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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

How have my worldview and cultural background influenced the way I approach leadership? This was my big question by the time I enrolled in this class. After analyzing and discussing different worldviews and working through this competency, at some point, I will attempt to answer the question. Nevertheless, to understand this issue's complexity, it is vital to recognize how my worldview is influenced and how to deal with different worldviews that sometimes are contrary to mine. Living, working, and studying in three other countries (Brazil, the United States of America, and Canada), I could learn, live, observe, and reflect on my worldview and how these experiences have shaped my life as a person and leader.

In the following report, I will review some worldview literature and position myself in discussions to reflect my response. I will combine the discussed topics seeking to reshape, improve, and reaffirm my worldview describing how this course influenced my way of dealing with worldviews. Finally, this paper explores my experiences with understanding, viewing, and communicating worldview, and the role these play in my leadership.

Defining worldview

The word worldview has its roots coming from the German word “*Weltanschauung*,” which means a “view or a perspective on the world or the universe used to describe one’s total outlook on life, society, and its institutions” (Wolman, 1973, p. 406). Different authors express the topic in different ways. In a philosophical approach, the worldview can be defined as a “collection of conventions and beliefs that can describe reality” (Koltko-Rivera, 2004, p. 35). Anderson (2014) conceptualizes worldview as an “all-encompassing perspective on everything that exists and matters to us” (p. 12). He asserts that worldview involves the most representative beliefs and assumptions regarding the world you live. He goes further, saying that worldview “plays a central and defining role in our lives shaping not only what we believe and what we are willing to but how we interpret our experiences and respond and relate them to others” (p. 13).

Sire (2004) defines worldview as:

A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the hearts, “that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.” (p. 122)

I agree with Sire, but I also see worldview as to how I react when confronted to discuss my thinking or to respond or position myself in a specific situation. For example, I am a Seventh-day Adventist member. So, I believe that when we enter into a discussion in our Sabbath school lessons, they are a combination of many factors such as (a) how I

understand the context presented by the Bible, (b) the facilitator's interpretation, (c) how I face, learn and apply that situation consciously or subconsciously in my life, and (d) how to approach correctly to the questions the Sabbath lessons are presenting. Sometimes the discussions get hot due to the different worldviews. The facilitators tend to explain the subjects according to their way of thinking. Regardless of the situation, I have to be open to listen, learn, and accept different viewpoints.

Defining competency 1A

Competency 1A is described as “multiple perspectives and understands how individual worldview influences practice” (Leadership Handbook, 2009, p. 36). The ultimate objective is to understand how my worldview relates to others and determine standards that can guide work and relationships and help individuals lead well.

I have lived in three different countries (my home country-Brazil, U.S., and Canada). I affirm that these countries have influenced the way I approach, relate, and express worldview. While in Brazil, until the age of 35, I pursued my dreams and first steps in education. I also acquired my first and valuable leadership experiences in the business world. In 2002 I moved to the U.S. and then ten years later, to Canada. In the U.S., I worked, studied, and lived the “American way” of life, which includes principles, such as liberty, life, and happiness. I also experienced the “American Dream” that determines that with hard work, everything is possible. I accepted the “American Dream” for my life and had the opportunity to live and understand how a U.S. context shaped my worldview. Since June 2012, my family and I have been living in Toronto. I have to

develop and learn the Canadian culture and accept diversity from multi-cultural ethnic races and languages in Canada. Along with those, be ready to experience the “Canadian way.”

I have experienced these enhancements in my worldview in different aspects, such as 1. Opening myself to see, understand, and live in multi-cultural countries and other nations; 2. Through my job and education experiences; and 3. Through the awareness that I am not right all the time when reacting to different people’s worldviews because sometimes “what we really believe is not always congruent with what we say we believe or think we want to believe” (Wilkens & Sanford, 2009, p. 21). This point reflects that sometimes I have to be more favorable than realistic on various occasions, not entering into an internal conflict into dealing with my beliefs. Up to today, I conclude that these cultures have influenced, improved, and shaped my worldview in ways that make me more conscious about the foundation and roots of my worldview as they have guided me over the years.

My worldview: a cultural fact

My search for understanding worldview stimulated me to think about how I can improve my skills in interacting with cultures with a different view of the world. In doing that, avoiding conflicts presents my worldview standpoint. Wilkens and Sanford (2009) declare that “the most powerful influences come from worldviews that emerge from culture” (p. 12). They state that “our worldview will have a profound influence on how we envision ourselves, our universe, and our actions because we do not just think our

way into worldviews, we experience them” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 15). So, what the extent does culture shape worldview? Analyzing culture, Thom Wolf declares that culture indeed makes the variance (Wolf, 2010).

I analyze culture through aspects that include: a combined amount of knowledge, religion and beliefs, experience, values and attitudes, customs, perceptions of the universe of a particular group, and society, only to name a few. Therefore, connecting the diversity presented by these cultures to my personal and professional life, I am aware of the dimension in receiving these influences from the Brazilian, American, and Canadian cultures. Wilkins and Sanford (2009) make an important point where they declare that “we live in a world with a great deal of diversity...the broad array of languages, religions, races, nationalities and other cultural factors remind us of the global range of diversity” (pp. 139-140).

