, and as I draw from knowing theological and theoretical foundations, I must return to the evidence of my spiritual journey as a phenomenology of creative freedom.

As I account for my phenomenology of creative freedom, I take into consideration epistemological assumptions.

### **Epistemological Assumptions:**

I will address epistemological assumptions in my phenomenological reduction or epoché, by suspending beliefs and biases that may surface during my research. These epistemological assumptions relate to my research question, my 3 spheres of influence, the 4 themes of my research, and the 3 worlds that comprise my creative worlds.

However, I cannot assume the following:

1. Everyone will know what I am talking about in art, critical, and spirituality.
2. Everyone will agree with my theology, theory, and practice.
3. Everyone is familiar with the experience of creative freedom.
4. Everyone will identify with my lived experience as artist, author, and mentor.
5. Everyone will understand or agree with my definitions of art and ministry.
6. Everyone will understand my spheres of influence and my creative worlds.

7. Everyone will know what I mean when I relate phenomenology to theories and practices of communication.

Yet, it is my lived experience of an epistemology that is my own.

Phenomenology posits the practice of experience, embedded in the *essence* of that experience. Phenomenology is a reduction of that experience without bias, epistemological assumptions, beliefs *et al.* Bracketing, or the epoché, is only a temporary method to suspend assumptions. Inevitably, I must return to the foundations that gave rise to the experience. Creative freedom employs both the *essence* of the object or experience and the *presence* of very real objects or events and circumstances. One does not have a phenomenology of practice unless there is a context in which practice is manifested. Both *essence* and *presence* are inseparable and co-dependent. Whether these objects are creative thoughts, inspirational expressions, prophetic imaginations, spiritual practices, or acts of kindness, when collectively experienced as real events in the real time of my creative worlds, they invariably draw from a worldview already shaped and continually being re-shaped (transformed) by theological, theoretical and practical foundations.

As such, the experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom draws upon three essentials. These are my reflections on theological foundations, theoretical foundations, and professional foundations that became formative practices of both the artist in me and the ministry worker.

I begin by drawing upon my theological foundations.

### **1. Drawing Upon Theological Foundations**

The phenomenon addresses the essence of creative freedom as experience. It is the experience that motivates action for ministry in a small island community. The challenge for the

outcome of that action must be that the experience is sustainable, or as science would say, replicable. To support the main idea or argument of creative freedom's relationship to motivation, I will examine the phenomenon in light of my findings in theological inquiry. This is based on the position that the experience of phenomena is not a physical manifestation void of spiritual engagement. Of necessity I am drawn to the foundations of faith that are supported by my spiritual journey which in turn is integrated into my theological reflection. Creative freedom draws upon faith.

### **Drawing Upon Faith:**

Therefore I begin by drawing upon faith. Faith is drawing upon two sources.

The first source is my spiritual journey as an artist, accentuated by my profoundly personal experience of rebirth. My understanding and experience of spiritual rebirth are essential to my lived experience. The (theological) experience of rebirth is fundamental to understanding the essence of creative freedom through freedom in Christ. In telling the story I draw upon the experience of my spiritual journey. The account of my spiritual journey is the living testimony of my experience integral to the second source of my theological reflection.

Faith draws upon my inner self to take a step beyond the act of art-making and turn inspiration into a discipleship course. The event of hearing my poetry interpreted as music became symbolic of my academic journey to arrive at a deeper meaning of spirituality and ministry. The process of self-discovery through tacit knowledge has emerged as a focus towards the wholeness or essence of the phenomenon of creative freedom. I create, therefore I am. Whether subliminal or implicit, I am able to find "my way in the dark."<sup>37</sup> By taking my creative and ministry skills at face-value, I posit that there is a connection between my experience of the phenomenon and the theological foundations upon which the experience rests. Intuition about the



ecstatic characteristics of my motivation for ministry reflects my personal and professional immersion in established patterns of discipline. These patterns include incubation of discipleship ideas and the illumination of new concepts of theological understanding. The process is free from assumptions or imposed conditions that would inhibit the transparency of the story of my spiritual freedom. Ideas that emerge from the process are integrated into innovative ways to practice ministry such as the teaching of discipleship courses. Whether symbolic or real, the integration of a creative event reflects the nature of my personal and ministry journey as being spiritual.

And as indwelling refers to “the heuristic process of turning inwards to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of the quality or theme of human experience,”<sup>38</sup> I turn inward as well, to the indwelling Holy Spirit to unfold my human experience by focusing on my spiritual identity. That identity includes a cognitive knowledge of my own *being* in light of sensing the connection to my feelings and thoughts in order to understand the alternating rhythms of my internal and external behaviour. In turn, these alternating rhythms of my personal journey become a description of the lived experience as a phenomenological method of giving meaning to my research and writing. My spiritual journey reflects upon the dynamic theme of creative freedom, as well as the enduring theme. These themes are integral to my testimony.

*The end of one journey is the beginning of another journey.* A dividing line stands between the stark contrast of the end of one journey and the beginning of another. It is the night of August 22, 1981. It has been ten years of severe anxiety in the aftermath of a nervous breakdown. Excessive medication, too much alcohol, and six years of psychotherapeutic analysis are coming to a head. It is the night I am born again. The experience stands in stark contrast to my younger years.

My childhood indoctrination into religion is not a memory of trauma - just functional and very practically Dutch. Be baptized immediately after birth, go to church, attend catechism classes, sing the approved hymns, and uphold the Calvinist ethics of honesty, faithfulness and hard work. I remember one particular year, 1964, six years after our whole family had immigrated to Canada. I am about to voice a public confession of faith at age 19, just prior to leaving my home town of Wallaceburg, Ontario, to attend the *Ontario College of Art*, in Toronto. It's a church rule for young students leaving home to attend college. My membership papers will follow me to Toronto to be deposited with the closest branch church of the denomination. It helps the church monitor my attendance and especially my participation in communion. However, my father is not so radically denominational that he cannot encourage me with a different instruction – perhaps even Catholic. My father is a bookbinder. He gives me a copy of Thomas à Kempis' 1427 writings called *The Imitation of Christ*, to guide me through big city life. The book will become a devotional for decades to come. Perhaps my father's gift betrays my bias towards Thomas à Kempis because he practiced his ministry in the city of Zwolle, the Netherlands, the city where I was born.

If my account of the early years sounds somewhat disengaged, perhaps even critical, it is because there was no spiritual journey for me. I existed inside a socio-cultural paradigm of religious duty, rituals, and obligations. My image of God was personified in the staunch expressionless faces of church elders who sat up front in separate pews. They came to visit our home once a year. It was a time to dust the family bible and turn off the tv.

Attending art college is no different except for a radical explosion of creativity during the early 1960's. Society is awash in the British pop-culture invasion. Soon my cultural environ becomes the culture of drugs, anti-war protest, and the proverbial hippie persona. Although religion is sometimes discussed at art college, I never have to take a stand, because I have none. I am a Christian in name and by church membership papers, conveniently transferred from my home town to the Toronto church.

But it means nothing, especially when I have a major nervous breakdown. It is a painful memory of the year 1972, four years after I graduated. I am now owner of a nationally accredited advertising agency. I am also the provider for a growing family.

Two children and counting (six is the final number). But, hard work is good. It is part of the ethic I have been taught. So, I keep working with the help of a lot of medication and therapy. Ahead lies six years of medicated psychiatric therapy and four additional years of further medication. It will be a long fragile ten years of many dark nights, with many stories within the story that still remain untold. Yet, throughout that time, the ad agency remains a business success.

It is now the night of August 22, 1981, ten years after the first major nervous breakdown, including many smaller breakdowns and panic attacks in between. But on that August night, the entire fragile house of cards collapses with a second nervous breakdown.

I cry out to God.

It is the night of *the end of one journey and the beginning of another*. A spiritual quest begins. For questing will become the nature of my spiritual journey, foreshadowing the writing of the epic *Cerulean Odyssey* twenty-three years later.

One day in February of 1982, just six months after my re-birth, I hear the call to ministry. I am standing on a frozen highway just north of Toronto. The meeting with my corporate client has gone well. It's a big contract. But something (or someone) is pressing me to stop the car and get out. The landscape is blanketed beneath snow. A noon-hour sun shines bright to bathe the fields in a pale yellow glow on either side of the deserted highway.

I hear an inner voice. It is crystal clear. I am called to a new experience of my spiritual journey. I hear the call to ministry. I hear the call to leave the corporate world. My new experience begins with a discovery of scripture, authors, and ministry leaders. They cover a breadth of spiritual experiences ranging from traditional biblical scholarship to established doctrinal conventions, and from denominational traditions to revivalism. My experience expands to include an outpouring of spirituality, the gifts of the Spirit, and charismatic worship, including a deepening of my faith for healing and deliverance. Freedom becomes the essence of my journey. In that freedom, the ministry organization I begin in 1982, is an independent ministry. I am motivated to expand my horizons. For nearly ten years I organize and host a number of regional and all-Ontario Holy Spirit Conferences that are attended by thousands.

I am alive. I am ecstatic. I am delighted.

My multi-disciplinary journey as a husband, father, grandfather, godfather, friend, pastor, teacher, and as artist and writer, becomes a quest to seek the spiritual in everything in life. And I desire to give a voice to my journey in the visual images of fine art and in words of poetry. I rejoice in the freedom of visual expressions of my journey as well as a passion for writing poetry. Writing fiction would emerge years later. But, in a more scholarly fashion, the words of my journey are still wanting.

It is now Spring of 2014.

After 32 years of preaching and teaching, and approaching fifty years since I first attended art college, I continue to create all the art I never thought possible. I continue to experience ministry as I never thought possible. Time does not permit me to describe the lived experience of faith in such practical issues as believing God for all my needs including financial and health needs. That in and of itself is a *testimony* of ministry that still fills me with insufficient words to tell the story of God's grace and provision – often miraculous. Always inspirational in the outcome of a positive pleasure of art and ministry.

Now my quest continues in qualitative research. It is an inquiry into creative freedom as an experience of what it is like to follow in the footsteps of Renaissance masters and *the* Master.<sup>39</sup> My walk of faith unfolds into an experience of ministry as communication, motivation, and perseverance. The experience is a phenomenon of creative freedom that borders on ecstasy. It is an experience of my delight in inspiration especially as an artist. It is also my experience of sustainable motivation for ministry in a small island community. And the experience knows no bounds.

The second source of my reflection draws upon theological traditions, especially my understanding of Paul Jones' theological worlds.<sup>40</sup> This second source draws upon the contextual theme of creative freedom in theological reflection.

Reflection and tradition are instrumental in the transformative experience of realizing both theory and practice as part of an integrated arts and ministry calling. The lived experience is

one of creative freedom as transformational. The phenomenon touches upon theological traditions of separation and reunion based on ministry experiences as a teacher. The experience is dynamic as explicated in Jones' *Theological Worlds*. The aggregate of such personal experiences is my spiritual quest. The quest unfolds through incubation as a *conchetto* idea of creative freedom in ministry. Integral to the phenomenon is the position that my theological inquiry into separation and reunion has been and will be a positive and liberating one. The experience of being a teacher in ministry also aims to inform others of my desire to contribute to the larger conversation about the spiritual in art as integral to my story. In its telling, the story adds to the contextual theme a broader understanding of phenomenology as essential to effective communication.

As such my reflections reveal a motivation for ministry that pursues and wishes to replicate the dynamic experience of creative freedom in my search for meaning-giving methods. These methods I have and continue to encounter at the core of my critical examination of art, critical thought, and spirituality. The Pilot Project demonstrates that preliminary explorations of my research support the epistemological practicability and value of my study. My constructed reality is the lived experience of creative worlds with theological underpinnings.

