

Chapter five

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study has afforded me the opportunity of acquiring a clear understanding of the term emotional intelligence. I have also come to know its importance and application within many institutions in society and the value it holds for individuals within this society. This has also led me to realize its effectiveness and value to the ministry of the church. The research on emotional intelligence is vast and intense and concerns many areas of academic study. These fields include that of business (Cherniss 2001, Weisinger 1998), psychology (Salovey and Baret 2002, Forgas 2001), education (Elias 2000, Bar-On and Parker 2000), developmental studies (Mayer 2001, Salovey and Sluyter 1997) and the medical field (Taylor 2001, Bagby 2000, Bar-On and Parker 2000). As a result, the research and literature available has provided many opportunities for further research concerning emotional intelligence.

Not all sources however, are in favor of emotional intelligence. There is much criticism concerning the mixed model of emotional intelligence (that of Goleman). Many simply attribute this model to character traits and personality qualities (Mayer 2001, Dasborough 2004, McCrae 2000, Caruso 2001). There is also no accurate scientific measurement for this model of emotional intelligence (Arsenio 2003, Matthews 2004, Pfeiffer 2001) and so, skepticism and criticism concerning Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence is high amongst academics. There is however, much favor concerning his model amongst lay circles. This includes many companies and corporations who jumped on the bandwagon of Goleman's popularization of emotional intelligence (Dodds 2004, Manzella 2003, Kemper 1999).

However, this does not mean the importance and value of emotional intelligence according to an ability model has no credibility. Academic literature from business (Cherniss 2001), medical (Taylor 2001) and educational fields (Elias 2000) have all valued the importance and application of emotional intelligence very highly. The ability to identify, manage, express and regulate emotions is extremely important and applicable within these fields. Amongst academics the ability model holds more sway, as it can be measured scientifically and it is cognitive in nature (Mayer 2001, Arsenio 2003). The importance of such a model is seen within neuro-biological studies concerning brain functions (Salovey and Sluyter 1997). Emotional intelligence according to Salovey and Mayer therefore is academically and scientifically recognized and such literature and their fields of study validate its importance.

Due to the importance of emotional intelligence for the effective functioning of the church, a theological evaluation, investigating both the ability model and the mixed model of emotional intelligence was needed. In order to see whether emotional intelligence was in accordance with what God said concerning people and their functioning. If so, then the church could attempt to apply emotional intelligence within its functioning as institution.

Within this evaluation I investigated a number of presuppositions concerning both emotional intelligence and theology. These include the fact that both see people as 1) weak and unable to control themselves 2) an interconnected people within an environment that effects themselves and 3) an emotional being.

The mixed model of emotional intelligence states that people have the inability to control their emotions and thus if they apply emotional intelligence they will produce self-control (Goleman 1995: 34). Theologically, self-control is a characteristic people seem to lack due to selfishness, not due to a lack of emotional intelligence. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It is behaviour as a result of living for God. It attests to the fact that we have

eradicated selfishness and are now empowered by the Holy Spirit, to live for God and not ourselves. This selfless behaviour for God, empowered by the Holy Spirit produces self-control. Thus, theologically, our self-control is produced because we have tamed our selfish desires.

Self-control is also aided by the fact that we need to think correctly about our emotions and situations first. Theologically thinking correctly is essential to our behaviour and also enables us to think about our passions/selfish desires and how they affect what we feel and how we behave. The Bible says in Proverbs 23:7 “as a man thinks so is he”. Similarly, if a person thinks selfishly, they will behave selfishly. However, this thinking is also influenced by their passions/selfish desires (Goleman 1995: 34, Mayer 2001: 14). Thus, if a person is selfish, it will affect their thinking, emotions and their behaviour. Empathy, self-awareness and interpersonal relationships are all supported theologically so as to produce effective behaviour emotionally, but all allow us to deal with our heart passions too.

Theologically, God created people with the capacity of emotional intelligence (Ps 139). It would not be enough just to advise a person to live for God and eradicate their selfishness. We cannot expect to be passive by-standers in terms of our emotions. We must use what God has given for emotional regulation to aid in our emotional regulation too. God made people emotional beings with brains that facilitate this emotional regulation. Thus, it is the divine makeup of a person that they function and use this cognitive ability and processes to produce intelligent behaviour. We need to be made aware that we have this ability. And people also need to be shown how to effectively use this so as to produce emotionally intelligent behaviour. Thus the ability model of emotional intelligence is theologically correct, because God gave it to us in the first place to be utilized.

Due to the fact that we are holistic, we need to use this emotional intelligence to make us aware (self-aware) of our emotions and in so doing become aware of

our passions/selfish desires too. A person's passions fuel their emotions; by applying emotional intelligence this will produce self-control, resulting in controlled behaviour (Goleman 1995). However, the key is not merely to use our emotional intelligence to produce self-control, but to also deal with our selfishness, which interacts with our emotions (Mayer 2001).