Indeed, culture is also attached to values. Values “are the reason for basic choices, life headings, and personal senses, and are among the most steady and continuing characteristics of individuals. They are the foundation upon which attitudes and personal preferences are formed” (Whetten & Cameron, 2011, p. 65). Values help me define the meaning, morality applied to decisions, and my idea of good or bad. They are also attached to a family model that has been affected by culture too. For example, my parents taught me the family structure values formed by a man and woman. My mom and dad always taught that there are distinct differences between a man and a woman and that they should approximate people rationally and biblically. Nowadays, I see many changes to this family's original format, and many factions are demoralizing this structure.

Furthermore, intrinsic to the cultural fact, we built our confessional and convictional beliefs through the ways we worked, experienced, and enjoyed life. The confessional is “ideas that remain exclusively on the intellectual level” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 22) acting on the conscious level. Convictional beliefs “are reflected in our actions, which many of them are on the subconscious level” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009). As the author’s comment, “it is important to integrate what we say, we believe, and what we do. However, it is not possible unless we live reflectively, carefully examine both our ideas and actions to see if they are in sync” (pp. 22-23). Besides, “many of our convictional beliefs work on the subconscious level. We may not be conscious of them, but they are our true convictions” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009).

I believe we find our real worldview when the confessional and convictional beliefs overlap. We deal with both in our daily lives. The extent one is more present than the other; it depends on the situation and environment we are inserted. However, when the confessional does not align with the convictional or vice versa, I see a problem. We know people that through their words and actions, pretend to do or be someone or something they are not. It seems that they enter into a disagreement, and it is not hard to identify them. I am very rational, demand, and reflective of myself. I also value the famous phrase that reads, “say, do, and act as you mean it.” In other words, I appreciate a life with principles, truths, character, and personality by God’s desire. I do not need to be afraid to make a mistake or take some risk because I can learn from them. If there is something I always need to do is to ask God more wisdom and humility to identify my weakness and develop my strengths. Careful worldview examination requires that we

“constantly hold up our convictions against the mirror of our actions to see where our confessional beliefs are incongruous with our convictional beliefs” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 22). By these actions, we evoke the right culture.

Understanding my worldview

Worldview development is an essential step that guides me towards a full understanding of my worldview. It is at this stage that as children, I grow and experience the world through relationships. Additionally, this is the step where I learn to discriminate, categorize, form opinion, and generalize about everything our minds can identify. Wilkins and Sanford (2009) clarify this point by saying that “as soon as we come to this world, we come to compete and experience it in a variety of ways including realities such as purpose, goodness, and truth, and we experience them in a multitude of ways” (p. 18). It is essential to distinguish that worldviews come into pieces and not as a fixed and complex system that involves the whole idea. I often encounter “ways such as heritage, family influence, educational system, religion, peer groups, media channels, and other variety of sources” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 18). As a person, I build my interpretation of worldview when I begin to exchange my experiences and memories that comprehend my ideas in the abstract form, to fully understand. Then, I work to fit the concepts I have been influenced by into patterns and start to structure my conceptual models into conceptualized frameworks. Nevertheless, even getting older, I can still alter my formed theoretical frameworks because new experiences will add new ways to see

old perceptions. Because I am reaching this point independently of how old I am, I seek to know and understand who I am.

My worldview also includes all events in the world as I relate to them and encompasses past, present, and future experiences. Moreover, “they are transmitted through a variety of forms such as music, advertising, political speeches, and unsolicited advice from friends or family” (Wilkins & Sanford, 2009, p. 18). It is something that I keep in constant development throughout my life. For many people, it can take a lifetime to discover, define, refine, and test it based on knowledge, learning, experience, conflict, and feedback received as a form to measure it. Later on, I build the worldview principles and fundamentals through words, and then, these words express my worldviews. So, my search for understanding my worldview makes me consider how I can enhance my competency in managing individuals who see the world uniquely in contrast to me, and how I can exhibit and articulate my worldview.

CHAPTER II

SIRE'S 7 QUESTIONS: MY WORLDVIEW FOUNDATION

When I first read Sire (2009), one of the suggested books for the Philosophical foundation's class, I was a bit concerned by the real need to read and study something more than natural. This naturality resides in the fact that I accept, believe, and follow God. Since my early age, my parents have taught me there is a God, the creator of everything in the universe, and that we pass this world toward eternal life in heaven. So, I structure my religious worldview on Christian Theism. On the other hand, I am conscious that many people do not share the same thinking way. Sire (2009) claims that “a worldview involves the mind, but it, first of all, a commitment, a matter of the soul. It is a spiritual orientation more than it is a matter of mind alone” (p. 20).

As a foundation, my “worldview lies so deeply embedded in my subconscious that unless I have reflected long and hard, I am unaware of what it is” (Sire, 2009, p. 21). I baptized in a Christian church, a Seventh-day member, a God's follower, and I believe that God is the creator and founder of everything. He is also the answer to the universe in general. I accept the Bible and its writings, as well as the spirit of prophecy rooted in the Bible. I admit that as human beings, we are not a genetic accident in this vast world, but I have a sense of worth and dignity that began in Genesis, according to the Bible. I accept Jesus Christ as the son of God that became flesh and came to this world to rescue human

beings. I accept the Holy Spirit, which, together with God, the Father, and the Son, are part of the Trinity. I also believe in the human redemption through Jesus Christ and in the second coming of Jesus that will rescue and give eternal life for the “saints,” because only Jesus saves. Discussing “the Beginning” of everything that constitutes the foundation of my worldview, Sire (2009) presents seven questions that clarify and help expand my position about God.