The experience of hearing my poetry performed by the VSO and its role in motivating my work in ministry also reveal a deeper theology beyond just the unfolding of Jones' five theological worlds. That deeper theology is a practical one. As did Cerulean, I have also embarked on a long journey in search of a city "*which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*" <sup>41</sup> My journey is filled with the alternative rhythms of my theological (and creative) world. <sup>42</sup> As a result I posit my discovery of a 6<sup>th</sup> theological world of essential rhythms of promise and deliverance integrated into a personal theology about spiritual authority. Called

and destined to be liberated from the human condition (*obsessio*) of bondage and resistance, I continue to discover the promised and positional state of being free and *unbound in Christ*. It is a state of creative freedom that positions discipleship and service in a Christological perspective of being a child of God. Salvation (*epiphania*) therefore is the deliverance of my eternal inheritance, reflected in a practical theology that embraces life in context of the presence of the kingdom of God. The rhythm between promise and deliverance is not eschatological but phenomenological as a creative freedom that comprises the essence of the spiritual journey. The experience of such rhythm is an “*ecstatic* impulse that is vital, dynamic and pervading,” and playful.<sup>43</sup> W. Paul Jones, proposes his seventh mode of diverse practice in Christian spirituality as play. In play there is an innocence of promise and *delight* in the experience of playfulness as “a sense of being ‘on the other side,’ of having passed through the darkness into a spirituality of promise.”<sup>44</sup> Creativity is play. Freedom is play. Creative freedom is ecstatically and delightfully playful.

Yet I am cautiously optimistic in my immersive environment, lest I become dogmatic about my discovery of a 6<sup>th</sup> world by attempting to make a doctrine out of it. Instead it is better to bracket the theology of such a 6<sup>th</sup> world knowing where to draw the line between experience and theology. For the essence of my theological reflection remains a practical one. It is in the *practice of the experience* of creative freedom, including connoisseurship and criticism, where I direct my focus to remain motivated in ministry.

My long journey (as is Cerulean’s) towards that city is a metaphor for the fulfillment of divine inspiration as a key motivational factor that influences my ministry calling as a spiritual teacher. Congruent with ministering as a teacher, I define the spiritual by embracing art as well. The two, teacher and artist, are inseparable from the practical applications of theological

traditions. It is here where I draw a line between theological traditions and experience. That line fluctuates between a foundational theology of faith and a practice of faith where the phenomenon is not only personal, but transferable in the practice of motivating to others.

Further to the inseparableness of teacher and artist and between the practical applications of theological traditions, there remains an all embracing concept, a *meta-concetto*. Whether I build on foundations, or explicate the essence of experience, despite epistemological assumptions, I cannot escape the implicit relationship between phenomenological questioning, theological reflection, and the ability to communicate effectively. Therefore my inquiry across theological traditions also includes the importance of communication theory and the positioning of theological traditions in light of such theory. Even though communication theory is not my Doctoral focus as such, ministry is communication. Phenomenological writing is communication. The description and sharing of lived experience is communication. Therefore there remains a proposed phenomenology of communication, complete with meaning-giving methods in phenomenology such as communication research, tradition, and writing.

Suddenly I find my theological reflections slip almost seamlessly into a drawing upon theoretical foundations. It is as if Paul Jones eases me across a phenomenological bridge to process the packaging of my theological foundations into communications practices of “*lectio divina*’s sacred readings, creativity, the silent meal, meditation, poetry, painting and music.”<sup>45</sup>

Robert Craig and Heidi Muller are professors of communication at the University of Colorado. Their research addresses topics in communication theory, philosophy, interactive pedagogy, and symbolic structural foundations of communicative practices. Craig and Muller define communication as “a process of packaging our thoughts and feelings into words (and images) and sending them through a conduit, that is, a communication channel (art) to recipients

who unpack them and receive the meanings intended.”<sup>46</sup> I am that conduit in the practice of art and ministry. I am that conduit in phenomenological writing such as the telling of my story and the invitation to others to become fellow-travelers. And I am that conduit as I share my lived experience. That leads me to investigate even further the position of theological traditions within a communication paradigm, whether visually or in words and music. Tentatively, that position lies in the experiential vocabulary of phenomenology, which is a tradition of communication theory.<sup>47</sup>

But, my purpose is not mere experience of ministry. My purpose also includes unfolding the understanding of the spiritual of my journey, beyond the realm of the human spirit and into the realm of the divine spirit. That is, to take the significance of the experience of creative freedom beyond a cognitive and intuitive understanding into the spiritual realm of a deeper experience of faith. Such deeper understanding is incubated in the realm of being childlike in my spiritual journey. Creative freedom does not restrict me to “find inspiration in my own subjectivity,”<sup>48</sup> but longs to walk in the footsteps of masters and play, rather than “watch the professionals play for a price.”<sup>49</sup> Yet, subjectivity is not abandoned for the sake of objectivity. Can the two really be separated? Or is the practice of ministry yet another alternating or alternative rhythm between subjectivity and objectivity? Is this the *meta-concetto*, the idea about the idea that creative freedom is both the experience of play as subjective and objective?

Play is practical. Play is experiential. Play is creative freedom.

But, play also presumes the need for learning through mentorship and discipleship, especially in a positive environment.

Practical theology embraces my experience of ministry as mentorship and discipleship that have emerged and matured over many years. My understanding is grounded in the concept



of a positive interactional environment in which to build meaningful ministry practices. When motivated, my interactional and positive environment of ministry becomes the essential strategy for long-term sustainability. This positive environment is the essence of my creative worlds and the dynamic of profound wonder at the effect of creative freedom on the human spirit. That creative freedom posits both the wonder of spontaneous expression and my delight in systematic inquiry into the reduction of a science of experience.

Joe Kissell wrote: “Among the definitions of phenomenology you may encounter are ‘the science of experience, the study of apparent phenomena,’ and ‘the systematic description of pre-theoretical experience.’ Phenomenology is an attempt to study experience itself objectively and scientifically.”<sup>50</sup> That may seem contradictory, “but,” asks Kissell, “isn’t experience, by its very nature, subjective?”<sup>51</sup> Kissell gives the example of Husserl. “Husserl was looking for a rigorous method of describing experience that in fact did away with subjectivity. His motto was, ‘to the things themselves!’ By this he did not mean that he wanted to study things as they exist objectively out there in the world, but rather that he wanted to study the *experience* of things, as they present themselves to the observer (as a reduction) without any assumptions, predefinitions, interpretations, or prejudice as to why or how they exist.”<sup>52</sup>

But who has such discipline of mind to reduce the phenomenon as an experience without any assumptions, predefinitions, interpretations, or prejudice as to why or how the experience exists? Even the child when inspired to draw the sun will choose yellow as the primary colour, or green for a blade of grass.

Systematic theology although perceived as objective nevertheless comprises my subjective worldview and the tenets of my theological world. My worldview has developed from an examination of creative worlds through a process of advocating the building of a positive

environment conducive to intellectual and spiritual growth. My theological world embraces a revitalized concept of the kingdom of God and its role in practical ministry. Research also includes an account of my personal experience in ministry and art, tempered by my personality and the extent to which I will to remain a disciple myself.

To conclude, in the lived experience of creative freedom as a professional artist and ordained ministry worker, the phenomenon is spontaneous and systematic, evocative and invocative, objective and subjective, and never quite willing to be just an experimental science to be replicated. Creative freedom retains an experience of theological wonder as well as a delight in inspiration for the human spirit, engaged by the divine Spirit.

As the experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom draws upon my theological foundations, theoretical foundations are also essential, that is, foundational to the professional practices of both the artist in me and the ministry worker.

I continue by drawing upon my theoretical foundations.

I ease across the phenomenological bridge.

## **2. Drawing Upon Theoretical Foundations**

Theoretical foundations are as essential to the intellectual practice of knowing as theological foundations are essential to the spiritual practice of discernment. My lived experience will practice knowing by engaging creative acts such as doodling, sketching, and other forms of visual and written journaling. My lived experience will practice discernment by engaging such creative acts as meditation, prophetic imagination, prayerful worship, or speaking in tongue.

My lived experience draws upon theoretical foundations to record the “current operations in the flow of my life, so that I can discern the rocks, the intersections, and the sparking of the

ripples in the direction of the current.”<sup>53</sup> As well, I can discern the need for self-care, or to discern the hindrances of uncertainty, and the demands of effective communication in art and ministry.

The phenomenon addresses the role of creative freedom as motivation for ministry in a small island community, and the challenge of the outcome of that role as being sustainable. To support the main idea or argument of creative freedom’s role in motivation, I will examine the phenomenon in light of my findings in theoretical inquiry. Even though phenomenology does not concern itself with concepts of motivation, roles, and outcomes, I cannot readily dismiss these concepts. This is based on the position that the experience of phenomena is not a physical or spiritual manifestation void of theoretical underpinnings. Of necessity I am drawn to the foundations of specific theories that have supported my professional journey which in turn are integrated into my theoretical reflection.

The theoretical world comprises an investigative immersion in concepts of communication as interpersonal interaction. Immersion is affected by cultural and technological environments and the systematic gathering of knowledge of facts to support my reflections. These concepts are integral to the genuineness of my self-awareness and self-discovery. These concepts reflect across traditions that have shaped my self-knowing. By comparing and relating images and ideas, and concepts and practices of the many domains that comprise my creative worlds, I continue to *draw upon* my research and experience that have shaped my understanding of ministry. This understanding steps beyond the limits of phenomenology to include theory. The Pilot Project’s conversations surround the theology *and* theory of my experience with phenomenology.

### **Drawing Upon Research:**

Therefore I begin by drawing upon my theoretical research. As I wrote about in my reflections upon theological foundations, my research into theoretical foundations also draws upon two sources.

The first source is my professional journey as a practitioner of theory, accentuated by many years of business experience in communication and the building of awareness for my body of artwork. In telling the story, I draw upon the lived experience of my professional journey, for that too is my story. This is the first source of my theoretical reflection.

My professional journey continues to be a daily practice of theory. I do not include a résumé or *curriculum vitae* in this integrative paper, because that is another story in breadth and scope. The experience of my creative freedom is a lengthy chronicle of events, people, and adventures, that spans the full spectrum of a professional practice of turning doodles into newspaper and magazine ads, radio and television commercials, outdoor advertising, package design, corporate identity solutions, film and stage productions, especially the innovation my business partner and I pioneered as *business theatre*. They were heady years from 1968 to 1982.

When I left the business world in 1982, to engage ministry, I remained available as a corporate consultant for many years thereafter. To this day I still find myself in demand for consultation, primarily in the non-profit sector as a (volunteer) communication and organizational management consultant. And I seem to be unable to separate the birth of new *concelto* ideas specifically as a consultant from ideas for ministry. Creative freedom is the luxury of experiencing a synthesis that integrates one with the other, including the integration of creative freedom into art and ministry. An idea for a drawing becomes a poster for the Hope Centre. A discussion in one of my discipleship sessions becomes an idea for a drawing. Yet, to

label my art as religious or Christological, or my ministry as artistic, is an assumption. They are neither. Creative freedom is truly a freedom that can separate the *essence* of objectivity from the *presence* of subjectivity. Yet, mysteriously there remains a divine connection between the two. The connection continues to be my experience.

In my practice of theory I have also encountered the assumption that the *creative type* is not conducive to professional practices. This is the case in my practice of communication in its broadest sense as a professional communicator, especially in the practices of art and ministry in a small community. I am frequently *branded* the creative type. Some still find it difficult to visualize my *robe of ministerial ordination* or my peer and client affirmation as a professional practitioner. Whether in practices of disciplined management techniques and organizational leadership, or long term strategic corporate planning and media campaign management, somehow, the *creative type* is not identified with such a professional image. The *creative type* is no doubt the result of a saturated media strategy that for centuries has advocated the myth of the creative type in the culture of artists. As mystical as Wassily Kandinsky, prophetic as Eric Gill, whimsical as Peter Brueghel, majestic as Michelangelo, philosophical as Mark Rothko, or as human as the artist-storyteller John Gould, their respective myths as creative types are as atypical of the bell-bottomed groovy type of the nineteen-sixties or the brooding artist of medieval times.

