

St. Stephen's College

Interior Preparations:

How A Theological Reflection on John 13:1-20
Shaped An Art Therapist's Practice of Preparation

By

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Abstract

This thesis uses a heuristic methodology to explore the impact that a theological reflection had on my preparations for facilitating art therapy sessions. Through this research I engaged in a theological reflection on John 13 – the account of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet – as a pivotal source for expanding my understanding of art therapist preparation. The central question for the study was: *What is the art therapist’s experience of preparing for a session, in light of a theological reflection on John 13?* Data for this research was gathered through self-inventory scales and journal writings, which were analyzed and categorized into themes. The themes that were identified focused on the art therapist’s preparatory process based on Jesus’ example of servitude. These three themes were modeled upon: (1) *what Jesus knew*, (2) *the love that Jesus manifested*, (3) *and the simplified preparatory tasks Jesus’ embodied before the foot washing*. In its final process, this study distilled the essences of the three themes to form one complete preparatory prayer. The process of creating and implementing the preparatory prayer resulted in an *attending to* and an *opening up* of interior spaces to authentically welcome and serve clients. This thesis examines my experience of art therapy preparation in intimate conversation with my Christian faith and it explores how this conversation impacted my formation as an art therapist-in-training.

*Dedicated to
the glory of
my Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer – God
who
intimately knows, loves, and grounds me
who
dwells amongst and within*

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Chapter 1

The Entry Point

Introduction

The topic for this thesis emerged from a personal struggle to prepare for art therapy sessions with clients, which developed into a deliberate pursuit to explore preparatory processes in light of my faith and practices in Christianity. Although approaches for preparing oneself to facilitate a session are as varied and individual as the art therapist, recognizing and integrating one's religious or spiritual beliefs and practices within this pivotal process may provide a more holistic approach to the *being* and *doing* of art therapy. This thesis will explore the question: *What is the art therapist's experience of preparing for a session, in light of a theological reflection on John 13?* Through this heuristic inquiry, this research will develop a preparatory prayer based on a theological reflection of a sacred text and examine the experience of engaging in the prayer as a preparatory process for the art therapist prior to facilitating art therapy sessions. In its entirety, this inquiry anticipates that an active experience of preparation in conversation with my Christian faith will impact my formation as an art therapist and as a Christian. Through sharing the processes and insights gleaned through the experience, this thesis seeks to inform and inspire fellow art therapists.

Background

Faithful fruit farmer that he was my grandfather often said that in carrying out a task at the orchard, eighty percent of his time and energy were spent on preparing for the task and twenty percent on carrying out the task itself. My mother often imparted his

wisdom to me and described my grandfather's faithful work ethic as a subtle hint for me to approach a task more carefully and thoughtfully. In this way engaging in adequate preparations for a given task was perhaps, always a value deeply rooted in my upbringing.

However, when I began my practicum in art therapy I often felt overwhelmed in the brief condensed moments before clients entered the art studio. I struggled to improve my preparations for each session. As I arrived to the practicum site, set-up the space, and welcomed clients into their session I noticed that multiple preparatory processes were unfolding simultaneously within a short timeframe. When my preparations were especially rushed I fearfully assumed that the panicked pace was an early indication of a session doomed to failure. What would my grandfather's eighty percent of preparation look like for me in the context of art therapy? This question weighed heavy on me and gradually heightened into an urgent need to intentionally reflect on my preparatory processes - noting the subtle thoughts and rituals I engaged in. Very quickly, I discovered that I had not taken much thought or time to prepare myself – to recognize where I was internally. Instead I had focused primarily on the external dimensions of the art therapy sessions – namely, on setting-up the art materials and the studio space. This realization led to a serious commitment to closely examine the purpose and process of preparation as an art therapist and to look to sources beyond myself.

Coincidentally, I stumbled on a fascinating sacred text from the Bible in the Gospel of John in which Christ's own preparation towards His death begins with the washing of His disciples' feet. Initially, I was drawn to this text because of the mysterious ceremonial-like tone of the scene, layered with multiple processes and meanings. I wanted to discover a prescribed symbolic ritual activity that I, as an art therapy student, could

replicate in practice as a means to ground my preparatory process. However, I was repeatedly struck by John's introduction to the scene, which begins with "Jesus knew the hour had come" (John 13:1, New Revised Standard Version). Through engaging with this text daily, my attempt to pinpoint the specific procedures that Jesus Christ exemplified in His humble act of service, shifted to a broader curiosity for the *knowing* out of which Jesus served and washed His disciples' feet. These insights culminated in an invitation to examine the *knowing* out of which I served clients through art therapy. Furthermore, it invited me to pursue a *knowing* that focused on an active dialogue with Christ in the form of prayers expressed in words and images – integrating these prayers as embodied practices for preparing art therapy sessions.

Formation

This research looks to John 13 - to Christ who washes His disciples feet - as a pivotal source for expanding my understanding of art therapist preparation with an underlying goal that it will impact my formation as an art therapist. Furthermore, at the heart of this research is a longing for the reciprocal expansion of my formation as an art therapist in-training and as a Christian. At one level, this research involves the inclusion of my faith within my formation; however, it pursues much more than *inclusion*. It seeks a *reliance* on an active relationship with God, in my beliefs and practices of Christian faith tradition, in relation to who I am and what I do vocationally. Such reliance is the premise for engaging in a theological reflection. Thus, through engaging in theological reflection this research aims to develop my formation as an art therapist-in-training in relation to my Christian faith and to reciprocally develop my Christian faith in relation to

my formation as an art therapist-in-training. In the broader context of psychotherapy, Hart (1994) aptly expounds on the psychotherapist's relationship with her faith or spirituality:

(. . .) a sound psychotherapy and a sound spirituality are united in their goal of promoting human growth and well being. They are not separate realms, and certainly not opposed realms; they exhibit extensive overlap. God is the depth-dimension of all experience, and so spirituality is the broader context within which psychotherapy operates, dealing specifically as it does with the ultimate values, hopes, and power (God's creative and saving love) by which we orient ourselves. (. . .) Both psychotherapy and spirituality stand in permanent need of critique, from the best of their own traditions as well as from each other, as to whether they are being true in promoting the goal: the genuine human good, individual and communal. (p. 36)

Terms, Definitions, Parameters

This thesis involves several key terms and processes that are seemingly straightforward, however, in the context of this particular heuristic inquiry require qualifications. The following section describes how the terms and processes of *art therapist formation, preparation, preparatory process, prayer, and theological reflection* will be approached and represented throughout the research; what the parameters around each process will be; and how each of the described processes will function in relation to each other. For some terms a brief background discussion provides a broader context for qualifying the processes and parameters as they apply to this research.