What is prime reality – the really real?

I believe that God is real, and I speak to Him several times daily. I can read the Bible, I can bow my head, I can kneel and talk to Him, or I can only direct some internal words as He is listening to me. God “is the prime reality, finite, personal, transcendent, omniscient, sovereign, and good” (Sire, 2009, pp. 28-31). I also believe that God is the principle of love. Among the innumerable Bible verses that talk about God’s love, I resonate with John 15:13 that says that “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends” (Palmer, 1994). In God, I have the promise of a better future. No matter under any circumstances, I can have hope and faith that everything can turn to be different in God. I still remember that my parents used to tell me different histories and characters from the Bible at an early age. When I grew up, I also remember with enthusiasm that they motivated me to read the Bible and know more about God.

In the same way, I have tried to do the same with my children. We live in a different time, multi-cultural countries and nations, and they also need to learn more about our God, the same God that opened the red sea, the same God that was with Daniel

in the lion's jail. The same way my parents did to me, I have to make my children know about God and make Him the reality in their lives.

What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?

In the book of Genesis, my worldview starts with the Bible, declaring that God created everything. God spoke, and everything turned orderly into existence. The sun, the light, the sea, the animals, and everything were created, starting with God's word. Thus, the man and woman are God's hand creation. Based on this principle, everything belongs to God. I am merely the recipient of this process. As cited in Sire (2009, pp. 31-32), Isaiah wrote: "I am the Lord, and there is no other" declares God (Isaiah 45:18).

On the other side, Sire (2009) declares that "the system is open, and that means it is not programmed, God is constantly involved in the operation of the universe" (p. 32). It is curious to understand that even when Adam and Eve chose to Fall, God had a redemption plan that brought Jesus Christ to the earth to restore the human being and give the hope of better and eternal life. In short, it declares that the world is "orderly but not determined" (p. 32). Otherwise, it would make me think that if God is not in control and at the same time, everything was pre-determined, we would be toys walking on this planet called earth.

What is a human being?

The human body is the most intricate creature. As humans, we are a highly composite and living machine that, despite all of the research done on the human body, researchers know only a small parcel. We are God's creation accordingly to His image

and likeness what means “we are like God.” In short, it emphasizes the primacy, God (Sire, 2009, p. 33). Our “personality is grounded in the personality of God” (p. 34). It is phenomenal that we can say that “like God, we have personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, social capacity, and creativity” (p. 34-35).

Sire (2009) also declares that:

We are personal because God is personal; we are self-conscious and possess self-determination, that means “we are capable of acting on our own, we do not merely react to our environment but can act according to our own character, our own nature.” (p. 33).

I do not want to dispute nor refute his arguments, they are perfect, but above all, I have the conviction that God made the human beings to be a reflection of His infinite love and creativity of Himself. Regardless of the freedom we have, God respects our choices and delivers the best option accordingly. As Christian is very simple to understand that God is the creator, and us, His creature.

Therefore, I cannot judge other people because they choose not to accept God and all His creations' format. It is common in a multi-cultural nation to find people who distinguish themselves by worship other gods and belief formats. Fortunately, or not, God gave us the freedom to make choices.

What happens to a person at death?

As simple as is, at death, every single person stops breathing. After death, two things will happen to everyone. The flesh turns into the dust of the ground, and the breath of life returns to God. As a Christian, I believe that everything on earth is going to have an end. The book of revelation and the final prophetic events reveal that everything on

earth will have an end, and the battle between good and evil will stop forever. As a Christian, on page 41, Sire says: “At death, people are transformed” in two ways: 1. to live with God eternally (saints), or 2. to perish when everything in this world has gotten to an end. I hope to be transformed by God’s grace and mercy and receive an eternal victory life. After that, there will be no more death.

Shaped by a Christian theistic worldview, I believe in the Bible and its contents. However, many other groups and religious factions think that the soul and body take another direction after death. Some believe and preach that there is reincarnation. Others preach that the soul is transported to another level and wait until something happens. Regardless of what they think, I believe in God and in what the Bible says.

Why is it possible to know anything at all?

Only God knows everything. I agree with this statement that says “Knowledge is possible because there is something to be known (God and His creation), and someone to know (the omniscient God and human beings made in His image)” (Sire, 2009, p. 36). Through God’s gift, I can think, talk, see, hear, smell, taste, etc. The Bible says in Gen 1:27 that “the foundation of human knowledge is the character of God as Creator.” I am a human-made according to His image.

It is fascinating when the author, Sire (2009), reflects in this text saying that “but God wants us to know Him, and He takes the initiative in this transfer of knowledge” (p. 37). Afterward, this is called the revelation and can be disclosed by God in two primary ways: by “general revelation (God speaks through the created order of the universe), and

by special revelation (extra natural ways, i.e., God in the format as a bush talking to Moses)” (p. 37).

How do we know what is right and wrong?