During those heady years, I was part of the myth of that special *artiste* genre, the bell-bottomed, long-haired, *groovy* type whose contribution to creativity was innovative ideas for marketing and advertising – but at a price. That price was conformity to the professional practices of business. However, contrary to the myth of the *artiste*, the professional practices of business gave me a greater experience of creative freedom than did the mystical practices of the *artiste*. Prototypically, artists were unpredictable, temperamental and moody, prone to severe

spells of doubt, depression, and creative *angst*. They were starving artists. And I was perceived to be such an *artiste*, at least during the late nineteen-sixties through the nineteen-seventies and into the eighties of the ad agency years. Yet I presented a conundrum. I was also a graduate of business management and managerial psychology courses, as well as industry sponsored workshops in media buying, media management, consumer research, and technology. And so the myth was an oxymoron – the *artiste* business leader. Add to that the Christological essence of my later spiritual journey, I was and still am an enigma, despite all attempts at overcoming that enigmatic stigma especially in a small island community. My attempts have also come at a price of marginalization and discrimination. Creative freedom inspires me to overcome the often subtle rejection of the artist – Christian – pastor – mentor. The conundrum was also present in the enigma of a “pastor who draws naked people in the basement of a pub,” as was the playful comment of a fellow artist who participated in our weekly studio life-drawing sessions in a donated space in the basement of a Nanaimo pub.

I will be seventy soon. The bell-bottoms are gone as is my long hair. Yet, stereotypically I am still considered the *creative type*. Even though I am an enigma in our community, I have never been unpredictable, temperamental and moody in my professional work, or prone to severe spells of doubt, depression, and creative *angst*, whether as artist or spiritual leader. Nor have I ever *starved*. Regardless, I remain deeply thankful for friends, family, and those who are part of our community of faith to who I am the artist/preacher, who is Christian by confession, but not institutionally religious in practice. Certainly not the creative type or the archetypical religious leader, and sometimes just the pancake man. I know that was the inspiration that became the persona of Cerulean in the epic poem I began in 2004. I am the non-archetypical creative type who remains motivated because the experience of the phenomenon is a creative freedom that

borders on ecstasy and delight. Sometimes I bow to the divine and clap my hands into a fever pitch. I don't what else to do.

One memory stands out among many. The year was 1998.

I was part of a group who founded the island's arts council. I was its president for a couple of years. I had been invited to join the group because of my dual identity as both a successful artist and a practicing communication professional. For most in the group my connection to *Masterpeace Fine Art Studio* and the *Church On The Rock* was understood without reservation, except for two persons. One insisted that I not be voted into the art council's management because I was a Christian. He assumed I was a stereotypical pastor with all the religious baggage of church doctrine, ready to infiltrate the arts council and thus the community with my ideas. The other insisted I was an artist not suited for the laid-back, mainly self-taught community of crafts people. I would be too prone to insist in Renaissance values of high art as the standard by which all members of the arts community would be measured. The whole matter was put to a vote.

There was, however, no need for me to address the board with a lengthy polemic of art's positive role in developing cognitive abilities. Nor did I have to impress them with my professional qualifications to build a greater awareness of the art on the island. I had not volunteered for the position. I was invited. Instead, I waited patiently in my studio, busying myself with pragmatic practices of cleaning up.

At any moment, I am expecting the most vocal of the dissenters in my studio. He is the one who insisted that I *not* be voted into the art council's management because I was a Christian. Our greetings are reserved.

"But what does the word 'Christian' matter?" I ask.

"How does what I believe help decide whether I am eligible for election to the board? Remember, I am not asking for this position."

I remind him that the two founding members of the board invited me to participate in the formative development of the island's first arts council.

I press a bit harder.

“Have you not said yourself that you are of another faith? Jewish faith, right? So, I don’t accept the notion that religious preferences are objectionable criteria for board membership – Jew, Gentile, Christian, Buddhist *et al.*”

He becomes assertive and argumentative.

“It just so happens,” I continue, “that I wholeheartedly endorse the aims and objectives of the organization and would be honoured to bring my professional expertise to the table. Therefore, you have no right to put me in a Christian box, or for that matter, neither does the other board member have a right to put me in a stereotypical *creative type* box of high versus low art.

“I am what I am, and your assumptions about what I may or may not do as a board member are only assumptions. They are your predefinitions and prejudices.”

I am trying hard to put my own assumptions aside. Hopefully I can find some positive pleasure in the experience of being asked to join the board. I am looking for some context in my calling to this small island community as a professional artist and communicator, as well as my role as a spiritual leader.

This does not feel like the experience of a dynamic theme of creative freedom. In fact, I feel less and less motivated to continue with the process of becoming a board member. I don’t need this parochial squabbling. But, it’s not my nature to quit when facing opposition. After all, he is but one voice, and the other objector had chosen not to pursue the matter any longer. My qualifications won out in the squabble over professional versus amateur. Nevertheless, the experience was disturbing and I felt a righteous anger rising in my veins. I’ve been there before, being rejected for no just cause.

He leaves the studio. I give him the message that I will not accept board membership unless the decision is unanimous. I think I have communicated my position well, with integrity and a professional attitude.

The whole matter was put to a vote. It was unanimous.

To my surprise and pleasure, the dissenting member returned to my studio and apologized for his unacceptable behaviour. Since the board was still in session and just a few doors down from where I lived, he invited me to join them. Their wish to have me on the board of directors of the arts council was a determined effort to engage my professional qualifications – pastor and *artiste* notwithstanding.



The practice of theory has resulted in a systematic gathering and management of knowledge of facts. Knowledge and facts have accumulated in extensive inter-disciplinary studies and research throughout my graduate work. Knowledge and facts are supplemented by real experiences of communication in the arts and ministry over a period of nearly fifty years. Knowledge and facts have been deposited in a personal library of books and papers in print and an extensive digital database of folders, documents, and personal journals. This aggregate of information and experience is the background to the phenomenon of creative freedom.

From this aggregate continues to flow the intellectual currency for a continued discourse on the subject of phenomenological experience in art and ministry.

It's like drilling a rich vein of ore from a mine I once visited in the central mountains of Vancouver Island. Or, the cool clear water I draw deep from the 300 foot well next to our family home.

But the aggregate of theoretical traditions also posits the need for effective resource management. Many are the resources upon which I build my experience, including theological and theoretical foundations.

Resource management is a demonstration of my ability to assess and build upon information in a professional manner that effectively communicates my ideas to a multi-disciplinary readership. Whether the ideas I communicate are ideas for spiritual discipleship topics, creative ideas for works of art in the studio, or management solutions for the organizations I serve, they comprise the visual language of my story as a phenomenology of creative freedom in practice. And that practice gives meaning to the methods I use to inquire further into the wonder and inspiration of creative freedom. In turn, as the immersive inquiry is illuminated by deeper insight, I am motivated to continue to walk in the footsteps of masters.

Others may or may not be walking in the same footsteps as I am. They may not have read *Cerulean Odyssey*, or heard the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's performance of Joseph Glaser's tone poem, or seen my art, but they may nevertheless be inspired by my story. It remains therefore my prayer that as a response to my story, they will expand the research horizons about their own experience of creative freedom and the subject of motivation in their respective journeys in ministry.

The second source is a process of theoretical reflection accentuated by examining theoretical traditions posited by specific people. Both sources of professional practice and theoretical traditions are instrumental in the transformative experience of realizing both theory and practice as part of my integrated lived experience.

By examining theoretical traditions, I draw upon my understanding of Craig and Muller's theoretical worlds,<sup>54</sup> specifically their research into the phenomenological tradition.<sup>55</sup> This second source also comprises the contextual theme by drawing upon the creative freedom of theoretical reflection, including the writings of Max van Manen.<sup>56</sup>

Theoretical reflection inevitably intersects with the theories that have transformed me most. These theories or root theories are communication and phenomenology, even though van Manen admits to ambivalence towards calling phenomenology a theory. "In spite of fascinations with theoretical experiences, I sometimes admit an ambivalent relation with 'theory' as an intellectual achievement and property, and theory as membership into the 'circle of initiates.' Theory can be a staple that feeds our intellectual and moral hunger, and it can be the addictive substance that induces a cognitive amnesia. Wakefulness requires that we constantly try to work in the tension between the theoretic and what lies outside of it."<sup>57</sup> Outside the theoretical lies the

experiential. Yet, both are essential to practice whether in a mode of tension or in a mode of harmony.

“A practical approach,” according to Craig and Muller, “says that there is no way to devise or apply a theory that would provide the right answers that would eliminate problems. Rather, communication is inherently problematic. What worked this time in communication with others may not be what works next time with another. The underlying philosophy is not realism (theory describes the world) or idealism (theory constitutes the world) but rather a reflective pragmatism (theory informs praxis).”<sup>58</sup> As such, I propose that the theoretical writings of Craig and Muller are complementary to van Manen’s phenomenology of practice. Both are reflective whether in pragmatism, determinism or in the phenomena of experience.

A theory of communication embodies an understanding of traditions, past and present. This understanding requires questioning and rethinking to determine the validity of my experience of a phenomenon as integral to communication.

Of what value is the experience if I cannot communicate the essence of that experience?

Traditions of communication are heuristics of the phenomenological process. Phenomenology includes methodology as an extension of communication into heuristic phases that encompass the experience of creativity as intuitive and cognitive. These phases are integral to the conversations surrounding the experience. Methodology is designed to move from the practical to the theoretical, as well as from the theoretical to the practical. The aim of such methodology is to arrive at a detailed and sophisticated development of a personal theory of ministry communicated in the lived experience of a small community.

Theorizing also includes the unfolding of themes. As stated earlier, these unfolding themes have emerged from my inquiry and analysis, as being dynamic, inspirational, contextual, and enduring.

These themes of dynamic, inspirational, contextual, and enduring context are integral to the theoretical foundations of my creative worlds, such as my reflections upon the spiritual in art. Those reflections will be the subject of future research.

Communication has been my strength in both the practice of business and ministry, as theory and experience. That strength is renewed by a motivation to be effective as well as efficient. Perhaps the most important competency of effective and efficient communication is the need to clarify the terms and definitions I use. This applies specifically in the communication initiative, especially when I propose terms and definitions new to the discourse, such as that delightful word *concetto* identified as the idea, or the use of *ecstasy* as *delight* in inspiration. The competency of clarifying terms and definitions, also applies to the lived experience description essential to phenomenological writing. The description must be richly endowed with cognitive fluency.

I may choose the Italian word *concetto* to etymologically denote the concept of a creative idea or act, but that is precisely the essence of communication that motivates me. The evidence of that essence is the presence of an endless stream of new ideas. Yet, I am obliged to explicate clearly my meaning and use of this *concetto* word. I also affirm that my unfolding of the phenomena of creative freedom is an experience of the concept of a positive environment of my creative worlds.<sup>59</sup> Whether practical in the role of teacher or more philosophically aesthetic in my role of artist, theory illuminates my exploration of the spiritual in art and motivates my spiritual quest as artist and spiritual care provider.

Drawing upon theoretical foundations also includes an inquiry into interactional stages and influences of cultural environments (Knapp, Vangelisti <sup>60</sup>), and the genuineness and supportiveness of self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-discovery (Craig, Muller <sup>61</sup>), self-disclosure, confidentiality and trust. My inquiry includes the writings of Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese <sup>62</sup>, in their explorations beyond the initial interaction towards understanding interpersonal communication. I long to investigate the *beyond*, especially as an experience of (aesthetic) pleasure.