Art therapist formation. Although this research focuses on experiences observed during my training phase in a graduate art therapy program, the reality of art therapist formation, involves a dynamic life-long process that does not necessarily unfold in a separate, linear, or consistent manner. From a feminist-liberative perspective, formation is relative to contextual factors specific to a particular time and place (Townshed, 2006). Furthermore from this perspective, a critique on the notion of *therapist formation* is the hierarchical role it assumes in attempting to form the therapist as though she were the privileged expert. Therefore from the start, this research would like to emphasize that art therapist formation certainly is “not an individually owned subjective experience that prepares one to act upon other persons/objects through therapy” (p. 43). This research is deliberate in its approach and interpretation of formation and therapeutic outcomes foremost, by what it will not do: it will not seek to dictate a cause and effect between the formation and therapeutic outcome; nor will it seek to be conclusive or exclusive in prescribing art therapist formation. This is not to discredit the fruitful impact that therapist formation will inevitably have on therapeutic work. Rather, the primary concern for this research focuses on therapist formation for the sake of formation – a premise for theological reflection – in which, “the person engaged in theological reflection seeks not only to grasp truth more deeply but to be more deeply grasped by truth” (Warren, Murray, Best, 2002, p.324).

Preparation. In its broadest sense *preparation* involves the process of getting ready for what is to come. “Getting ready” may be a thought or a behavioral shift

triggered by an intention oriented towards a future *something* that is unfolding or anticipated to unfold. In a sense because we are always living in relation to the future and moving towards what is to come, we are always in the process of preparing for something. Though the intensity and clarity of this awareness will vary along with *how, in what manner, and where* preparations are unfolding, it is important to acknowledge the expansive and everyday nature of preparation recognizing how it is interconnected with multiple aspects of everyday life - from the art therapist's sleep (or lack of sleep) to his/her psychological stress level to his/her commitment to professional development to his/her current life transitions.

This also reveals the complexity of defining parameters around where and how preparation for the art therapist begins and ends. While acknowledging these everyday processes of preparation, whether they are intentional and unintentional, this thesis designates its focus on intentional processes of pre-session preparations carried out within a set timeframe prior to facilitating art therapy sessions. Notwithstanding, even with an identified parameter there are a variety of aspects involved in the art therapist's intentional preparation. Though not an exhaustive list, these may include: preparing for particular interventions and art directives specific to the client, the therapeutic process, and the therapeutic relationship; preparing environmental and site-specific tasks (such as securing safe therapeutic and expressive spaces and materials); preparing oneself at multiple biopsychosocial and spiritual levels and preparing oneself in terms of professional competence (such as receiving and acquiring sufficient training, skills, and techniques in adherence to professional standards). This research recognizes the vital tasks that each of these aspects have on the art therapist's preparation. At the same time, however, of

particular interest for this research are the processes of preparation that directly relate to the art therapist's faith and how the integration of one's faith takes form through intentional processes of preparation.

Preparatory process. This term may connote a sense of formality and order through the use of particular actions, behaviors, or thought-processes with step-by-step procedures for preparation. However, "preparatory process" in this research will simply refer to the entirety of the art therapist's preparation prior to facilitating an art therapy session with no implications for a specific method or approach. In this way, this term will be used rather expansively with flexibility in reference to the whole process of preparation. Although "preparatory process" will be used interchangeably with the terms "preparing" and "preparation", what will distinguish it is its comprehensive scope of the total experience of preparation, providing a sense of honoring the entire process of preparation and recognizing that each moment of preparation is part of a whole.

Theological reflection. Theological reflection is the process of exploring one's experiences with the resources of a faith tradition. Killen & DeBeer's (1994) description of theological reflection as a *genuine dialogue* closely resonates with the approach this research engages in:

Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions, and perspectives, as well as those of the tradition. It respects the integrity

of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand how we understand our own experience and how we understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living. (p.viii)

This research engages in a “genuine dialogue” with the experiences of preparation in art therapy with the wisdom of the Christian faith tradition. As such, it is essential to identify underlying presumptions involved in doing a theological reflection based on a Christian faith tradition, while acknowledging that even within the Christian faith tradition diverse approaches and perspectives exist.

Theological reflection presumptions. First, theological reflection presumes that in the search for meaning, faith traditions- that is beliefs and practices within an active relationship with God - can be relied on as *primary* sources for guidance (Killen & DeBeer, 1994). In application to this study, this research presumes that the Christian heritage provides a primary source for understanding my experience of preparation for art therapy. While acknowledging that all facets of the art therapist’s biopsychosocial well-being impacts the experience of preparation, this study emphasizes a reliance on the faith tradition as a central source for wisdom in understanding and developing the experience of preparation. Although the faith tradition is not an exclusive source this research seeks to approach it as a primary source.

Second, theological reflection presumes God’s active presence in every event (Kinast, 1993, p.4). This research presumes that God is actively present in every event and experience of my life – within and beyond art therapy sessions, in and out of the art therapist role. Killen and DeBeer (1990) provide an expanded understanding of

“experience” as any event in which the person directly or indirectly interacts with themselves and the world around them (p.54). They divide the full range of human experiences into categories of sources for doing theology. Through theological reflection, this research focuses on a very specific event: God’s active presence in my process of preparation for facilitating art therapy sessions. Furthermore, theological reflection can function as a “theology by heart” (Graham et al., 2005, p.13) – one of seven methods for theological reflection outlined by Graham et al (2005) in which “God is experienced as immanent, personal and intimate, speaking through the interiority of human experience” (p. 13).

Third, theological reflection presumes that one can relate to God’s presence through a variety of means (Kinast, 1993, p.5). This research seeks to relate to God’s presence through the wisdom of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and through the use of personal prayers in spoken or written word and/or symbolic images. Finally, theological reflection presumes that in relating to God’s active presence one can enact its theological meaning (Kinast, 1993, p.5). The central purpose for engaging in a theological reflection for this research is to integrate insights from John 13 into the practice of art therapy through the enactment of preparatory prayers based on the teaching and modeling of Christ exemplified in this sacred text.