I think that everything starts with discernment. Personally, the insight of right or wrong began in my infancy as a child and is followed by my worldview development that includes the environment in which I used to live. It continues as I grow, and then I distinguish right and wrong through the knowledge, learning, education, experiences, values, and ethics. As Christians, I think that everything starts with the fear of the Lord. Psalms 111:10 says that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Holy Bible). Accordingly, I have to fear God and believe that He will give me the wisdom and discernment to choose among right or wrong things.

Sire (2009) points that “God has revealed his standard in the various laws and principles expressed in the Bible such as the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the apostle Paul’s ethical teaching” (p. 42), and more critical for my life is that through these examples, “people who want to know it can know it” (p. 42).

What is the meaning of human history?

Philosophically, I think it is too complicated to understand the meaning of human history. It took some time to assimilate the author’s thought on Sire (2009, p. 43) where he states that “history is linear meaning that the actions of people, as confusing and chaotic as they appear, are part of a meaningful sequence that has a beginning, a middle and an end.” He also declares that “history is not reversible, not repeatable, not cyclic;

history is not meaningless. Rather is teleological, going somewhere, directed toward a known end” (p.43). Unfortunately, sin started when Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the garden. Fortunately, to solve the issue, God revealed His plan of salvation for all humankind. Throughout this process and by God’s mercy, there was a plan of redemption already established. In God’s plan, Jesus Christ, the son, would come to this earth, born from a virgin, live and experience life, die, and rise from the tomb to give me the hope of salvation. Jesus came to earth to give everyone the example. I genuinely believe and seek the mysterious revelation that will happen by the second coming of Jesus.

How do we relate to people? The “isms.”

As stated above, through Sire’s seven questions, as a Christian Theist, I believe in God and follow the Bible. I read God becoming known through the scriptures and given instructions in many areas of our lives. I defend and accept God and His creation, and I hope to see Him soon and live together. As simple as is. I also recognize Ellen G. White and her writings in translating, explaining, and expanding the Bible’s contents to us. On the other hand, when facing a discussion with others' worldviews, we have to do it with an open mind and respect, not using a tone that shows traces of provocation or arrogance in defending our worldview. Thus, I have to be wise and careful when expelling out the other’s worldviews.

Many “isms” are presented as a form to help individuals to relate to people and to understand themselves and their worldviews. Among them, I will shortly give a little understanding of Naturalism, Deism, and Islamism.

Naturalism

In brief, “Naturalism states that the world is of a piece. All that we are and do is incorporated into the space-time continuum whose most essential elements are those described by physics,” and that “we are the evolved products of natural selection, which operates without intention, foresight or purpose” (Tenets of Naturalism, n.d.). According to the Tenets of Naturalism, everything is included in the physical universe or molded by various biological, physical, social, and psychological progressions that science describes.

Working on my Christian worldview with a naturalist worldview would clash because, under the naturalist point of view, they claim that there is no God, and they replace modern science. I believe that science has brought many innovations and discoveries that have helped many other fields, such as medicine and technology; however, we can never forget that God is the creator of everything that encompasses life. Science can create almost everything, but they cannot create a human being. This process only God can.

Deism

Deism presents another view of understanding life and related situations. It preaches that Deism has a lot to offer to us and society (World Union of Deists, n.d.). Deism claims that we find God's knowledge throughout nature; therefore, Deism is not a “revealed” religion. It presents itself as a natural religion. Thus, “the natural religion/philosophy of deism frees those who embrace it from the inconsistencies of superstition and the negativity of fear that are so strongly represented in all of the “revealed” religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam” (World Union of Deists,

n.d.). They are called “revealed” because they present many books having God in the center of their revelation.

Working my Christian worldview with Theist viewpoint, I see that both believe in a creator God; however, the Deism sees that even with a creator's existence, he ignores the creatures. He does not require worship, the judgments of the behavior, prayers to be answered, or promise that you can have a new life after death. The Theism does precisely the opposite, God is the creator, and He does take care of everyone.

Islamism

According to Islam (n.d.) Islamism is a vital “religion which shares many beliefs and practices with Christianity and Judaism. Furthermore, Islam is a rational religion: The vilest of creatures are those who choose to be deaf and dumb and do not use their reason” (Qur’an 8:2). Muhammad used to remind his followers that God created the reason first, and then the other things. Thus, believers should take individual responsibility for one’s faith and actions. Islam’s appeal resides in connecting the piety of faith, the covenant, and then organizing elements to produce dominant resistance to foreign invasion where the crucial dimension is not economic but social (Islam, n.d.).

The pillars of Islam are 1. Faith in ONE God and Muhammed the Prophet; 2. Five daily prayers are facing Meca; 3. There is no option; you have a requirement to share or give money to the poor; 4. You have to be fasting throughout the month of Ramadan. Muslims cannot eat or drink anything during the daylight hours (period of spiritual and moral renewal), and 5. Once in their lives, they have to plan to Pilgrimage to Mecca if they can afford to do it (Dutch, n.d.; Kash, n.d.).