I am reminded of what a musician said to me.

When you thoroughly enjoy the creative process in your expression through art, you experience the pleasure of God. Creative freedom is the experience of the pleasure of God. It is worship.

According to Rolf Reber,<sup>63</sup> aesthetic pleasure is a function of the perceiver's processing dynamics. I posit that the experience of this dynamic of aesthetic pleasure adds to the perceiver's experience of creative freedom and that in turn will heighten the intensity of the phenomenon itself. The more fluently I perceive and process an object such as a *concetto* idea, the more positive my aesthetic response and the effect upon my expressive fluency. Fluency, as in cognitive fluency, becomes the expression of a positive environment in which the phenomenon is experienced and the subsequent *living* of that experience is explicated and shared. This theoretical view emerges as part of an inspirational theme of *positive-ness* as the essence of creative freedom. And how else can this *positive-ness* be lived unless it is shared? And that is the primary goal of interpersonal communication, also known as a key practice of ministry.

### **3. Drawing Upon Professional Foundations**

The experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom draws upon three essentials. These are my reflections on theological foundations, theoretical foundations, and professional foundations. They have become formative practices of both the artist in me and the ministry worker. My earlier discussion of theoretical foundations illustrated my professional experience as a member of the business community. I conclude by drawing upon my professional foundations, with specific references to the profession of artist.

As in my reflections upon theological and theoretical foundations, my research into professional foundations also draws upon two sources.

The first source is my journey as an artist in the footsteps of masters, for that too is my story. The second source touches upon the real-life experience of three worlds that comprise my creative worlds: namely the experience of a positive world, an invented world, and a practical world.

#### **Walking in the footsteps of masters:**

The first source is my journey as an artist in the footsteps of masters. I draw upon the lived experience of my artistic journey. As a professional I have an extensive business experience. But the media world of marketing and advertising was never far removed from my passion for drawing and painting. Despite a busy family and business life, I managed to remain active in my small home studio. As the family grew, that space was pushed along from a spare bedroom to a basement space. Not until I turned forty-eight was I able to build my dream studio, complete with skylights and windows facing that essential of creating good art – northern light. That lived experience is also an aspect of professionalism as I practice being inspired by the masters and learning to develop my own skills. In 1982, an art instructor at the Ontario College

of Art & Design, invited me to join him in his weekly evening studio life drawing sessions at the college, as a generous token of respect to keep my observation and drawing skills finely tuned. In other words, I was never really far from my artistic home, that is, the large spacious professional studio of a master.

As early as 1969, I began shaping an identity for my professional practice by using a figure of speech shortly after my graduation from art college. *Walking in the footsteps of masters* became the pivotal expression of my artistic quest and the key to understanding my experience of creative freedom. It remains as the primary motivational influence throughout my journey.

And as so many time before, that identity began with questions, even ones I still ask today.

What motivated great Renaissance and contemporary masters to continue their artistic journeys? What ideas of spirituality captivated them? What motivates me to walk in their footsteps, and what effect do they have on my identity as an artist? What is it about their experiences that would *speak* to me later as a spiritual teacher in ministry?

In the short story, “*Kermode: the Ecstasy of Katie Gordon*,”<sup>64</sup> submitted as a course assignment, a young native runaway experiences ecstasy when Kermode, the white spirit bear, acquaints her with the spirit of her grandfather. The experience becomes the primary motivating influence for Katie Gordon to return to her community to re-engage life with determination and resolve. I am motivated to engage life with Katie Gordon’s determination and resolve.

Lorenzo Bernini’s white marble sculpture, “*the Ecstasy of St. Teresa*,”<sup>65</sup> illustrates a moment when divinity intrudes on an earthly body in a fusion of sensual and spiritual pleasure. The experience of carving the magnificent sculpture motivated the artist to deal positively with the withdrawal of papal patronage by Pope Innocent X. Instead, fulfillment of the vision was

completed under a new patron, the Venetian Cardinal Frederico Cornaro (1579-1653). I am inspired by Bernini when the divine intrudes upon my artistic musing, and the *conchetto* idea becomes prophetic imagination.

My inquiry goes deeper. How does the phenomenon of creative freedom imply a methodological approach to an aesthetic of pleasure in beauty? After all, the *scarlet thread* of creativity that runs through the art of such masters as Michelangelo, Mark Rothko, Wassily Kandinsky, and John Gould, just to mention a few, is a passion for pleasure in beauty. Yet, their passion becomes experience when disciplines or methods in the beauty of art-making are applied. Whether such beauty is classical mannerism, realism, abstract expressionism, musical impressionism, or linear representationalism, it is in the eye of the artist and in the eye of the beholder to appreciate. I look for that *scarlet thread* in my own art. It's the thread that links me to the past in order to understand the present and to remain motivated for the future. It's the thread that links my spiritual journey to the phenomenon as experienced in art and ministry.

The aesthetic of pleasure in beauty invokes an emotional response to works of art. It is a *holiness* of natural beauty, distinct from direct experiences of sensual or intellectual pleasure. Research in the aesthetics of pleasure examines how people experience beauty. Research in the aesthetics of pleasure examines how I experience creative freedom. It is a concept that is further explored as an essential component of the writings of Rolf Reber as I reflect upon his idea of a positive epistemological construction. He explores the idea of processing the information that surrounds such aesthetic pleasure, and as a result proposes that aesthetic pleasure is a function of the perceiver's processing dynamics. The more fluently perceivers can process an object, such as an object of art, the more positive their aesthetic response. It is the positive response that invents or inspires motivation. It is the positive response that enriches the phenomenon.



The contributions of such artists as Michelangelo, Mark Rothko, Wassily Kandinsky, and John Gould, contextualize aesthetic pleasure by instilling in the viewer, whether as artist and ministry worker, a desire to continue or repeat the experience of pleasure. I seek to embody that pleasure, that ecstasy as delight in inspiration, through the experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom. The examples of Michelangelo, Rothko, Kandinsky, and Gould, are bound by time and activity, but their inspiration will sustain me and others *ad infinitum*. My examination of their art does not pretend to be an exhaustive commentary on art theory or art criticism. Nor does it presume to add to the discourse further analysis of their art. Instead, my research focuses on what the artists had to say *about* their work through their respective philosophies, poetry, and journals, and their lived experience of the essence of *being* an artist. I have added my own commentary from decades of writings. As a result, their footsteps became my footsteps. Some footsteps are in the solitude of my studio, others are on the public stage. Some are in the discipline of fine art drawing and some are in the exuberance of experimental silverpoint work. Some are in the quiet of writing poetry and others in the company of coffee shop people. Some would be exhibited, others performed. All of them integrated into the footsteps of *the* Master who continues to walk with me through the ministry years.

I remember the kinship of my footsteps with those of Michelangelo. His footsteps helped me abandon thoughts and biases about fame, that peculiar tradition of the contemporary art world that equates fame and success with a dollar figure. But it was not in Michelangelo's art where I could suspend belief about conventions of notoriety and success. It was the spiritual essence of his poetry where I found solace.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), composed more than three hundred sonnets, madrigals, and other poems throughout his lengthy creative journey. When the artist was

seventy-two years old, he reached the pinnacle of literary recognition, as noted by the Florentine humanist scholar, Benedetto Varchi, who gave two public lectures on art theory, using Michelangelo's poetry as examples. As early as 1518, Michelangelo's sonnet 12, was set to music and published by the Veronese composer Bartolommeo Tromboncino.

Poetry set to music.

Oh, the ecstatic delight of such an experience.

My thoughts return to the performance of *Cerulean Odyssey* by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Tromboncini acknowledged Michelangelo's writings as among the earliest literary creations by any major visual artist. The scarlet thread from Michelangelo's art to his poetry and to music has kept my spirit high. His poetry encompasses religious and Platonic ideology, a consciousness of the rituals of love, resistance to a mortal self, and the emancipation of the human spirit. His poetry became a conduit for my self-inquiry and self-discovery. "Michelangelo's poetic language is ambitious, employing a great variety of figures of speech and grammatical structures in an attempt to create a style that is formally complex, intellectually sophisticated, and aphoristically condensed into 'high style'." <sup>66</sup> I never met Michelangelo except for a brief moment when I physically touched one of his marble creations.

I touched the *Deposition* or Florence Pietà in the great Duomo Church in Florence, Italy (*Museo dell'Opera del Duomo*). The year was the Spring of 1969, the same year I decided that *walking in the footsteps of masters* would be my journey. I was a newly wed of two years. Our first child was expected in November. Footsteps of another kind.

In 1991, I purchased James Saslow's annotated translation of the poetry of Michelangelo. My footsteps began to travel deep into the realm of Michelangelo's aesthetic of pleasure. Seeds were sown for the epic poetry I would begin writing in 2004.

To nourish my inspiration and motivation, I did as James Saslow did by making Michelangelo my "ever present companion and imaginary friend." <sup>67</sup>

This integrative paper does not include further reflections on the footsteps of such other masters as Mark Rothko, Wassily Kandinsky and John Gould. Each one of them contributed to the richness of my lived experience as an artist and fellow traveler in search of the spiritual in art. Each one holds a key to the continuum of my creative freedom that became so integral to my ministry practices. My aim is to expand the story of their contributions in my Dissertation.

*“We have before us the age of a positive construct of conscious creation and critical thought, and this new spirit in all creative arts is going hand-in-hand with the spirit of God towards an epoch of the Kingdom of God, which will necessitate great spiritual leaders,”* <sup>68</sup>

To conclude, I remain enthusiastically responsive to my sojourn in the footsteps of masters. So much so, that at any given moment, I can replicate the experience of the phenomenon by simply picking up a pencil to draw, or contemplate an art book from my collection. I can add yet another verse to the *chanson de geste* I am investigating as poetic form, or call a friend for coffee. My footsteps also take me to counsel someone in need of healing and restoration. Perhaps it’s just a word of encouragement or a friendly hug that’s needed. Sometimes it’s an admonition in the form of a loving correction. Motivation has its blessed rewards. And as recent as a month ago, in a divine *conchetto* moment of inspiration, the experience of creative freedom turned into the beginning of a new epic poem (forthcoming).

The aggregate of walking in the footsteps of masters has also become the architecture of my positive environment of life and spirituality. That environment is an epistemological construct of meaning grounded in theology, theory, and practice. It is my identity. I am the artist, author, mentor, and ministry worker, who in Christ assumes the position of informed leadership wherever I am planted or called. Upon foundations of theological reflection, theoretical inquiry,

and practical experience, I have begun to *build the house*. It has taken many decades but the foundation is sure.

When I move from immersion to a *conchetto* idea and from there to the experience of incubation, I am aware of my intense focus on the main idea of a phenomenon. In addition to reflecting on the nature and meaning of the phenomenon and its theological and theoretical foundations, I can never remove myself totally from where theology and theory meet practice. I am also bound to engage a more reflexive inner level of understanding to examine the practice of my spiritual journey. Qualitative research intuitively examines the emergence of a synthesis of epistemological assumptions, logical examination, and a triangulation of *worlds* that comprise my creative worlds. I think of these worlds as positive, invented and a functional. All three comprise the lived experience of my often very emotional journey. But, the lived emotional experience is a positive one.

Therefore, the second source touches upon the three worlds that comprise my often emotionally creative worlds: namely the experience of positive world, an invented world, and a practical world. These worlds triangulate to support my experience of creative freedom at the intersection of art, critical thought, and spirituality.

### **A positive world:**

First: I draw upon a positive world.

To draw upon the idea of a positive world and an epistemologically positive construct of that world, I must begin by reflecting upon my personal identity in that world. The positive world, an invented world, and the practical world that comprise my creative worlds are inextricably bound together in the experience of creative freedom. The experience of a positive

outlook and worldview has grown as a result of the practice of connoisseurship and criticism. I will write about connoisseurship and criticism more extensively in the Dissertation. Suffice it for now to give a brief overview of this essential practice and how it contributed to my positive world.