Prayer. This study approaches prayer as a process of acknowledging the presence and prominence of the Divine and of engaging in an active relationship with the Divine. Such an approach to prayer is based on beliefs of the Divine God as the Source of life – the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of life – who is actively present in all lives and all

aspects of life. This God invites and makes it possible for humans to be in an active relationship with the God-Self through the revelation of Christ – God incarnate.

Oudtshoorn's (2012) description of prayer speaks to the epistemology of this research and closely aligns with the presumptions of theological reflection described earlier – a way of knowing and of being known through a dialogical, personal relationship with God:

Prayer is a response to the 'Word' that has come into our world, challenging our interpretations of reality. In prayer we, in turn, are invited to enter into God's world with our words. Prayer acts out of the belief that God is more than a set of theological ideas, but is a person who esteems us enough to become open to us, to listen to our interpretations of reality and to respond to our prayers. (p. 291)

Prayer in the context of this research. One ethical concern that this research poses in relation to prayer is *what* and *how* to collect data on the researcher's engagement with preparatory prayers. If the researcher's understanding of prayer involves a dialogue with the Divine – a being in relationship with the Divine - how would such a dialogue or relationship be documented? Would it be ethical to speak or write on behalf of the Divine? How would parameters and timeframes be placed around transcendent processes? To address these concerns, the research closely follows Killen and DeBeers (1994) framework for engaging in a theological reflection as it provides a structured process for discerning and articulating faith-inspired processes. Although a personal understanding of prayer is inclusive of all expressions of one's relationship with the Divine - operating within and beyond a set timeframe, form, or intention – this research involves a particular expression of prayer represented through the symbolic use of language and/or images. A

multi-medium journal will document personal narratives, reflections, and images throughout all stages of the research to capture what emerges from an awareness of internal and external experiences using multiple sensory modalities that are not typically honored or voiced through the process of *embodied writing* in my journals (Anderson & Braud, 2011). *Embodied writing* invites readers to encounter the experience through a form of sympathetic resonance through “conveying in words the finely textured experience of the human body” (p. 267). During the illumination and explication phases of the study, I was able to re-encounter the experiences by re-reading these writings from my journal. As well, the process of writing and expressing through images slows down awareness towards sensitive attunement to the experience. As a result this slowing down of awareness, cultivates research praxis – which provides a fertile ground for my formation as an art therapist. This is perhaps, the most pivotal intention for this research in integrating a theological reflection with the development of a preparatory prayer.

Choice of Methodology

Heuristic methodology and theological reflection. A heuristic methodology provided this research with an open-ended structure and systematic method to explore these experiences through its use of first-person account depictions. As the topic of this research emerged from my experience of struggling to prepare for art therapy sessions, a heuristic methodology offered a disciplined method to discover “the underlying meanings of important human experiences” (Moustakas, 1990, p.15) by acknowledging that the “deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual” (p.15). Furthermore, because “self understanding and self-growth occur simultaneously in

heuristic discovery” (p.13) this methodology provided a rich opportunity for my formation as an art therapist through carefully examining my experience of preparation in dialogue with my Christian beliefs and practices. The research followed Moustakas’ seven phases of heuristic inquiry, which consists of *initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis, and validation*. At the same time, this research explored the thesis question in three broad stages – each stage distinguished in relation to its process with the theological reflection. The chart below outlines how a theological reflection based on Killen & DeBeer’s (1994) framework corresponds to the larger structure of Moustakas’ (1990) heuristic inquiry in relation to this research:

Chapter I, Figure 1. Methodological Framework for This Study

Three General Stages for This Research	Framework for Theological Reflection <i>(Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 68-69)</i>	Seven Heuristic Phases of Research <i>(Moustakas 1990)</i>
Stage 1: Pre-Theological Reflection (Pre-Conversation)	1. Focusing on the experience of preparation 2. Describing the Heart of the Matter	1. Initial Engagement
Stage 2: Theological Reflection	3. Exploring the Heart of the Matter in conversation with John 13	2. Immersion
		3. Incubation
		4. Illumination

	a) Documenting the conversation b) Developing a series of preparatory prayers	
Stage 3: Post Theological Reflection	4. Identifying new truths and meaning as an art therapist and as a Christian	5. Explication
		6. Creative Synthesis
		7. Validation

Initial engagement and the pre-theological reflection stage. In the first heuristic phase of *initial engagement* and the pre-theological reflections stage the inquiry articulated the birth of the thesis question by exploring my initial struggle with preparation and how it led to a critical need for integrating my faith tradition in the process of preparation. In the language and framework of heuristic inquiry, the initial engagement “elucidates the context from which the question takes form and significance” (Moustakas, 1990, p.27.) before the immersion phase. Likewise, the pre-theological reflection stage focused on defining the experience of preparation through narration and through a dense exploration of feelings associated with my experience of preparing. Within Killen & DeBeer’s (1994) framework of theological reflection this narration is the first step in doing a theological reflection, thus it is in fact, a part of the theological reflection. I entered the experience and defined the affective energy and central question of the experience – that is, the “heart of the matter” (p.63), through writing personal narrations, reflections, and the use of images documented in a multi-medium journal. This was a process of building the context for the conversation between the experience of

preparation and the wisdom of the Christian heritage – John 13. In this way, a more accurate term for this stage would be “Pre-Conversation Stage”. That said, for the purpose of maintaining consistency with the three general stages of the research, the first stage will simply be identified as the *Pre-Theological Reflection Stage*. Also, in the pre-theological reflection stage I developed a self-inventory scale – a simple rating system to consistently observe and track my experiences of preparation. Before engaging in the theological reflection, I used the scale to rate my experiences of preparations prior to facilitating art therapy sessions. Upon assessing the results of the initial rating I narrated feelings and images that emerged through the experience to focus on the aspects of it that unveil core issues and challenges around preparing for art therapy sessions and identified what was at the “heart of the matter” (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 68).