One of the assignments for this class was to prepare a role-play, choosing one of the “ism,” study, and present it to the course (see artifact H.3). I decided Islamism because I was interested in knowing about this “weird” people, their beliefs, values and principles, and their roots. According to DeSantis (n.d.), Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world. Canada is one of the countries that, in the last decades, has received thousands of Islamite people from all around the world. I live in a neighborhood here in Toronto that presents a high percentage of Islamic people. I also study at York University, where there is a significant concentration of Islamic students. It is fascinating to observe these people dress, communicate, and express themselves to other people. We know that Islam has its roots in God, but they do not believe in Jesus in the same way Christians believe. We are all kind of “cousins” by Abraham’s sons and daughters side; however, they follow their principles through Mohammed, its prophet - the messenger of God. So, with an open mind, I could understand their beliefs, and with respect, I had the opportunity to talk to some friends at York about their history. Studying these people was such an excellent experience.

CHAPTER III

MY WORLDVIEW IN ACTION

My background

Originally from Brazil and living in North America for the last 15 years, I have worked in a variety of areas such as 1. vice-president for commercial banks and CEO for a car dealership in Brazil; 2. assistant pastor for SDA churches; 3. musician, music director, choir's director and vocal group conductor for SDA churches; 4. musical producer; and 5. music school director and music teacher in U.S. and Canada. All these three different fields, business, music, and church, have not only contributed to my personal and professional development but shaped my worldview.

The connection between the knowledge base and the artifacts

My worldview is well-founded on God. The above Sire's seven questions worked as a path that helped me to affirm my worldview. I am a Christian and SDA believer. As a Christian and leader, I have my core values, beliefs, and qualities, such as 1. God is all; 2. God's plan to have a family; 3. My parents are a framework for my family; 4. My home must be a piece of heaven on earth; 5. Friends and relatives, always seeking a way to serve them; 6. Open heart for changes; 7. A visionary leader; 8. Positive thought and optimistic person; 9. Honesty is always the best policy; 10. Trust has to be earned; 11. Integrity, and 12. Have faith in God.

Combining my values, beliefs, and qualities to my worldview, I have to express my thinking through actions, words, conversations, letters, and collectively when working in teams, only to name a few. These approaches show that flexibility and openness are essential qualities that I have to maintain to improve my cultural background. So, as I discussed above, worldviews, cultures, and values are not only related but connected positively in my approach to leadership. Ideally, my behaviors and responses to the environment have to be according to my beliefs and values.

What artifacts have been generated?

To improve my worldview, I have developed, worked, and executed several projects. The artifacts are the representation of these projects, which reflect all my experience over the years. I implemented many of them through the different roles I was assigned. The different positions are: 1. as assistant pastor, music director, and first elder for the Seventh-day Adventist Brazilian church in Mount Vernon, NY; 2. as musician, teacher, and music school director in three different countries (Brazil, U.S., and Canada); 3. through projects related to my professional experience in these countries; and 4. a student in two different universities (Andrews University, U.S. and York University, Canada). A brief description follows of how each of these projects influenced my worldview growth.

(A) I worked as an associate assistant for Dale Carnegie training in Brazil. Dale Carnegie is a worldwide company that focuses on leadership and how to deal with people. Through this course, I trained people to develop their abilities to see things from different perspectives in their personal lives and professional lives. They also learned to

confront, analyze, reflect, and redirect their attitudes, actions, and viewpoints. As a result, they improved the way to see the world around them that directed to new approaches and discoveries in their worldviews.

See the following artifact(s): Dale Carnegie certificate.

(B) Connected to my worldview are my spirituality and beliefs. I worked as an assistant pastor and first elder for Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Brazilian church in Mount Vernon, NY. It was one of the most relevant experiences I achieved in my life. In this role, I had the opportunity to lead a vibrant Brazilian community in Mount Vernon, NY. When we lead a church, we lead people as well as share our worldviews. Among several duties that I had, I helped the church develop, implement, and direct the nominating committee, church board meetings, religious activities, workshops, training, and conferences.

As the assistant pastor, I also invited Pr. Denison Moura, the Portuguese Advisory Secretary to come to my church. In his visit to my church, he preached and presented a workshop regarding the Adventist structure starting from the General Conference reaching the churches around the world.

Also, I taught Sabbath school lessons to the church to better understand the culture, values, principles, and worldviews included in my roles. The SDA church manual states that “Elders must be recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community... and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience” (Adventists, 2015, p. 73).

See the following artifact(s):

B:1. Elder's certificate, 2. Nominating Committee, and 3. Two letters from the Senior Pastor Claudio Vilela, and two letters from the Greater New York Conference actual and former presidents, and

B:2. The video presentation and a letter from the Portuguese Advisory Secretary for General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist churches, Pr. Denison Moura.

(C) I worked as a music school director for All Nations Music and Arts Center. I was the coordinator for the I Conference of Worship and Praise In His Presence promoted by All Nations Baptist Church in Danbury, CT. We taught the influence of the music into the worship context and how they reflect our way to worship God, that in the end, they express our worldview.

See the following artifact(s): Book of activities in Portuguese and English, and flyer.

(D) I understand that through school education, I can enhance my experience that, in the end, will improve and reflect my worldview. At Andrews University, the main idea was to seek multiples perspectives, new knowledge, develop my education and curriculum, and be aware of multi-cultural approaches throughout the program.