Theologically, emotional intelligence according to the ability model and the principles of the mixed model, are part of the solution and aid to society's emotional outbursts. A theological evaluation identifies the fact that emotional intelligence applied to our emotions is needed. If we were also to identify, regulate and manage our selfish desires and so control them, we would be more effective in dealing with our emotions and our behaviour would be different. It is also surprising that Goleman acknowledges the danger of our selfishness, "the self righteous inner monologue that propels our emotions along fills the mind with the most convincing arguments for venting rage" (1995: 59).

As holistic beings, scientifically the question remains: can we apply emotional intelligence to aid in regulating our selfish motivations effectively? Could we use emotional intelligence then to identify these heart motivations and in so doing correct them if they are to cause harm through selfish ambition? Or is the recent surge on spiritual intelligence more equipped to deal with our heart motivation?

Not much has been said concerning spiritual intelligence within this study. However, spiritual intelligence does entail an 1) awareness of a spiritual entity (theologically God) and also an 2) awareness of yourself as spiritual entity (this includes your motivations and your awareness as spirit, of this spiritual entity) and 3) the interaction of this entity and yourself (Zohar 2000: 5).

Research however, has shown that spiritual intelligence combined with emotional intelligence produces greater, effective intelligent behaviour, than if only one were applied. This could also be the reason why church members, (while being

aware of their spiritual intelligence and unaware of the possibility of emotional intelligence) can spiritually be effective and fulfilled, but emotionally are unable to deal with stress. Was Jesus effective in his behaviour, because he combined both emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence?

The author proposes that a thorough investigation of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence together, could produce results with far reaching consequences for the effective living of people within society. Thus, emotional intelligence is effective and important for the emotional functioning of people. This enables us to deal more effectively with our environment and its pressures. Theologically, emotional intelligence is in accordance with the Bible. A perfect example is Jesus Christ's application of emotional intelligence, producing controlled behaviour. However, Jesus Christ seemed also to be aware of how much his own selfish motivation effected his emotions and behaviour too. This selfless motivation seemed to enable him to be more effective in his behaviour towards society. Thus this self-awareness and identification of selfish motivation and his emotions enabled him to effectively deal with his environment.

A theological evaluation would try to encourage the development of emotional intelligence within the church as workplace and as institution concerned with individuals. It would also be willing to use emotional intelligence (the cognitive processes) to identify selfish heart motivations too. Further study might shed more light upon this, in terms of spiritual intelligence. However, this study concerns itself with emotional intelligence and its evaluation theologically. As a theologian it would be correct to say that emotional intelligence is an effective tool God has placed in the hands of people to live effective lives of peace and not destructiveness. This combined with a change in heart motivation is even more effective and possibly could save many from the destructive behaviour within our society.

5.2 Limitations and recommendation for further study

Although this study was filled with much literature and research, there was no current academic theological literature concerning emotional intelligence and its application within the church. Currently there are a handful of theological books from lay circles. However, because they are not of scientific nature their definition of emotional intelligence is solely based on a mixed model of emotional intelligence as popularized by Goleman. As stated before, this definition is not the complete, structured and foundational definition this study could be build upon.

There is also a definite lack of knowledge concerning the ability model of emotional intelligence within society. This is partly due to Goleman's popularization of his mixed model. Within lay circles and so also amongst many institutions the impression is that emotional intelligence simply consists of qualities such as self control, empathy, awareness, interpersonal relationships and management (Vermeulen: 1999: 71, Goleman 1995, Elias 2000). Institutions are developing these qualities and associating progress with emotional intelligence. The real issue is being able to identify, express, regulate and manage our emotion first cognitively. This is emotional intelligence (Mayer 2001). The self-control will be produced because of the application of emotional intelligence as an ability model. Although schools and medical institutions are aware of this and trying to apply this, many of the institutions within society are still under the impression that emotional intelligence is based on certain attributes alone (Mayer 2001: 12).

This will have consequences for the church too and so more academic literature needs to be published to emphasize that the groundwork of emotional intelligence is actually the practice of your cognitive processes of identification, expression, management and regulation. I recommend that more research go into devising programs and developmental strategies for the identification of

emotions. This needs to be spread and made aware to education, medical, companies and church institutions too.

Further study can also include the application of emotional intelligence within the church, its various departments, and its workplace and also in the lives of its members and clergy. Its importance and value is not questioned at all. The question is: how do we apply it? Another recommendation from a theological perspective would be on the topic of spiritual intelligence. A theological evaluation will also need to be made concerning this topic. Its relationship to emotional intelligence and its value and importance could also be researched.

Thus, emotional intelligence has opened up many research opportunities for further study and also for further improvement within the fields of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and theology. This is all geared towards improving and equipping society to effectively produce intelligent and peaceful behaviour in years to come. Society has no option but to produce effective, intelligent behaviour. Further research and application is imperative.