Immersion, incubation, illumination and the theological reflection stage. Throughout the theological reflection stage the research engaged in the three central phases of heuristic research – *Immersion, Incubation, and Illumination*. In the immersion phase the research became a lived question in which I was “alert to all possibilities for meaning and enter[ed] fully into life with others wherever the theme [was] being expressed or talked about” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). Simultaneously I engaged in a theological reflection by exploring the experience of preparing for an art therapy session in conversation with the wisdom of John 13. The unfolding of this conversation involved the creation of a series of preparatory prayers integrated and enacted in my process of preparation prior to facilitating art therapy sessions. The theological reflection is based on Killen & De Beer’s (1994) “Framework for Theological Reflection” (Killen & De Beer, 1994, 68) and applies

Ulrich & Thompson's (1995) "Design for the Critical Examination of a Text" (35). The theological reflection involved references to previous inquiries by theologians and spiritual writers of John 13 to identify essential movements modeled by Christ in the sacred text. Throughout the entire theological reflection – in the development and enactment of the preparatory prayers - I carefully attended to and documented the inner and outer dimensions of my experience in a multi-medium journal, which included written and/or symbolic imagery and served as data for latter stages of the heuristic inquiry. After the completion of the theological reflection, I rated my experience of preparation for an art therapy session with the same self-inventory scale used in the pre-theological reflection stage before entering into the third heuristic phase, *incubation*, where I retreated from direct involvement with the question to allow my mind, spirit, and body to be open to any clarification and new awareness about the essence of the theological reflection and preparatory prayers. This naturally wove the heuristic process into its fourth phase, *illumination*, as the total experience of integrating the theological reflection in my preparatory process, were examined.

Explication, creative synthesis, validation and the post theological reflection stage. In its final post-theological reflection stage, based on the results of the scale and analysis of the data from the multi-medium journal, I reflected on the shifts that unfolded in my preparatory process before, during, and after the theological reflection. The research then unpacked the essence of the entire experience through the last three phases of heuristic inquiry - *explication, creative synthesis* and *validation*. To better understand the essence of the experience, the *explication phase*, concentrated on "discovering nuances,

textures, and constituents” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31) to unpack various layers and qualities of the prayers and their enactments in correspondence to shifts evidenced in the self-inventory scale results and the data collected from my journal. Identifying and exploring these shifts helped to reveal the integration of my Christian beliefs and practices in my preparatory process and to capture the dynamics of the process. The thesis then presented insights gleaned through the *incubation, illumination, and explication* phases as one complete prayer through the *creative synthesis* phase. In its final phase of the heuristic inquiry - *validation* – I returned to the data throughout the research and checked for an accurate and consistent depiction of the entire experience of preparation. Through a process of self-validation I determined my final judgment based on how honestly and clearly the creative synthesis reflected the experience of preparation in light of a theological reflection and articulated extended areas of study for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Despite the lack of literature on this thesis topic it is important to examine existing bodies of literature related to central aspects of the topic- notably those regarding *preparation, prayer, and theological reflection* along with a review on commentaries on John 13 and heuristic studies in relation to the topic. That said, it should be noted that literature and studies on art therapist preparation in relation to prayer and theological reflection are indeed limited. Much of the literature that links *prayer* with *therapy* examines its use as a therapeutic intervention or are unrelated to aspects of preparation for the therapist. The majority of such literature is written in the context of general psychotherapy and is not specific to the art therapist. As well, there is no such literature that links art therapy with theological reflection.

While there is research on the association between the pastoral counselor and the practice of theological reflection they are written in the context of pastoral counselling where theological reflection is part of the training curriculum. Some art therapists have written about the interconnections between their religious or spiritual beliefs and practices with their therapeutic work - though very few identify a distinctly Christian theology. In view of the fact that much of the literature in this review comes from varying disciplines the discussion will shift within the fields of art therapy, general psychotherapy, pastoral counselling and theology. That said this review will maintain, as it's primary focus, the context of art therapy and the art therapist's process of preparation.

Literature on Preparation

A number of art therapists offer insights on a broad range of topics that relate to preparation. Those that carefully unpack the art therapist's role and presence in the practice of art therapy indirectly inform and shape how the art therapist prepares for each session. This review will look at literature on preparation in three sections. First, it will examine literature on the preparation of the therapeutic setting and session. The second section will explore personal accounts written by art therapists who describe their practice of preparing for a session. The final section will examine preparation for the art therapist in relation to preparing the person of the art therapist. With the centrality of the topic and the limitations of literature in art therapy in mind, this section will also review studies from a broader scope of literature in the field of general psychotherapy.

Literature on preparations for the therapeutic setting and session.

Introductory art therapy textbooks offers insights for preparing the therapeutic space, however, much of the literature read as how-to manuals for the starting art therapist (Rubin, 2010; Carpendale, 2009; Horovitz, 1999) or make minimal reference to pre-session preparation. Rubin (2010) briefly addresses general therapeutic conditions necessary for the art therapist to create "a framework for freedom" (78) for clients, which include creating a physically and psychologically supportive setting. However, aside from presenting basic principles for developing treatment goals through assessments and research, little is described in terms of what is involved in creating a supportive environment and in preparing for each session. Allen (1995) also offers general

instructions on setting-up for an art making process. Her instructions on “knowing how to begin” (12) cover aspects for preparing the art-making environment and process, including: space, music, materials, time, intentions, and attention. Her discussion on *intentions* and *attention* looks at the inner awareness necessary in preparing for the art making process. However, because she is not exclusively addressing the art therapist but a much wider audience she focuses on the art making process rather than a therapeutic process. In her chapter on creating the studio space Moon (2002) considers a variety of therapeutic environments and circumstances not uncommon for the art therapist. Although she briefly outlines essential conditions for the therapeutic environment she focuses on the cultivation of the person of the therapist. Through depicting the reality of the mobile art therapist and the spontaneity and flexibility involved in the profession of art therapy she emphasizes the need to engage with any given therapeutic workplace from an artistic identity.

In contrast, coming from a context-specific approach, Ferrara’s (2004) analysis of art therapy practice with patients of Cree ethnicity briefly explores interrelated dimensions of space in the therapeutic environment. Drawing from Victor Turner’s work on rituals, Ferrara suggests that the physical, mental, and social dimensions of the art therapy space becomes a ritualized space. She briefly describes the art therapist’s role in structuring this space. However, her focus is on ritualized space in relation to “metonymic associations found in Cree narrative discourse” (101). She sheds light on the importance of understanding and working within the social, cultural context of the client in the preparing and structuring of the therapeutic space.