See the following artifact(s): Andrews University acceptance letter, and Pr. Claudio Vilela's letter of appreciation regarding my Andrews acceptance letter to enter the Ph.D. program.

(E) As a dad, I share the responsibility with my wife in developing our children in essential areas preparing them to live a good life and make good choices, including a

Christian foundation they can follow as an example for their lives. As they are in the worldview development step, they receive a correct life guide through our parental education.

See the following artifact(s): See the essential books that I have used to structure their Christian worldview.

(F) At York University (Toronto, Canada), the main idea was to seek multiples perspectives, new knowledge, improve my education and curriculum, and be aware of multi-cultural approaches throughout the program. Canada is a multi-cultural country, and every single culture shares their worldviews. It was a two years project. I understand that through school education, I can enhance my experience that, in the end, will reflect and improve my worldview.

See the following artifact(s): York University: application, certificate, Celebration of Success graduation book, and picture.

(G) As music school director for the churches All Nations Baptist Church, Philadelphia Assembly of God church, Revival Assembly of God church, and Christ for the Nations Assembly of God church, I was responsible for exploring and developing multi-cultural music education. Not only that, I had to understand how our worldview assumptions impact how we lead and approach music education. As a result of my work, I prepared the students to perform in several recitals. I directed and performed these recitals at 1. 2009, Danbury, CT at Philadelphia Church, 2. 2011, Danbury, CT at Revival Church, and 3. 2016, Toronto, Canada at Christ for the Nations Church.

See the following artifact(s):

G:1. EMAF 2009 Spring Recital (Recital da Primavera): program, flyer, newspaper report, and video. Music School Director and teacher: Prof. Osvaldo Junior,

G: 2. Avivar Music & Arts Center: school flyers in English, Portuguese and Spanish, spring recital flyers and invitation, pictures, and video. Music School Director and teacher: Prof. Osvaldo Junior,

G: 3. Christ For the Nations Music & Arts Center (CFN): school flyers in English and Portuguese, spring recital flyer and invitation, pictures, and video. The music school director, teacher, and host: Prof. Osvaldo Junior,

(H) LEAD 636 – Issues in Leadership Foundations at Andrews University: This course helped me explore ideas and study different approaches to worldviews while helping shape and improve my worldview.

See the following artifact(s): Course syllabus, final course paper, and course assignment: Islamic worldview.

(I) AP/ADMS 3020 – Canadian Business Culture and Management at York University: This class is part of a bridging program offered by the Canadian government to internationally educated professionals, the newcomers. According to its syllabus, this course gave a review of the Canadian business condition and its environment. It concentrated on the improvement of the management knowledge and skills for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP). Hypothetical guidelines were joined with case examinations, intuitive and group-based activities, and oral and composed assignments that built up a thorough comprehension of the Canadian landscape. Canada is a multi-cultural country, with a majority of its immigrants coming from the Middle

East. So, interacting with many different cultures, I could learn and improve my worldview.

See the following artifact(s): AP/ADMS 3020 (Canadian Business Culture and Management Skills) course syllabus, final paper, certificate In Canadian Business for Internationally Educated Professionals, Celebrating Success 2015 graduation booklet picture.

(J) As a musician, I created, produced, directed, and presented many religious musicals in the U.S. and Canada. I credit my religious worldview on Christian Theism. I believe in God, and I have used musical ways to express and explore not only His life but His love toward the world acting and singing. Through these musicals, I could explore Jesus' life in two essential phases: Easter and Christmas. Through these musicals and based on the Bible, I could show Jesus' life since the time He was born and His death and resurrection.

The musicals are:

J:1. 2003, Danbury, CT – Brazilian SDA Church - Christmas Musical: Christ is the Light (Cristo A Luz). Director, producer, conductor, and pianist: Osvaldo Junior. See the following artifacts: flyer, picture, and video.

J:2. 2004, Mount Vernon, NY – Brazilian SDA Church - Christmas Musical: Adore (Adorai). Director, producer, and conductor: Osvaldo Junior. See the following artifacts: flyer, pictures, and videos

J:3. 2013, Toronto, Canada, Brazilian SDA Church – Easter Musical: Behold the Lamb. Director, producer, and conductor: Osvaldo Junior. See the following artifacts: flyer, newspaper ad, pictures, and video.

J:4. 2013, Toronto, Canada, Portuguese SDA Church – Christmas Musical: The Night Before Christmas. Director, producer, and conductor: Osvaldo Junior. See the following artifacts: flyers, pictures, and videos.

J:5. 2014, Toronto, Canada, Portuguese SDA Church – Easter Music Program: Because He Lives. Director, producer, conductor, and pianist: Osvaldo Junior. See the following artifacts: flyer, pictures, and videos.

How my education connects to my worldview

Indeed, my education shapes the way I see my world. “Education and learning are constantly taking place in a person’s life” (Knight, 2006, p. 108). I can divide my education into two parts: my home education and school education. My parents gave me a Christian home education and taught me the principles, values, and ethics and helped me build the emotional and well-prepared individual I am today. On some level, I tend to reflect on the level of education and boundaries my parents taught at an early age. So the home education I give to my children is a combination of that one I received from my parents. I have good memories and feel the importance of those early years. As a result, I automatically transfer to them.