Connoisseurship and Criticism contributed to my positive world because the two are grounded in appreciation. Appreciation is a precursor to the experience of a phenomenon of creative freedom, because it is an appreciation of art that will draw me to the book or the exhibition, or into the studio.

Connoisseurship and Criticism are the practices of art appreciation that result in motivation not only for those who are artists but also for those who are not, yet who are nevertheless inspired by art's aesthetic environment of beauty. The practice of art appreciation will always be a phenomenological experience of awe and wonder. In that context of awe and wonder, appreciation is a measure of the positive aesthetic value of the beauty of art. However, I base my comments on the assumption that etymologically the word criticism is not the practice of being a *critic*, but the disclosure of what has been learned in the practice of appreciation. That appreciation is more than just visual appeal and an intellectual aesthetic. That appreciation is also spiritual as devotional and divinely inspirational.

But, how do I as connoisseur and critic measure the devotional and inspirational values of the phenomenon of creative freedom? How do I measure delight in inspiration through art as reflexive practices of connoisseurship and criticism? Is the measure actually immeasurable? Elliot Eisner answers, "it has little to do with measured variables, with factor analysis, with multivariate analysis, or the array of statistical procedures used to do 'real' research."<sup>69</sup> Reasons for value judgments are given based on quality. In the same manner, when discussing a spiritual

experience based on connoisseurship and criticism, participants in the discussion can measure spiritual experience by its implicit value. According to Eisner, *connoisseurship* is a knowing of teachers and their wisdom, or artists and their art. I posit that same connoisseurship is a knowing of God and the work of the Spirit of God. Eisner also proposes that *criticism* is the cognitive ability to “render what they come to know in a language that is accessible to others.”<sup>70</sup> Criticism discloses what participants know or have heard and seen in ministry practitioners or seen in artists and their work. That same criticism is a disclosure of my experience of creativity as an effective way of communicating with others in order to *minister* to them.

Connoisseurship is a knowing about the experience of one’s self-journey as well as the informed leadership journey of others. Criticism is the ability to draw a critical voice from that learning experience with which to communicate the essence of the appreciative process. This process is explicit in a wholeness of living life as connoisseurship and criticism. Connoisseurship and criticism reflect my desire to share my research journey. That desire is indigenous to my spiritual quest and a desire to share that quest with others. The practice of connoisseurship and criticism is transferable to all phenomena of interest that enrich the experience of the individual. Whether the experience of creative freedom is in theology, theory, social sciences, spiritual care, and philosophy, just to name a few, the experience of creative freedom is the essence of being motivated. And being motivated is the essence of innovation. And innovation is fuel for the new *concetto* idea that will inspire me and other artists and ministry workers to experience each day as a bright new day of wonder and awe. In fact, my intent is to inspire everyone to give birth to great new innovative *concetto* ideas. In aggregate form, connoisseurship and criticism build towards a densely positive environment that will sustain my adventure of faith and hopefully benefit those who read these words.

### **An invented world:**

Second: I draw upon another of my creative worlds, the invented world.

By invention I do not mean an unreal flight of fancy into imaginative realms that have no meaning, such as some would say comprise my abstract art, or even as some would imply, my abstract thoughts. I propose the notion that abstraction has very real meaning. Abstraction is etymologically rooted in the word *abstract*, meaning to *draw from* or draw upon. My abstractions, as are my representations, are *drawn from* a lived experience rooted in the footsteps of great masters. However, by invention I do mean *innovation* as new ways to examine old ideas. I continue to inquire into appreciative and innovative ways to present my new discoveries as part of the transformation I have experienced throughout the Doctoral journey.

My inquiry into the essence of the phenomenon of creative freedom resulted in a discovery that the ecstatic experiences of spirituality have been and continue to be an invented escape into creativity, specifically art and writing. When voiced or displayed in art-making practices such as exhibitions, workshops, and curatorial work, the resulting conversations increased my awareness of what Brueggemann calls prophetic imagination.<sup>71</sup> This is equally true in ministry applications such as preaching, teaching, seminars, conferences, and mentoring through discipleship. The resulting engaging conversations increase my awareness of a prophetic imagination. The act of creating art also offers symbols of *epiphania* as salvation<sup>72</sup> to help “cut through the numbness and to penetrate self-deception.”<sup>73</sup>

Prophetic imagination is my invented world from which I draw the motivation needed to engage the culture of a small island community, and the community of faith, as well as culture on a broader scale. Imagination is invented because I initiate my first encounters with the experience. Imagination can be prophetic if I recognize in my self-awareness the influence and

presence of the divine. Invention is innovative because new things are unveiled, often as a result of examining old ways.

Through the language of metaphor in art and writing I have begun to express my experience of the spiritual in art with a freedom to speak “evocatively to bring to the community the fear and the pain that individual persons want so desperately to share and to own, but are not permitted to do so.”<sup>74</sup> Prophetic imagination grew beyond initial engagement of writing about a spiritual quest, and became my immersion in the writing style of epic poetry. The epic *Cerulean Odyssey*<sup>75</sup> became a prophetic voice for the spiritual in the art of life illuminated by the reality of Cerulean’s fears and pains. The explication of my fully “awakened conscience to understand the various layers (of the epic),”<sup>76</sup> found a unique resolve in experience of hearing my poetic voice expressed in music by Vancouver composer Joseph Glaser.<sup>77</sup> The result was a better understanding of the transformative effect of creative freedom. The experience reflects upon my life as a continual intersection of art, critical thought, and spirituality, especially when I reflect upon my escape into an invented world.

After every Sunday of ministry, I escape into the Monday morning world of my coffee shop people to draw upon creativity for strength. And after many Wednesday evening discipleship teachings, I also withdraw into the poetic world of my current epic. In between lies a myriad of ministry opportunities for prayer and counseling, bound in a creative synthesis of the spiritual in art, critical thinking, and my passion for discovering the foundations of the kingdom of God. I record a never-ending stream of consciousness in my *Great Idea* book. Its pages contain a silent but visible testimony to the never-ending world of *conchetto* ideas. Sometimes these ideas bear the fruit of becoming an actual drawing. Many times the ideas remain locked in an invented world waiting to be discovered.



“The spirit of art is most tangibly present wherever insightful investigations confirm that by means of the arts the human mind strives for clarification and depth, and that the things we see and hear carry an eloquent symbolism whose truth afflicts us almost bodily.”<sup>78</sup>

As I continue to navigate the phenomenology of creative freedom, I have become aware of a breakthrough into my conscious awareness of inherent transformative qualities of my research. Illuminated by the experiences of many *wonder*-full phenomena of creative freedom, the dimension of my research has grown into an understanding that I am not finished yet. There is even work to do beyond the Doctorate. As I reflect on the experience of one such phenomenon of creative freedom, that is, hearing the poem *Cerulean Odyssey* performed as music, I am reminded of tearful encounters with the unfolding of my other journeys as deeper meaning and greater appreciation for all of spirituality’s nuances.

Many are the *circle drives* around BC and across the prairies just to breathe the air of illumination and self-awareness. There are places along the road, a valley, a mountain, a village, a turn in the road, where I stop the car because I am too overwhelmed to continue any further. I get out to stand by the roadside, or to walk upon a path just to feel a divine presence in knowing I will be led by the Spirit onwards. The memories of these special places and stops along the way never go away. I look forward to the experience of them over and over again. I am filled with creative freedom. More ideas and more questions. Illumination is the realm of the mysterious where questions abound and answers are elusive. Whether my worlds have been invented through traces of spirituality and the inherent experience of uncertainty, or the invention of a positive world, I integrate each word, each experience, into a systematic whole. That whole is my lived experience of life.

Nevertheless, I draw upon my invented world to ask the greater question of why I create art? Which is intrinsically tied to the question why am I in ministry? These are probably the most mysterious questions of all. “Yet,” says Winner, “there is evidence that the drive to create art has something to do with the quest for (spiritual) knowledge and discovery.”<sup>79</sup> So, the relationship between art and ministry exists, yet remains to be unfolded. Invariably I arrive at the practical-*ness* of my creative worlds.

### **A practical world:**

Third: I draw upon the third of my creative worlds, the practical world.

By practical I mean functional.

In his latest book, *Phenomenology of Practice*, van Manen states that “phenomenology is *for* practice and *of* practice, referring to the kinds of inquiries that address and serve the practices of professional practitioners as well as the quotidian practices of everyday life.”<sup>80</sup> Somewhere between the practices of professional practitioners and the recurring practices of everyday life, lie my creative worlds in a state of alternating flux between being and doing, between creative freedom and “technicalities and instrumentalities”<sup>81</sup> which van Manen says are not the aim of phenomenological practice.

But, is what I have experienced and researched sufficient to motivate others in their respective personal and professional practices? Have I successfully bridged the gap between theory and practice by accepting the challenge of transformation to such a degree that others may desire a greater understanding of their spiritual journeys? How do I as artist, author and mentor, along with others in a community of faith and in the community at large, determine the functional value of our collective contribution to the experience of our realities? Does the

epistemological construct of my reality have a functional dimension worth extending into further research?

I have proposed that living and working in a positive environment of creative freedom will motivate ministry practitioners (and others) to keep a steady course of their practices of spirituality. Art-making and the appreciation of art are the practices of my experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom. Even though phenomenology does not concern itself with outcomes, the very nature of practice is outcome. My outcome is motivation. *Drawing closer* is the functional outcome of integrating my creative worlds. Whether I draw closer to the divine or to the experiences of the human spirit, the outcome is a phenomenology of practice. Not as a *how-to* but as a *what* of meaning, “to foster and strengthen an embodied ontology, epistemology, and axiology of thoughtful and tactful action.”<sup>82</sup>

I will continue to unfold many layers of my inquiry, and each layer is an awakening of my consciousness towards experiencing the phenomenon. The process becomes one of focusing, indwelling, and self-searching to determine my awareness of the effects of my experience of a phenomenon. Drawing closer comprises a detailed picture of my self-identity as an artist in ministry and my self-need for continual practice.

My frame of reference is an aspect of my integrated domains that reflect who I am in my positive, invented, and functional worlds. As a result I draw closer to the domains of my creative worlds by proposing seven characteristics as integral to my practice of phenomenology. These characteristics are embedded in my lived experience.

1. *Positionally* from a worldview as artist, author, and mentor.
2. *Personally* as someone on a spiritual journey from which I draw all I need to sustain motivation for the journey, as personified in the epic of Cerulean.

3. *Professionally* as an organizationally independent provider of counsel, consultation, curatorial services, management, innovative and inventive initiatives.
4. *Artistically* as a multi-disciplinary artist in visual arts, fiction and poetry.
5. *Academically* as a researcher of communication's phenomenological tradition and a methodology to examine and investigate the integration of theological, theoretical, and functional worlds.
6. *Experientially* as:
  - a) an advocate for the spiritual in art as my story of my experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom.
  - b) an advocate for the practice of my experience in discipleship and mentorship initiatives.
  - c) an advocate for the transferability of my investigative findings of the human experience of a phenomenon as motivational in ministry, especially in a small community such as on a small island.
7. *Functionally* as an informed leader, a community participant, a compassionate being, and a willing servant.

To conclude: The positive world, an invented world, and the practical world that comprise my creative worlds are inextricably bound together in the experience of creative freedom.

## **Methodology and Procedure**

### **Project Type: Research in Ministry**

*Research in Ministry* is the best approach with which to explore my research questions as descriptive of the phenomenon. I aim to explore and explicate as concisely as possible the issue I have identified and the themes that have emerged.