Literature on art therapist's personal accounts of preparation. Only a few art therapists offer personal accounts of their work with clients that include aspects of art therapist preparation (Allen, 1995; Moon, 2002; Moon 2010). Catherine Moon (2002) provides a step-by-step sample of how she prepares themes and materials for upcoming sessions, based on cues, clues, and themes from previous sessions observed through the client's behavior and art. Rather than focusing on the preparation process itself, she provides a detailed sample of how she discerns the "poetry" of her client's life and how this informs the materials and interventions she offer as a therapeutic response. Bruce Moon (2010) perhaps, offers the most explicit description of his preparations for facilitating group art therapy in the context of a psychiatric hospital. He describes the context of his group therapy; his preparatory rituals for setting up the space and his approach from start to finish of each session. He focuses on clarifying and defining the art therapist's role based on the context and needs of the clients and the intentions of the art therapy group. Although he alludes to the sacred calling of art therapists he does not explicitly discuss spiritual or religious aspects in his preparatory process.

Literature on preparations for the art therapist. One recurring theme within literature on preparing the person of the art therapist regards the importance of nurturing *therapeutic presence* and *authenticity* (Horovitz, 1999; Rubin, 2010; Moon, 2002). Carpendale (2009) commits an entire chapter to the topic of *therapeutic presence*. She outlines central aspects of therapeutic presence as they apply to the art therapist's attitude and her qualities throughout a session along with concrete do's and don'ts for nurturing presence. She suggests that as the art therapist becomes more conscious of his or her

own feelings the more empathetic they will be and more able to accurately reflect their client's feelings (60). Moon (2002) emphasizes the art therapist's role in providing "a hospitable environment for people to grow emotionally, spiritually, and functionally" (47). In order to offer a hospitable environment she addresses the art therapist's process of readying his or her own self through cultivating an artist identity by honing particular sensibilities, skills, and knowledge. Moon's consistent focus on operating from an artist identity with artist perceptions offers much insight on preparing the person of the art therapist. In fact, it invokes intriguing aspects for further exploration related to this thesis topic. Such as, *how would an art therapist cultivate other identities – notably their religious or spiritual faith-identity - and what sensibilities, skills, and perceptions would this involve?*

In the field of expressive arts, Atkins (2014) describes practices for cultivating therapeutic presence prior to and between sessions. She provides simple instructions such as taking moments of quiet self-awareness to reflect on previous sessions; letting go of associating thoughts and emotions and preparing oneself for the next client. She likens this process to a purifying ritual. She also recommends the importance of engaging in daily practices outside of the therapeutic setting to cultivate the therapist's ability to maintain therapeutic presence with clients and suggests a range of practices that the therapist can engage in such as spending time in nature; mindfulness practices; and arts-based practice. Using her own practice as an example, she describes how they sometimes naturally interweave into opening and closing rituals for her clients as well.

Literature on preparation in general psychotherapy. Literature in the broader field of general psychotherapy covers a range of approaches and topics around preparation for the therapist from Buddhist mindfulness practices, Christian mindful awareness practices, spiritual disciplines on solitude, and therapist character and virtue development. Literature on preparing the person of the therapist often follows themes regarding therapist training which when examined with the person of the therapist in mind lean towards topics on *therapeutic presence* - most of which find their basis in mindfulness practices (e.g., Bien, 2008; Shapiro & Carlson 2009; Fulton, 2008). Such literature often begins with a thorough description of the significance of therapeutic presence and the direct impact that mindfulness practices have on the therapeutic relationship before detailing the how-tos for engaging in these practices. By shedding light on the significance of therapeutic presence they emphasize the importance of preparing the person of the therapist and touch on crucial aspects of therapist preparation with concrete approaches and explicit procedures which can not be found to the same extent in the art therapy literature. That said, although the literature around mindfulness practices asserts a way of *being* for the therapist, they primarily identify certain therapist characteristics and skills that impact therapeutic outcomes (e.g., Shapiro & Carlson, 2009; Geller & Greenberg, 2013).

Shapiro & Carlson (2009) for instance, ascribes numerous therapist qualities such as attentional capacity, appropriate attitudes, self-compassion and attunement, empathy, and emotional regulation. All of these qualities are supported by empirical evidence on how they can assist the therapist to develop stronger alliances with clients (18). Pre-session mindfulness practices for the therapist include: connecting to the breath; forming the

intention to practice mindfulness through the session; grounding oneself in the present; and acknowledging what one brings into the session (29). Geller & Greenberg (2012) offer an even more comprehensive analysis of the components of therapeutic presence and its positive impact on therapeutic relationships based on qualitative research. They offer a working model focused on *therapeutic presence*. Of particular interest is the initial stage of their model that focuses on “preparing the ground for presence” (75), in which the therapist makes internal space for clients by engaging in awareness enhancing practices prior to facilitating a session. Geller & Greenberg examine the positive impacts that meditation, spiritual practices, and spiritual readings have on the therapist such as reducing stress or anxiety and helping the therapist better recognize self-focused emotions or distractions during a session (81).

Literature on Heuristic Studies

Aside from the personal accounts of art therapists mentioned earlier, there are very few heuristic studies in the field of psychotherapy and counselling that relate to the topic of therapist preparation. Brooks & Howie’s (2008) study offers insights on the significance of the therapist as researcher and participant through heuristic enquiry. Their study on spoken language provides a clear example of how the therapist can “view their therapy practice as potential sites for research” (29) and they offer thorough explanations for each stage of their heuristic research as though encouraging future therapist researchers in this direction. Notably, from the field of nursing, De Vries’ (2004) heuristic study is thematically relevant for this thesis, as De Vries investigates the experience of post registration student nurses who engage in the practice of washing their patients’ feet

for a set period of time. The study examines how this particular act of humility impacted the nurses' care of patients to go beyond the duty of care role. As a response to the humble act, the nurses experienced changes in their relationship with their patients marked by a sense of interconnectedness. Though this thesis does not take on a literal application of washing client's feet as a process of preparation, nor does it seek to investigate the outcome of a particular preparatory act, De Vries' research sparks interest on how certain postures of service and humility on the part of the caregiver inevitably impacts those being cared for.

Literature on Prayer and the Art Therapist

Literature on the spiritual or religious beliefs and practices of art therapists are few and varied. However, Farrelly-Hansen's (2001) compilation of writings by several art therapists offers a variety of approaches for conceptualizing interconnections between the art therapist's spirituality or religious beliefs/practices with art therapy. Although some mention *prayer*, none explicitly approach it as a central aspect in the art therapist's process of preparation. That said the theme for such literature regards the intricate connections between prayer and the art making process. This section will explore how three different art therapists conceptualize prayer or meditation in their practice and the potential implications they may have on the art therapist's process of preparation.