Taking the LEAD 636 at Andrews University, I had the opportunity to study the Anyon (1980) article. If compared to Anyon's (1980) study, I can say that I always had

the chance to participate in the “Affluent Professional School,” the fourth class of school among the five contained in this study. Regardless of the situation, my parents always gave me the best school education they could afford. My Father usually says that I have to study and pursue more school education because they can help me to make better decisions every moment in my life.

I left Brazil to live in the U.S. in 2002 and from the U.S. to Canada in 2012. So, I use to say that my education/learning/schooling is always working in progress. I am taking the Ph.D. program in Leadership at Andrews University, and a bridging program for Internationally Educated Professionals at York University in Toronto. Every single class taken in both Universities is a challenge because English is not my first language. My experience shows that it takes almost double the time to understand the readings and elaborate projects and complete assignments.

I have learned from the various philosophies I sympathize with ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing). Knight (2006) claims that “Ontology is the study of the nature of existence, or what it means for anything to be” (p. 18). In nature is how I make sense of existence. On the other hand, Epistemology is the “study of knowledge or how we recognize the things we know” (p. 18). Practically, epistemology is how I make sense of the processes by which I make sense. So, based on these two concepts, and in simple philosophical thought, I like to think that “ontology comes ‘before’ epistemology” in the same view that “Zero appears ‘before’ One.” For example, you cannot study something which you do not have a case of. In general, this is our life, which is why I am taking the

leadership program (L.P.) of Andrews University (A.U.), always seeking more knowledge.

The L.P. of A.U. summarizes these two philosophical dimensions about being and knowing where: “being works with the individual bringing his/her personal and professional experiences and sharing with other his/her cultures, beliefs, worldviews, and theoretical orientations.” Knowing is represented by the “paradoxical unity of theory and practice, and as leaders, we can transmit and generate knowledge.” (Andrews University: Leadership Handbook 2014-15). In my understanding, I am actively participating in these two philosophical dimensions in this leadership program at Andrews University.

The Constructivism Approach

I see in my education the constructivism approach. According to Knight (2006), constructivism means that I am continually revising and upgrading my knowledge. It dictates how I can learn, seeking new understanding or ways to fulfill my acquaintance of “new” things. It says that I can construct my knowledge through experiencing things and reflecting on them. I build my worldview about things by estimating the thoughts against the new data where I can change or dispose of them. It is a constant learning process through life, where I am building my knowledge.

This approach makes me uncomfortable because the level of “knowledge” I present today might not be sufficient to keep me as a successful leader, educator, and professional in the future. What does it mean? The education and learning acquisition

system is a constant and evolving change. I have to analyze myself regularly and compare the level and quantity of information necessary to exceed.

I trust that the primary goal of education is to “generate individuals who are skilled in doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done” (Theory of Constructivism - Jean Piaget) (Constructivism, n.d.). So, my learning process, as well as my need to seek new knowledge, never ends. I have to be innovative and reflective to add more insight to myself.

CHAPTER IV

MY WORLDVIEW AS LEADER

As a leader, I need to be aware, manage, identify, deal, and understand my strengths and weaknesses. In the article “*Learning while leading: The Andrews University leadership program*” written by Drs. Freed, Covrig, and Baumgartner (2011), on page 37 it states: “Leaders need to understand who they are and they achieve this understanding in part by learning the significance of their own life stories.” Earlier in 42 B.C., Publilius Syrus wrote: “It matters not what you are thought to be, but what you are” (Whetten & Cameron, 2011, p. 57). Whetten & Cameron (2011), together with Freud (1956), developed a similar idea asserting that to “be fair to oneself is the best exertion, an individual can make. The reason is that a total genuineness requires a ceaseless look for more data about the self and action toward self-change” (Whetten & Cameron, 2011, p. 58).

Indeed, I will not be able to improve myself or advance to a new competency unless I determinedly know the levels of abilities and capacity I have. It shows the recognition and evaluation of my current skills and deficiencies versus my expectation at the end. The realization that I may have lacked in my education is sometimes hard to accept because seeking self-knowledge is a prerequisite for my personal growth. However, for a variety of reasons, I might be attempted to avoid seeking the information

and evaluate myself because it may bring a feeling of inferiority. The sense of inadequacy is some weakness that I deal.

As a leader, I am a proactive person by nature. I try to learn, reach a high level of school education, and acquire knowledge as much as possible because they can enrich me personally and professionally. My statement reads that the leader's role should link to a complete understanding of culture, where the worldview, values, and principles move me towards the vision. Thompson (2014) declares that "great leaders are always learning" (p. 20). So, it is evident that living, working, and studying in three different countries and receiving a multi-cultural education, I can affirm that directly and indirectly, these cultures influenced my worldview as a leader. As a result, I have been improving my leadership and myself as a leader.

What are the challenges in assimilating different worldviews?

By the time I left Brazil to live in the U.S., that country was in a deep financial, economic, and political crisis. Despite having lost my job, business, money, I did not miss the hope of restarting my life. So, the desire to build a better future acquiring experiences living, studying, and working in this country made me decide to move to the U.S. In the U.S., I saw myself at the bottom of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow (1943), a psychologist, affirms that "motivational behavior is related to human desires. Maslow presents five basic types of needs that provoke people's motivation. These include the need to survive physiologically, the need for security, the need for affiliation with other people (belongingness), the need for self-esteem, and the need for self-actualization." While in the U.S., I could go from bottom to top in this hierarchy. I had

the opportunity to buy a house, buy new and pre-owned cars, make money, and live well with my family. The challenges came after I moved to Canada. Looking back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, I am at the bottom of the scale again. I am studying, working part-time, and rebuilding my life. Nevertheless, I am improving my worldview.