### **Methodology: Phenomenology**

My research method is phenomenological and my research design is qualitative. In a summary of research into creativity, Michael Mumford suggests: "Over the course of the last decade, however, we seem to have reached a general agreement that creativity involves the production of novel, useful products."<sup>83</sup> Phenomenology as a method of inquiry will produce something that is both original (novel) and worthwhile (useful and helpful), and both expressive and imaginative. Phenomenology is the method by which I inquire into an experience of creative freedom.

"Each genuinely new phenomenological tradition instigated by an original thought (novel thought, the *conchetto*) or thinker is made possible by the continuous creativity of phenomenology itself."<sup>84</sup> Phenomenological inquiry is characterized by a tension between order and disorder, between creative design and chaos, whether active or passive, analytical or imaginative. This tension is inherent in all phenomenology. This tension is the experience of the artist who seeks to resolve issues of form, light, and colour. This tension is the experience of the ministry worker who seeks to resolve issues of faith, doctrine, and conflict. "Its methodology is ordered on radical disorder. The order of inquiry is a function of the methodical rigor of the reduction caused by the demand of the epoché that seeks to free itself from all constraints and prior assumptions that may contaminate the operation of the reduction. This tension carries the imperative of continuous creativity, for phenomenology to constantly and creatively rethink its programs and practices."<sup>85</sup>

Yet, I posit this tension to be a positive tension, in which the phenomenon of creative freedom becomes a transparent and reflective step towards motivation, edification, and encouragement.

Creative freedom as a phenomenon implies the experience of a relationship between the inspiration for art and the communication of that inspiration in various forms of art. The communication of the experience of the phenomenon also implies an invitation to participate in the process of seeing oneself (the artist, the connoisseur and critic, and the ministry worker), as well as seeing oneself in the person of another (artist, connoisseur, critic, ministry worker), in relation to creativity and experienced freedom.

“However,” ask Craig and Muller, “if phenomenological epoché or bracketing finally reduces everything to the purified experience of a solitary transcendental ego or abstracted individual, then doesn’t phenomenology degenerate into a kind of solipsism <sup>86</sup> as a radical subjectivism that cannot acknowledge the reality of any other’s experience?” <sup>87</sup> The experience of *others* is of course essential to any professional practice especially that of the spiritual care provider. Then why this method?

### **Why this method?**

By employing the phenomenological method of bracketing I am able to focus more indepth and with direct exploration on my lived experience, as free from unexamined presuppositions as possible, although not totally free from the experiences of others. This qualitative research methodology enables me to explore creative freedom as a phenomenon of interest from an indepth perspective both as a result of my experience and the experience of those who participated in the research.

Given the nature of the research topic and my needs as a researcher, a research method other than the empirical method is necessary. Creating and appreciating art as a source of inspiration and motivation do not lend themselves to empirical research. In fact, they would appear to be the very antithesis of the scientific experimental method.

The phenomenological method is a philosophical perspective that acknowledges the reality of my realm of meaningful experience in art and ministry. The phenomenological method takes into account the way in which I construct meaning for my experience as an artist in ministry in context of my spiritual journey of life. My phenomenological inquiry presents an in-depth exploration of my retrospective account of lived experience, as well as being a suitable heuristic for studying such phenomena as transformation and self-awareness.

“Phenomenological inquiry does indeed importantly require a certain heuristic of methodology and creative impetus,”<sup>88</sup> because extreme patience as well as the slow preparation for incubation, gestation, and illumination, “are conditional for a creative moment to occur.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore the phenomenological method includes heuristic phases of my inquiry to demonstrate that I have a direct and personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated, namely the phenomenon of creative freedom. This deepens the phenomenological method by unfolding my journey as one of discovering the essential meaning of my ministry, as well as being engaged in the process of transformation. Psychology and human behaviour author, Wray Herbert, says that “heuristics are amazing time savers which make them essential to our busy lives, and like the ‘familiarity heuristic’, are an amalgam and experience.”<sup>90</sup> Dare I include the busy lives of researchers as well? He also proposes that these familiar heuristics are cognitive shortcuts,<sup>91</sup> as contributing factors in many of the studies conducted to investigate the choices we make every day. However, it remains to be investigated even further if in fact these familiarity heuristics or

cognitive shortcuts constitute the biases a researcher may impose upon pure phenomenological research of experience. Is my story fundamentally infiltrated by these familiarity influences, intentionally or unintentionally, as I process every aspect of essence as it relates to the experience of the phenomenon?

“It’s a fundamental human nature that people prefer what they already know.”<sup>92</sup> This leads me to question whether the epoché is capable of filtering all biases, suspend all beliefs, or exclude all epistemological assumptions. And if not, what guides the phenomenologist’s decisions?

As a result, my lived experience becomes my story which must be told to present my research in context of a very real and actively unfolding life of art and ministry, biases or familiarity heuristics notwithstanding. Nevertheless, the phenomenological unfolding not only motivates me, but in its telling will motivate others. Again, that story is embodied in the odyssey of Cerulean, who is my persona, written in the style of an epic poem.

### **Description of the Method:**

The phenomenological method is essentially descriptive of my experiences in relation to the community in which I live and the greater community beyond. The lived experience description is integral to the environment in which I engage others. That environment is *external* in ministry practices of teaching, preaching, discipleship and counseling. That environment is also *external* in creative practices of drawing, painting, and writing. However, the environment is also *internal* as the place where I engage myself and where I engage the divine. It comprises the spiritual practices of faith, meditation, reflection, prayer and worship, integral to my worldview.

The description of my lived experience *looks back* to the spiritual journey of growing by faith. It reflects on my response of faith as I ventured from ministry practices in Ontario to a



greater missionary work on Gabriola Island, BC. The descriptive method also reflects upon the *present* in experiences of drawing coffee shop people, silverpoint workshops, cartooning workshops, creating works of art in the studio, and writing novels and epic poetry in my study.

The lived experience will demonstrate the evidence of my creative freedom as being filled with a sense of wonder and awe. It is an expression of ecstatic delight in inspiration and animated wonder. Something does happen in the act of writing phenomenologically as the very experience of creative freedom makes contact with the things of my creative worlds. This contact depends on expressing myself in writing in a scholarly fashion based on styles and traditions, examination and reflection, on metaphors and figures of speech, and on poetic imagery and prophetic imagination.

In addition, I *look ahead* to a return to drawing.

My reflections are a detailed account of one example of my lived experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom. That account is the creative freedom that led up to the VSO performance. The experience of the phenomenon was documented in the Preliminary Pilot Project as *conversations*. Subsequent follow-up conversations re-examined the experience. From the event <sup>93</sup> and subsequent *conversations* were gathered the necessary data to continue my DMin program.

My lived experience embodies the essence of creative freedom as epoché during the performance, and the essence of creative freedom after the performance. Integral to resulting conversations after the performance, my account (my story) explores the creative ideas that motivated me to inquire deeper into my experiences of greater meaning in my art and ministry. For the Dissertation, reflections will follow a style of phenomenological writing, interspersed with research findings and observations.

### **Reflective Inquiry:**

I will use a phenomenological description of my lived experience through reflective introspection to document the experience of creative freedom. My experience of creative freedom is the essence of the content of my creative worlds in context of art and ministry practices. I aim to define “the method of perceiving and carving descriptive meanings out of a series of events.”<sup>94</sup> In addition to my systematic observation of the event known as the performance of *Cerulean Odyssey* by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, I will employ a method of self-examination through my story in order to explore the real-life experiences that have shaped my art and ministry practices. Even though I am not prepared to write with real confidence or definitive understanding about phenomenology, I will however, maintain a close association with the phenomenological writings of Max van Manen. As such, reflective inquiry is an integral part of the phenomenological method. According to Vincenza Caldareri, “Reflective inquiry, also known as self-reflection, is a systematic process of looking at a sequence of actions and experiences describing and outlining the events as they happened, recording what went on, recording the changes that were made in the process, and recording what the outcomes of the interactive experiences were.”<sup>95</sup> As such, the reflective process looks back in a phenomenological manner of reduction and epoché.

That satisfactory or concluding answers may never be found, is a thought echoed by van Manen when he quotes Gadamer as having said, “there is no method to human truths.”<sup>96</sup> Perhaps, this is where I as the researcher using reflective inquiry realize that sometimes what I wish to measure, remains immeasurable, or remains as questions unanswered.

### **Writing phenomenologically:**

Phenomenological inquiry is practiced as phenomenological writing.

My methodological style is phenomenological writing

But, phenomenological research does not merely involve writing. Research is also the work of writing as being at the very heart of the process. Phenomenological writing is not the practice of a technique; neither is writing restricted to the moment where one sets pen to paper. Writing has already begun when I engage the *conchetto* idea on paper in a form of textual communication. Phenomenological writing is the very act of making contact with the things of my world. “My observations and lived experience description depend on the right words and phrases, on styles and traditions, on metaphor and figures of speech, on argument and poetic image. These are values that cannot be decided, fixed or settled since the one always implies, hints at, or complicates the other.”<sup>97</sup> Yet, no text is ever perfect, no interpretation is ever complete, no explication of meaning is ever final, no insight is beyond challenge. In many ways the description of phases of phenomenological writing such as moments of seeking, entering, traversing, gazing, drawing, and touching, reflect the heuristic phases of Moustakas’ research design (initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis).<sup>98</sup>

Phenomenological writing is a discovery of themes and structure of my experience to which I add my interpretation of observations made during the process of experiencing creative freedom.

### **Testing Validity**

Is my description of lived experience trustworthy of the phenomenological method I am using? How do I test the validity of my experience of creative freedom? How do I test the effects of inspiration on creative acts? How do I validate the continuity of creative freedom as

motivation to sustain a vibrant ministry? For purposes of this Integrative Paper I will explain the procedure by illustrating two tests of validity.

The test of validity is demonstrated for example in the writing of the epic *Cerulean Odyssey*. One source of imagery for the first volume of the epic, Cerulean's first journey, was a fragmented world as presented in newspaper headlines. Headlines describing this fragmented world were deconstructed into experimental phrases and word juxtapositions. These in turn were reconstructed into poetic prose. Although the actual newspaper headlines were not saved, my footnotes in the annotated text version of the epic do refer to events of the times.

*but what to say and when to say it*  
*tsunami glimpse of a wall of water*  
*fallout waves of tragedy*  
*shallow slip tremors*  
*the planet is vibrating*  
*oceans harbour waves of judgment*  
*for an earth that quakes*  
*with greed from the other side*  
*of boxing days week of sales*<sup>99</sup>

The event was the tsunami that occurred on Sunday, December 26, 2004, in the Indian Ocean. It came as a result of an undersea mega-earthquake on the west coast of Indonesia. The tsunami killed 230,000 people in 14 countries. This tragic event stands in stark contrast to the consumer glut of western culture's Christmas spending. The effect of newspaper headlines increased my anxiety about the fractured lives of people I know in the arts and in ministry, as well as some of the circumstances of my own life. For six months I continued writing in this style of reconstructionist prose.

Another test of validity is the chronicle of events in which I describe the experience of writing *Cerulean Odyssey*. It describes meeting the composer Joseph Glaser and his process of composing a tone poem based on the epic. It includes direct quotes from the published musical score that accompanied the performance by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (of which I have a copy). In addition, there is correspondence with the VSO, the composer, and the musician's union, to confirm copyright issues and rights to use the digital recording in my doctoral research. Permission included playing the digital recording for the DMin Cohort during the Integrative Seminar of 2013.

Another example of validating the description of my lived experience and the phenomenological method is my use of internet media. This comprises public posting of pertinent information about my art and ministry in websites I have created, and how these websites are interactive and interrelated with many other websites that source my material for reference purposes.

## **Conclusions**

I crave for creative freedom in the next step of my Dissertation Phase. As an outcome of this Integrative Paper, I look forward to the crafting of my Dissertation. In fact, in response to all I have learned, I look forwards to the very practice of phenomenological writing for my Doctoral Dissertation.