Michael Franklin (2001) describes meditation practices based on yoga philosophy to highlight analogous features of his personal practice of meditation and the art making process. Franklin perceives both as being self-referential in stimulating the person to encounter their true divine self. Central to his discussion on meditation is the larger

context of yoga philosophy. Of interest to the thesis topic on the art therapist process of preparation is Franklin's suggestion on how meditation helps the art therapist to develop informed intuition to observe and evaluate their work for reflexive practice. However, this is mentioned briefly with no details of how and why meditation impacts reflexive practice. Thus, it would be of interest to explore the relationship between spiritual practices and art therapist reflexivity and its impact on the art therapist's process of preparation.

Busch (2001) describes how her experiences on a spiritual Celtic pilgrimage evolved into meditative exercises for her art therapy practice. Photography was used throughout her spiritual pilgrimage as a form of meditation that facilitated her healing process of grieving her father's death. She describes how "[t]he pilgrim way of experiencing silence regularly and on a daily basis" (124) influences the ways in which she engages with her clients. Moon (2001) explores prayer from a different approach - as one of three spiritual aspects from a Judeo-Christian tradition that provide an implicit frame for her experience and work with clients. In a profession that constantly encounters the overwhelming realities of human pain and suffering, Moon describes how the three spiritual aspects of *prayer*, *sacrament*, and *grace* uphold her in her art therapy practice. She explores prayer primarily in relation to her own experience of art making as a form of prayer. Of particular interest is how prayer leads Moon to acknowledge her limitations as an art therapist and to affirm that the healing of suffering require the help of God. Such an approach helps her to recognize her own part in responding to her clients and their suffering. Moon's approach to prayer is markedly different from the meditation and mindfulness practices that focus on prayer as a therapeutic intervention or as a method for

honing effective therapeutic skills. She focuses on her relationship with the Divine and on re-posturing herself within this relational context.

Literature on Prayer and the Spiritual Life of the Psychotherapist

Several notable studies and literature in general psychotherapy discuss prayer and allude to spiritual practices or the spiritual life of the therapist in relation to therapist preparation (e.g., Cashwell, Bentley, & Bigbee, 2007; McInnes-Miller & Chavier's 2013; Strawn, 2007). Cashwell et al. (2007) broadly discuss how a therapist's spiritual life and spiritual practices impacts their wellness personally and professionally by enhancing their mindfulness, heartfulness, and soulfulness. Their discussion includes the importance of first recognizing the therapeutic time and setting as *sacred space*. By engaging in rituals such as prayers or smudging prior to a session, some therapists set the intention of a sacred space. Cashwell et al. liken the therapist to a vessel being poured out to each client and in continual need of being refilled. Central to their discussion are the ways in which the spiritual life of the therapist benefits therapist wellness as it provides a vital way of being filled up. They assert that disciplined spiritual practices increase the therapist's ability to be self-aware.

McInnes-Miller & Chavier's (2013) phenomenological study examines how therapists of different faith orientations use prayer in a variety of facets of the therapeutic process, both in and out of a session. Of particular interest to the topic of this thesis are their findings on the therapist's use of prayer for "self-of-therapist care" (84) and how prayer before, during, or after sessions helped the therapists draw strength from God. During sessions, in the face of suffering, silent intercessory prayers helped some

therapist's feel more connected to their clients in their suffering. As well, prayer at the end of a day of seeing clients helped some therapists turn their clients over to God's care, helping them to cope with the pain or anxiety that emerge in sessions and to be grounded.

As a Christian therapist, Langberg (2006) affirms the Biblical call for the Christian to reflect the image of Christ through therapeutic practice. She identifies prayer as one of five disciplines that shape her life and work as a Christian therapist and describes two different approaches she uses for prayer in her work: 1) asking God to show her how to think about certain situations and how to respond to a client 2) using prayer to intercede for her clients with the belief that God will work in the situation or in the client.

Vanmeter, McMinn Bissell, Kaur, & Pressley (2001) attempt to look at the spiritual life of the therapist and how personal practices of spiritual disciplines impact the therapist. They note that many beginning therapists were unable to use silence in sessions effectively, thus, in their study they had beginning therapists engage in the disciplines of solitude and silence to observe the impact these disciplines would have in promoting silence in a simulated therapy session. The results of their research reveal that the disciplines interacted more with the personality characteristics of the therapist than with the depth of their faith experience (26). While recognizing that spiritual disciplines are more about character formation than about techniques for changing behavior they assert that character formation indirectly shapes therapist behavior.

Coming from a very different approach, Russell (2009) emphasizes the notion of therapist training in the context of *character strengths and virtue*. He discusses the lack of agreement and certainty on cultivating effective therapist attributes and suggests that the therapist look at the Church's rich traditions of virtues. Through a small sample of

interviews with self-identified Christian therapists who completed an inventory survey he identifies common themes on therapist strengths and virtues. Of particular interest was the theme on the therapist's sense of calling to develop character strengths. Russell links this to the Christian calling to incarnate Christ, not only as a means to be an effective therapist but also as a form of worship. This is in great contrast to the majority of literature on therapist training that has, as its central goal, therapist effectiveness. What is most distinct about Russell's approach to developing therapist strengths and virtues is the primacy he places on a broader goal rooted in his beliefs of Christianity. This difference is notably apparent in comparing his approach to Kottler's (1995) discussion on therapist authenticity. Kottler touches on several virtue-like aspects of therapist authenticity, such as "love" and empathy. However, he approaches these virtue-like aspects as a means to therapist effectiveness.

Though much of the literature around mindfulness practices often refers to Buddhist teachings they are quick to detach themselves from being practicing Buddhists (Bien 2008). Blanton (2011) distinguishes Buddhist *mindfulness* practices from *mindful awareness* practices and the need for more attention to the latter. He introduces Centering Prayer as a Christian form of a mindful awareness practice and briefly describes the benefits of engaging in Centering Prayer and the positive effects it has on a session. In the field of social work, Trammel (2015) differentiates the epistemological differences between mindfulness practices and Christian worldviews by examining the differing presuppositions that undergird each. She sheds light on Christian traditions that have integrated mindful-like practices through the lives of Hildegard of Bingen, St. Ignatius, and in contemplative practices like Centering Prayer, and Lectio Divina. Trammel

describes her personal use of mindful practices embedded with Christian meaning and how they weave into her daily life and profession, providing her with the self-care necessary to endure the many challenges of her work. Despite differing fields, Trammel's insights on her practices are relevant for the art therapist in terms of revealing how one's profession and practice are intimately resourced from an active engagement and identity in one's faith practices and beliefs.