What are the implications?

Some of my recent reflections and thoughts on my worldview express my concerns regarding "aches." In other words, I have challenges in my worldview because specifically of three aches. My first ache deals with living far away from my family for years. As an immigrant, I have lived out of my family home and home country for the last 14 years. I missed my family very much. Even though I talk to them regularly and travel to visit them once a year, this is not enough, and this situation hurts. Of course, that was my choice to move and still is my decision to live, work, study, and raise my family here in North America.

On the other hand, I see a privilege to experience life and culture in these countries. Moreover, God has been blessing me a lot over the years. In moving to North America, I established my goals in four directions: 1. Seek knowledge through education; 2. To start and raise a family; 3. To live and assimilate new cultures to expand my multi-cultural experiences; and 4. To learn new languages and work as a way to improve my personal and professional backgrounds.

My second ache: 12 years ago, I got married to Daniele. From this relationship came my daughter Hillary. Thanks to God, I have a beautiful, intelligent, outgoing, Christian, and smart daughter. I also have a 13 years old step-son, Richard. He

is very intelligent, smart, a bit shy, and an outstanding soccer player. Both children are very talented, Christians, educated, healthy, play many musical instruments, and smart kids under my responsibility to give them the best I can do. What aches me the most through this process is that my wife has depression and is also bipolar. This emotional instability has affected the environment of my family for years. It is not easy to accept this unstable situation because it clashes directly with my worldview to have a peaceful, healthy, and perfect family. These dangerous emotions have also affected my process of writing the dissertation at Andrews. Every single day is different, and everyone brings its “surprises.” What has bothered me is that, as I give too much importance to keeping my family healthy and united with love, care, respect, and commitment, this point has challenged my worldview under God's control. My worldview is a tremendous conflict. My Christian and personal beliefs decide to accept the situation or break-up my marriage through a divorce.

My third ache comes from the expectation of my future professional life. I have a part-time job as a music school director and teacher. If, on the one hand, this situation brings some comfort because I can plan and manage my time, on the other side, the money coming from this job is not sufficient. As I got a Canadian government loan to pay Andrew's University tuition and fees as soon as I finish the doctoral program, I have to pay them back. In this third ache, once I trust in God, my worldview believes that God has much more in store for me and that He will open the doors for my future.

Affirming my worldview

I have been working for Pentecostal churches in the U.S. and Canada since 2004. Even though we see many denominations in Jesus, the Pentecostal and SDA churches have different principles, values, and worldviews. Moreover, connecting my SDA worldview to the Pentecostal churches, I experienced a reaffirmation of my faith in God. In brief, I had a situation where I tested my worldview, working for a non-Adventist church. In 2003, the All Nations Baptist Church, a Pentecostal church, applied for my work visa (H1B1) in the U.S., and in 2006 they were willing to sign all the documentation for the green card. However, the immigration department denied my application based on the laws regarding church membership. I was an SDA member and not a Baptist. Furthermore, the Pentecostal pastor said that he could baptize me so the process could be approved. I appreciated his willingness to solve the issue with no hesitation, but I refused his proposal once it clashed with my SDA worldview.

Working with the Pentecostal churches through these years, I always have found several biblical interpretations that conflict with my SDA worldview. However, in all these situations, I respect their viewpoint, and I thank them for the opportunity to know more about their beliefs. In facing these moments, I explain their questions based on the first book, the Holy Bible. As an SDA believer, I never say that I have the final word or that their way to interpret some verses is wrong or right. I respect their opinions and learn how they understand the Bible in that context.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

So, how have my worldview and cultural background combined influenced the way I approach leadership? My worldview has been shaped through the years based on the cultural experience and influences living in three different countries. This competency elevated my sensibility to understand not only my way to reflect and interpret facts that have shaped and influenced my life as well as the way I approach leadership, but through the books, assignments, and class discussions; they helped me to understand different worldviews, cultures, and values. I see very clearly that as a person, Christian, professional, educator, and leader, if I understand the complexity of culture and values, I can better understand and deal with others' behavior and lifestyle that are different from my style and leadership.

Indeed, I understand more about other's people's worldviews when I learn and understand their behavior. In doing so, I may find challenges to my values and beliefs that will make me more conscious of expressing the similarities and differences in worldviews. Similarly, if others understand my worldview, they can understand the values and behavior I present. Knowing that when one makes a value judgment, one makes a statement about the way the world "ought to" be, and of course, people do this differently depending on their worldviews (Worldviews-An introduction, n.d.).

Thompson (2014) declares that “great leaders are always learning” (p. 20). It was an incredible opportunity to study, learn, and enhance my insight all through this competency. Life is a learning process. I view myself as inside in the learning process. That living, working, and studying in three distinct nations, and getting multi-cultural training, they have molded my leadership, perspective, and initiative.

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