I am fully aware that my DMin journey continues to be a philosophical one rather than a social science project. Therefore, my conclusions are less scientific, choosing instead to engage creative freedom as I would in the writing of poetry, or the creation of a new silverpoint drawing. Regardless of however philosophical my reflective inquiry may be, the experience of the

phenomenon of creative freedom has a practical purpose. And that purpose is threefold. One: to remain motivated for ministry in a small island community. Two: to encourage others by sharing my lived experience of art's positive, invented and practical worlds, and three: to recommend they surround themselves with their own experiences of art connoisseurship and criticism. For these purposes will add fuel to the fires that need to remain burning bright in faith as each person engages a peculiarly individual experience of spiritual transformation and leadership.

My research aims to make a contribution to the practice of ministry through the advancement of knowledge about the phenomenon of creative freedom. Research will also contribute to new knowledge about the appreciation of art in a process of *connoisseurship* and *criticism*. My findings will provide additional insight into my personal journey of art, spirituality, and ministry, through storytelling to encourage and enlighten others.

My role and commitment are to develop my research into a worthy dissertation as the outcome of my DMin journey and the completion of St.Stephen's College's Doctoral degree requirements.

The role and commitment of the P/D Committee are to guide me through the process of finishing the DMin program and the writing of a worthy dissertation. I welcome and appreciate the committee's encouragement, critique, and recommendations.

Sometimes I question my role as an artist and its often obscure link to my role as a spiritual mentor. Of what significance can I be, especially on a small island and in a small community? But then, all I need to do is remain aware of my own need for continual creative freedom, and my need for the Spirit of God on that precarious journey called life. Then, without warning, a little voice speaks up while I am shopping in our island's only grocery store.

*"It's the pancake man,"* she shouts and waves.

Ah, the pedagogical implications of having impacted a child with pancakes.

To believe by faith and a matching life-style, I may one day be privileged to teach them deeper truth, as I have so many before. But, that's another story.

## **Future Research**

Themes of dynamic, inspirational, contextual, and enduring context are integral to the theological and theoretical foundations of my creative worlds. These include the experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom in my reflections upon the spiritual in art. Those reflections are the subject of future research, whether that research is expressed in acts of creating art, writing fiction and poetry, or discipleship initiatives such as inquiry into the foundations of the kingdom of God.

One new initiative as a result of my DMin studies is research I have undertaken to write *The First and Last Kingdom*, as a comprehensive book about the practical theology and lived experience of the kingdom of God.

But first the Doctoral Dissertation as a continuum of the Integrative Paper, the Literature Review, and the Dissertation itself. Not as three separate assignments, but as one.

## ***Epilogue***

On July 1, 2014, I began writing a new epic poem. Its working title is *Weatherstone: Rachel's Odyssey*. The epic will unfold as a continuum of *Cerulean Odyssey*, which I began writing ten years ago, in 2004.

I posit this as an experience of the phenomenon of creative freedom and as a direct response to the transformative process of engaging the Doctoral program at St. Stephen's College. The research for *Weatherstone* will serve as evidence of my experience of creative freedom which in turn will enrich my artistic endeavours as well as my ministry practices. The

epic poem will continue to transform my spiritual journey as well inspire my spiritual leadership in ministry.

I conclude therefore with two personal expressions of creative freedom: one from the prophetic imagination of a musician and the other from the inspiration for a poem I wrote in 1997. The first experience happened on a bus.

I remember the bus ride very well. It was November 23, 1996. Rik Dekker sat beside me. We were all going to a special birthday celebration at an exclusive country club north of Toronto. A luxury coach had been hired to take us there. Our wives could not make the trip, so we were with the two of us among a bus load of people. Inevitably the conversation turned to art and music: I the artist, and Rik the professional musician. What he said has been posted on my studio wall ever since.

*“When you thoroughly enjoy the creative process in your expression through art, you experience the pleasure of God.”*

Creative freedom is the experience of the pleasure of God. It is worship.

The second experience happened on February 16, 1997. It was a cold February morning. I was thinking about a drawing I was about to begin in my studio. It was three months after Rik had spoken to me. However, instead of drawing, I wrote a poem that has been taped to my studio wall beside Rik’s words.

*to capture in drawing  
the journey to the centre of my soul  
in my longing for purpose  
to capture in drawing  
the awesome architecture  
of God’s created likeness  
surrounded by the garden*



*of his imagination  
to capture in drawing  
the joy and peace of looking  
in the mirror of truth  
with the hope that tomorrow  
the reflection becomes reality  
as such my quest for drawing  
is indeed a noble  
and worthy pursuit*

My journey therefore, remains a continuation of the quest for a deeper spirituality. It is a quest that embraces the experience of creative freedom as an act of worship. It is an experience that finds expression in my art and writing. Through the practices of ministry I am able to let my lived experience of such a quest motivate and inspire others as well. It is my prayer that others will make their quest a noble and worthy pursuit. It is a pursuit that brings pleasure to oneself and to God. Of such is divine worship.

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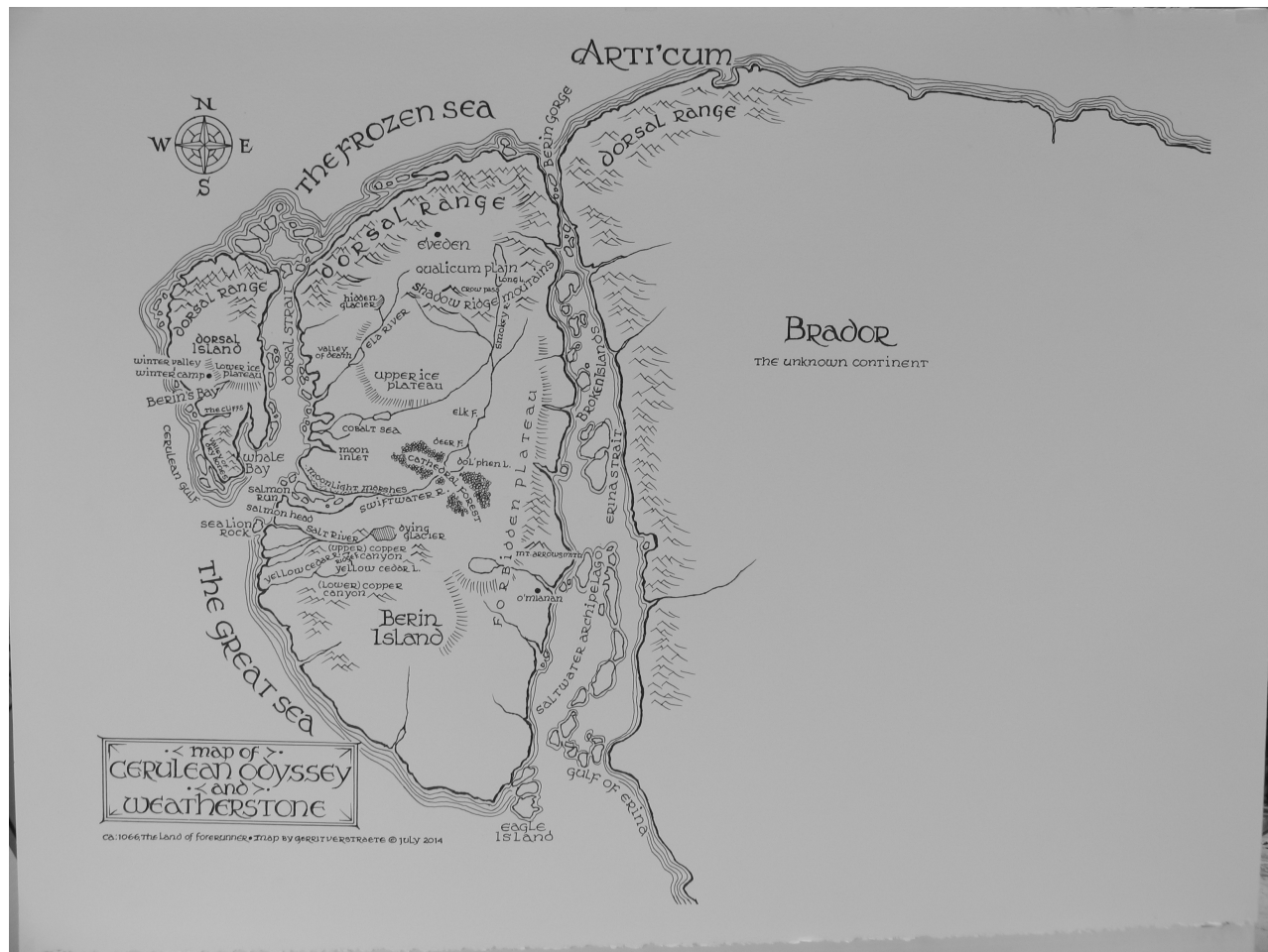
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Appendix 1. Map: My Creative Worlds. Map of the epic poems *Cerulean Odyssey* and *Weatherstone*.



## Endnotes:

This Integrative Paper began as “*Traces of Spirituality in Art*,” a first draft of a first concept of integrated research on September 25, 2013.

This Integrative Paper is the fourth and final draft of the third concept.

File: C:/MD/SSC/Dissertation Master 6/Integrative Paper 2014/ Final, July 25, 2014, Integrative Paper

Total pages 79, and total 23,473 words (not including title & content pages, bibliography, appendix, and endnotes).

<sup>1</sup> The *Benedictine Walk* is a spiritual practice I learned from a retreat some thirty years ago. One chooses a person to walk with and during the walk together each person shares stories about their respective spiritual journeys. IKT’s a time for sharing and listening, not for teaching or preaching. As an alternative, the *Benedictine Walk* is a solitary practice of walking with God and listening to His Spirit speak to one’s heart, as well as intimate dialogue. The solitary walk is my practice of a *Benedictine Walk*. However, I have recommended *Benedictine Walks* for two people during seminars I have lead.

<sup>2</sup> Garry Wills. “*Confessions: Saint Augustine*.” Deluxe Ed. NY: Penguin. 2006. Pp.29, 2012