Literature on Theological Reflection

Literature on theological reflection is almost exclusively found in the field of pastoral care and written for the pastoral counsellor or pastoral caregiver. Despite fundamental differences between the two fields of pastoral counselling and art therapy, literature on theological reflection provides insights for therapists at the interface of their faith, formation, and practice. Topics on theological reflection range from descriptions on how to engage in theological reflection (Cooper-White, 2006; Warren, Murray & Best, 2002) to context-specific applications (Anderson & Carroll, 2013). Other studies offer a variety of models for theological reflection (Townsend 2006) or describe certain aspects, such as prayer (O'Connor & Meakes, 2008), or the use of Scripture (Walton, 2003). Still other studies examine how the practice impacts the formation of the pastoral counsellor (Warren, Murray, & Best, 2002). The following section will examine recent studies on theological reflection to better understand how it is applied to varying contexts and approaches.

Cooper-White (2006) addresses the pastoral psychotherapist and pastoral counsellor and broadens her discussion to examine complexities in psychology and

theology dialogues. She offers a method for the pastoral counsellor to apply pastoral assessments and theological reflection before and after a session. Though she does not exclusively nor explicitly discuss her method in direct relation to therapist preparation what she offers is a total picture of the entire pre and post session reflective and preparatory process. Her method, which begins with self-care for the counsellor, involves repeated phases for the counsellor to examine countertransferences with clients. Although her method also includes a phase for assessing the needs of the client along with a theological reflection because her premise for pastoral “care” is “contingent on the socially constructed, *contextual* realities” (234), her discussion primarily focuses on the proper examination of countertransferences. She highlights this as a preliminary process for engaging in a theological reflection, while providing minimal description on what a theological reflection is or how to engage in it.

In contrast, O’Connor & Meakes’ (2008) study explores elaborate details of understanding and defining *theological reflection* in contrast to *prayer* based on their interviews with participants working in or studying pastoral care and counselling. They discuss the ambiguity between interviewees who viewed prayer and theological reflection as involving both head and heart from those who approached them differently – with prayer being primarily affective and theological reflection more cognitive. Though the interviewees seemed to express a longing to integrate prayer and theological reflection together, O’Connor and Meakes suggest that the hectic pace of the pastoral care and counseling context contributes to the lack of time for the interviewees to engage in both theological reflection and prayer.

Based on interviews with pastoral counselors, Townsend (2006) examines how daily context-specific practices translate into functional theological reflection models. He explores these models and concludes that they interact mutually with pastoral counsellor formation. His findings highlight the significance of theological reflection for the pastoral counsellor as “the activity that confirmed congruence between personally integrated theology, psychotherapy and vision of one’s self as a pastoral counselor” (43). Likewise, this thesis also seeks to examine how theological reflection impacts the art therapist’s faith and theology; view of art therapy practice and her own view of her self as an art therapist.

In a similar manner, Warren, Murray, & Best (2002) highlight the necessity of theological reflection practice in the formation and development of the pastoral caregiver. The final step of their description on the theological reflection process is particularly relevant as it focuses on articulating, through prayer, the pastoral caregiver’s relationship with God in the context and process of serving others as an honest pursuit for “truthfulness and integrity” (330). They suggest that intentional and frequent practice of theological reflection for the caregiver “develops a distinctive way for being in the health care environment that differs significantly from other health care professionals” (330). Though the art therapist carries out a different role from the pastoral caregiver much of what they suggest could be applied to the art therapist and in so doing beckons the question of what it would be like for the art therapist to engage his or her relationship with God in the context of serving clients and what “distinctive way of being” this would have in the environment he or she works in.

Walton's (2003) study provides interesting insight on the long-term development and use of theological reflection for the theology student. He examines patterns found in 200 written theological reflection assignments from three theological training institutions to explore different approaches for using the Bible in a theological reflection. He identifies seven distinct ways that the Bible can be used in a theological reflection and recommends that an understanding of these variations be taught in institutions to help students improve their critical awareness and lifelong approach to theological reflection. Although this thesis focuses on engaging in a theological reflection in the context of art therapist preparation, Walton offers an expansive vision for the use of theological reflection as a lifelong practice with multiple approaches for using the Bible.

Finally, Anderson & Carroll's (2013) study offers a substantial example of a theological reflection based on John 13:1-20 in the context of L'arche - an ecumenical community for those with intellectual disabilities. Their theological reflection explores Jean Vanier's (the founder of L'arche) commentary on the Gospel of John as well as interview responses by community members on their experiences of the practice of foot-washing in community. They reflect on how foot-washing is a significant dimension of spirituality in L'arche as it provides a unifying action within and beyond the community - reflecting service and intimate communion. Their theological reflection focuses on the literal practice of foot-washing within a specific context in which serving and care giving are realities of daily life. Although this thesis does not take on a literal interpretation of engaging in foot-washing, Anderson & Carroll's theological reflection provides a glimpse into how this sacred text can be interpreted and demonstrated as a significant practice within an ecumenical community.

Commentaries on John 13

The focus of this thesis is not to provide a hermeneutical interpretation of John 13, however commentaries on the foot-washing provide a context for the themes that emerge in the theological reflection. Some commentaries emphasize the foot-washing as a symbol of purification (e.g., Coloe, 2004; Morris, 1995; Nevey, 2009) or focus on servitude (e.g., Ridderbos, 1997; Stevick, 2011). Others focus on Christ's love displayed through the foot-washing (Moloney, 2013) or approach it as a part of a larger theme in the book of John (Coloe, 2004). Neyrey (2009) uses a cultural anthropology model of ritual to suggest that the foot-washing is a status transformational ritual for Peter and the other disciples at the scene. Although there are an extensive number of commentaries on John 13, in this section we will only examine a select few to capture a general sense of varying interpretations on the Scriptural text as they relate to themes in relation to the theological reflection for this study.