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- <sup>3</sup> Frederick Jacobus Buytendijk (1887-1974), Dutch anthropologist, biologist and psychologist. [www.phenomenology.online](http://www.phenomenology.online). Link recommended by Max van Manen who forwarded the article by F.J.J. Buytendijk. "Experienced Freedom and Moral Freedom in the Child's Consciousness."
- <sup>4</sup> Frederick .J.J. Buytendijk. "Experienced Freedom and Moral Freedom in the Child's Consciousness." Translated from French by Alic Weymouth. *Educational Theory*. (3)1. January 1954. p.1.
- <sup>5</sup> Walter Brueggemann. "The Prophetic Imagination." 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 2001.
- <sup>6</sup> Robert Wuthnow. "Creative Spirituality: The Way of the Artist." Berkeley, LA: University of California Press. 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> [www.gverstraete.com](http://www.gverstraete.com)
- <sup>8</sup> John 8: 32, 33, 36. NASB. New American Standard Bible.
- <sup>9</sup> The role of poetry in my story is my LE: My lived experience of ecstasy as delight in inspiration during my first hearing of Joseph Glaser's first "draft" of the tone poem "Cerulean," and the subsequent VSO performance with accompanying notes. It also includes the re-visiting of my epic poem "Cerulean Odyssey" during conversations of the Pilot Project. This re-visiting motivated me to begin writing "The Broadway Players" as a sequel to "Cerulean Odyssey." The result was sustained motivation for ministry (and life) in a small community on a small Gulf Island.
- <sup>10</sup> Philemon 6. KJV.
- <sup>11</sup> Philemon 7, KJV.
- <sup>12</sup> Rolf Reber, Norbert Schwarz, Piotr Winkielman. "Processing Fluency and Aesthetic Pleasure: is Beauty in the Perceiver's Processing Experience". *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. (8)4. 2004. Pp.364-382
- <sup>13</sup> Christian Unkelbach, Miriam Bayer, Daniel Danner, Klaus Fiedler, Martin Stegmüller. "Why positive Information is processed faster: The density hypothesis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. American Psychological Association. 95 (1). 2008. Pp.36-49
- <sup>14</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust. 28<sup>th</sup> President of Harvard University in an interview with Charlie Rose, March 28, 2014. KCTS TV.
- <sup>15</sup> John Gould. "John Gould Journals." (John Gould, 1929-2010) Moonstone, ON: Moonstone Books. 1996. p.9
- <sup>16</sup> Max van Manen. "Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing." Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 2014. p.20..
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. p.72.
- <sup>18</sup> Michael Mumford. "Where have we been, where are we going? Taking stock of creativity research." *Creativity Research Journal*. (14). 2003.
- <sup>19</sup> K.Ferlic. "A Releasing Your Unlimited Creativity," discussion topic. 2007. [http://ryuc.info/meditation/true\\_freedom.htm](http://ryuc.info/meditation/true_freedom.htm) (retrieved online)
- <sup>20</sup> B.Nelson. D.Rawlings. "Relating Schizotypy and Personality to the Phenomenology of Creativity." *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. Oxford Journals, (36)2. Oxford. 2010. pp.388-399. <http://schizophreniabulletin.oxfordjournals.org/content/36/2/388.full#sec-3> (retrieved online)
- <sup>21</sup> Max van Manen. "Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing." Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 2014.
- <sup>22</sup> Clark Moustakas. "Phenomenological Research Methods." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 1994. pp.180-182.
- <sup>23</sup> Gerrit Verstraete. "Journals." January 24, 2003. (unpublished).
- <sup>24</sup> Philip Sheldrake. "Spirituality: A Very Short Introduction." Oxford: UK. Oxford University Press. 2012. P.28. (bracket added).
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> John Bright. "The Kingdom of God." Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 1953.
- <sup>27</sup> H.E.Huntley. "The Divine Proportion: A Study in Mathematical Beauty." NY: Dover. 1970.
- <sup>28</sup> Bas Levering. "Phenomenology of Practice and the Tradition of the Utrecht School of Phenomenology." Advanced course, Utrecht University, Netherlands. July 29, 2013 – August 9, 2013. (forwarded by Max van Manen).
- <sup>29</sup> John 3:8 NASB
- <sup>30</sup> VEA Ministries is the founding organization that oversees the ministry of the *Church On The Rock* and the *Hope Centre* on Gabriola Island. Founded in 1979, VEA Ministries is a registered non-profit organization (since 1982) with charitable status. In British Columbia, VEA Ministries is also registered as a denomination authorized to perform marriage ceremonies and ordain pastors. Currently, VEA Ministries comprises 6 ordained pastors ( 1 male, 5 female). The *Hope Centre* is a licensed daycare and afterschool program provider for early, middle and teen years,

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and family services. The *Church On The Rock* is a Christian community of faith with an emphasis on charismatic renewal, discipleship, family fellowship, communion and worship.

<sup>31</sup> Max van Manen. "The ecstatic-poetic phenomenology of Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei." *Phenomenology & Practice*. (7) 1. 2013. pp.139-143.

<sup>32</sup> Clark Moustakas. "Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Application." Newbury Park, CA: 1990. p.11.

<sup>33</sup> Max van Manen. "The ecstatic-poetic phenomenology of Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei." *Phenomenology & Practice*. (7) 1. 2013. pp.139. (bracket added where van Manen cites the Greek Ekstasis, as well as referencing a writing of Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, titled: *The Ecstatic Quotidian: Phenomenological Sightings in Modern Art and Literature* – 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Clark Moustakas. "Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Application." Newbury Park, CA: 1990. p.11.

<sup>35</sup> Gerrit Verstraete. "I Believe: Negotiables and Non-Negotiables." A discipleship course I wrote and taught from September 2013 to May 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Rose Montgomery-Whicher. "Drawing to Attention." A paper sent to me in 2014, by Max van Manen from his personal library.

<sup>37</sup> Clark Moustakas. "Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Application." Newbury Park, CA: 1990. Pp.20-22.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p.24.

<sup>39</sup> Excerpts from my spiritual autobiography, as part of the SSC, Spring 2013 Integrated Seminar. The autobiography was also shared publically with the people at The Church On The Rock, on Gabriola Island, on Sunday, March 17, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> W. Paul Jones. "Theological Worlds: Understanding the Alternative Rhythms of Christian Belief." Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 1989.

<sup>41</sup> Hebrews 11:10, NASB, New American Standard Bible. Chicago: Moody Press. 1978.

<sup>42</sup> From the title of the book by W. Paul Jones. "Theological Worlds: Understanding the Alternative Rhythms of Christian Belief." Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 1989. (bracket added).

<sup>43</sup> W. Paul Jones. "Trumpet at Full Moon." Louisville, KY. Westminster, John Knox Press. 1992. p.58.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p.121.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. pp. 128-231.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Craig, Heidi Muller. "Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007. p.1 (brackets added).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Table 5:1. Seven Traditions of Communication Theory. p.74, 75.

<sup>48</sup> W. Paul Jones. "Trumpet at Full Moon." Louisville, KY. Westminster, John Knox Press. 1992. p.124.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Joe Kissell. "Phenomenology: The Science of Experience." Retrieved online.

<http://itotd.com/articles/237/phenomenology/> July 2004.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> W. Paul Jones. "Trumpet at Full Moon." Louisville, KY. Westminster, John Knox Press. 1992. p.110,111.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Craig, Heidi Muller. "Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Craig, Heidi Muller. "Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions." Unit V: The Phenomenological Tradition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007. pp.217-261.

<sup>56</sup> Max van Manen. "Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing." Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p.14.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Craig, Heidi Muller. "Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007. p.xi (brackets include in quote).

<sup>59</sup> Rolf Reber, Norbert Schwarz, Piets Winkielman. "Processing Fluency and Aesthetic Pleasure: is Beauty in the Perceiver's Procession Experience". *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. (8)4. 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Mark Knapp, Anita Vangelisti. "Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships." 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Education. 2005.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Craig, Heidi Muller. "Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007.



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- <sup>62</sup> Charles Berger, Richard Calabrese. "Some Explorations in Initial Interaction and Beyond: Towards a Developmental Theory of Interpersonal Communication." *Human Communication Research*. 1 (2). 2006. Pp.99-112 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1975.tb00258.x/abstract>
- <sup>63</sup> Rolf Reber, Norbert Schwarz, Piotr Winkielman. "Processing Fluency and Aesthetic Pleasure: is Beauty in the Perceiver's Procession Experience". *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. (8)4. 2004. Pp.364-382
- <sup>64</sup> Gerrit Verstraete. "*Kermode: the Ecstasy of Katie Gordon*." Foundation Course 3. DMin program, Assignment 3. Edmonton, AB: St.Stephen's College. 2012 (unpublished).
- <sup>65</sup> Lorenzo Bernini. "*The Ecstasy of St.Teresa*." White marble sculpture. The chapel of Santa Maria della Vittoria. Rome. 1647.
- <sup>66</sup> James S. Saslow. "*The Poetry of Michelangelo: an Annotated Text*." New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 1991. p.41.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid. p.57. Adapted and amplified from: "We have before us the age of conscious creation, and this new spirit in painting is going hand-in-hand with the spirit of thought towards an epoch of great spiritual leaders."
- <sup>69</sup> Elliot Eisner. "*The Roots of Connoisseurship and Criticism*." *The Roots of Connoisseurship and Criticism: A Personal Journey*. Ch.3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2004.pp.e1-e7.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid. p.e2.
- <sup>71</sup> Walter Brueggemann. "*The Prophetic Imagination*." 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Augsburg, MN. Fortress Press. 2001. p.45.
- <sup>72</sup> W. Paul Jones. "*Theological Worlds: Understanding the Alternative Rhythms of Christian Belief*." Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 1989. p.41.
- <sup>73</sup> Walter Brueggemann. "*The Prophetic Imagination*." Minneapolis, MN: 2001. p.45.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup> Gerrit Verstraete. "*Cerulean Odyssey: Journey of a Long Distance Voyager*," 10 Vol. Annotated Text Ed. (forthcoming).
- <sup>76</sup> Clark Moustakas. "*Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications*." Newbury Park, CA: 1990. p.31 (bracket added)
- <sup>77</sup> "*Cerulean Odyssey*," (Volume 1) tone poem by composer Joseph Glaser, performed by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra at the Jean Coulthard Readings: Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver, BC. March 20, 2013. Presented by Gordon Gerrard and the VSO, with Composer-in-Residence Edward Top. Presented by Joseph Glaser to Jocelyn Morlock and Dorothy Chang. References to the composition of the tone poem by Joseph Glaser and the performance of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, are with permission from the composer, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and the Vancouver Musicians Association, Local 145 AFM.
- May 9, 2013, SSC IS 2013, the tone poem "*Cerulean Odyssey*" by Joseph Glaser, and performed by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, was presented to the Cohort 2012, as part of gathering data for the Pilot Project's *conversations*, under the supervision of the Integrated Seminar's faculty, Heather Jamieson, Chair of the SSC DMin program, and Margaret Clark, Interim Chair of the SSC Master's program. With permission
- <sup>78</sup> Ellen Winner. *Invented Worlds: the Psychology of the Arts*. Foreword by Rudolph Arnheim. Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1982. p.vi
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid. p.387. (bracket added).
- <sup>80</sup> Max van Manen. "*Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*." Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 2014. p.15.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid
- <sup>83</sup> Michael Mumford. "Where have we been, where are we going? Taking stock of creativity research." *Creativity Research Journal*. (14). 2003. pp.110.
- <sup>84</sup> Max van Manen. "*Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*." Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 2014. p.73. (bracket added)
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid
- <sup>86</sup> Solipsism: the theory that the self is the only thing really existent, and therefore that reality is subjective, opposed to objectivism. *The Reader's Digest Encyclopedic Dictionary*. NY. 1966.
- <sup>87</sup> Robert Craig, Heidi Muller. "*Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions*." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2007. p.218.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 345.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.



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<sup>90</sup> Wray Herbert. *"On Second Thought: Outsmarting Your Mind's Hard-Wired Habits."* NY: Crown Publishers. 2010. p.5.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p.53.

<sup>93</sup> *"Cerulean Odyssey,"* (Volume 1) tone poem by composer Joseph Glaser, performed by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra at the Jean Coulthard Readings: Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver, BC. March 20, 2013. Presented by Gordon Gerrard and the VSO, with Composer-in-Residence Edward Top. Presented by Joseph Glaser to Jocelyn Morlock and Dorothy Chang.

<sup>94</sup> Vincenza Caldareri. *"Artist, Art-Educator and Reflective Inquiry: A phenomenological research that investigates creative and pedagogical experiences."* Master's Thesis. Concordia University. Montreal: QC. 1996. pp. 1-125. (Retrieved online).

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.19,20

<sup>96</sup> Max van Manen. *"Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing."* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. 2014. p.30.

<sup>97</sup> Adapted from *Phenomenology Online*. Retrieved online from *Phenomenology Online* and attributed to Max van Manen <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/inquiry/writing/>

<sup>98</sup> Clark Moustakas. *"Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Application."* Newbury Park, CA: 1990. pp.27-32.

<sup>99</sup> *"Cerulean Odyssey,"* Annotated Text. Volume One, "The Long Distance Voyager," Tableau 52, lines 1-9. Gerrit Verstraete. 2004 (forthcoming). The original Volume One without annotations was published in 2010. Baltimore, MD: Publish America. 2010.