In regards to understanding the foot-washing as a symbol of purification, Morris (1995), interprets it as a foreshadowing of the ultimate cleansing made possible through Jesus' work on the cross to free humanity from sin. Asumang (2013) examines two interpretations of Christ's foot-washing – a soteriological interpretation that views it as a symbol of participation and purification in Christ and an ethical interpretation that focuses on humble service. He suggests that the foot-washing is a revelatory activity of self-sacrifice focused on Jesus' death that “trigger purification and maintain the participation of disciples in Jesus” (31). In disagreement to sacramentarian interpretations, Carson (1991) argues that if foot-washing were truly a sacrament of purification, Judas, whose feet were washed by Christ would have been “cleansed”. However, Judas goes on

to betray Christ proceeding the foot-washing. Coloe (2004) offers an interesting interpretation in light of the entire Gospel of John. She suggests that the theology of John combines aspects of God's "house" and the "Temple" together through Jesus' use of the "Father's house/hold" as a symbolic reference to people being in relationship with God and one another. Working with this interpretation, Coloe suggests that the foot-washing is Jesus' gesture of welcome into His Father's (God's) house alongside the double meaning of cleansing necessary to entering the Temple. Although the theological reflection for this research does not focus on purification as a central theme for therapist preparation, the nuances of Christ washing his disciples' dirty feet in light of the ultimate cleansing that Christ provides, which Morris (1995) explicitly describes, undoubtedly affects the researcher's theological reflection and preparatory prayers.

Other interpretations focus on the motif of servitude with the foot-washing symbolizing a readiness to serve others and to deny oneself as Jesus' does (Ridderbos, 1997). Stevick (2011) approaches the text with multiple meanings. The foot-washing is understood as an exemplary model for serving one another as Jesus demonstrates his own servanthood from an interior possession of his self. As well, Stevick suggests that the foot-washing has a Christological meaning as Christ's humble action reflects his descending, redemptive, and self-giving work, which provides a basis for Christians to love. The foot-washing also has a sacramental meaning through the use of water and washing and an eschatological meaning carried over from Luke's account of the last supper in which the disciples dispute who is greatest. Stevick suggests that the eschatological meaning reflects a new order, and role-reversal in which the disciples are called to serve others. Indeed Stevick's manifold meanings around the servitude of

Christ provide much for the art therapist to ponder on the implications of what it means to *serve* clients. In trying to grasp the driving force behind the type of *servicing* Christ teaches and models, Moloney's (2013) emphasis on the consummate love of Christ - his unconditional incomprehensible and divine love to his disciples, to those who would betray, deny, and misunderstand him - speaks to the *why* and *how* of Christ's gesture and his love in action.

One point of controversy in understanding John 13, are the diverse views on Christ's command to his disciples after washing their feet to "do just as I have done to you" (John 13:15b). Bennema (2014) examines the mimetic imperative in John 13 and whether Christ's foot-washing is to be literally replicated or interpreted as a call to humble service. He suggests that the text requires a hermeneutical process of understanding the act, which results in a creative articulation. He argues that John 13 requires both an understanding of the original act and a "creative, bodily, articulation" (31) of the original attitudes and ideas demonstrated by Christ through which one experiences Christ's salvific service through the mimetic act. He does not expound on what a "creative articulation" might look like and instead leaves this open for the reader. In a sense, this thesis seeks to explore what a creative articulation of John 13 might be and how it would be applied for the art therapist.

Conclusion

This literature review explored existing studies and literature on the topics of *preparation, prayer, and theological reflection*, along with commentaries on John 13. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of this thesis topic the review involved a broad reading and

understanding of dialogues in the fields of art therapy, general psychotherapy, pastoral counselling, and theology – along with some discussion in the fields of nursing and social work. As a result, inherent in this review were abrupt shifts and overlaps that may have not made for a straightforward and smooth discussion. This is however, somewhat reflective of the nature of art therapy practice: it involves wisdom and collaboration from multiple fields and often requires an eclectic approach. Collaborative and eclectic approaches define the unique roles art therapy offers in the healing process. As these are not easy roles to carry out, they are cause for why art therapist preparation – both in terms of pre-session preparation and preparation of the person of the art therapist – need to be examined with intentionality and great care.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

Using heuristic methodology this research explored my experience of art therapy pre-session preparation in conversation with a theological reflection on the scriptural text of John 13. The research was divided into three overarching stages; each stage was distinguished in relation to its process with the theological reflection: (1) Pre-theological reflection, (2) Theological reflection, and (3) Post-theological reflection. Woven throughout the three stages were Moustakas' (1990) seven phases of heuristic research – *initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis, and validation* – and Killen & De Beer's (1994) framework for theological reflection. Although the theological reflection was primarily based on Killen & DeBeer's (1994) framework it also integrated additional theological reflection methods for examining the Scriptural texts; including Ulrich & Thompson's (1995) method for *critical examination of Scriptural text* and Graham, Walton, & Ward's (2005) *theology by heart*.

This chapter will outline the following methods and processes used throughout the study: heuristic methodology, heuristic concepts and phases, the theological reflection framework and theological reflection methods, and the data collection methods. Though each of these methods and processes will be described in separate sections throughout this chapter they did not by any means unfold neither remotely from each other nor in an uncomplicated linear process. Rather, they interwove in varying patterns throughout the heuristic phases. In certain phases of the study where the

heuristic phase unfolded synchronous to the theological reflection, the data that was collected pertained to both the heuristic phase and the theological reflection movement. Though sequential in its heuristic and theological reflection tasks, the study involved spiral-like motions that shifted between active data collection to the uniquely heuristic task of internal gazing, incubation, and meditation. These phases were followed by rigorous data analysis and synthesis, which also involved periods of solitude and reflection. As Killen & De Beer (1994) describes the movements of a theological reflection it “proceeds more like a directional spiral, a gyre, in a dance, which allows backward and forward movement within a larger trajectory” (68). With the spiral-like motion of this research in mind, the following chart helps to lay out the three overarching stages of the study with a brief description of how each of the seven heuristic phases and theological reflection movements wove into each stage. As well, the chart details the nature and content of the data collected within each phase and movement:

Chapter III, Figure 1. Methodological Framework for This Study (Detailed)

Stage 1: Pre-Theological Reflection		
Seven Phases of a Heuristic Study <i>(Moustakas, 1990)</i>	Theological Reflection Framework <i>(Killen & DeBeer, 1994)</i>	Data Collection Process and Contents
<p>Initial Engagement Phase</p> <p>1. Discovered a “passionate concern that call[ed] the researcher” (Moustakas, 1990, p.27)</p> <p>2. Formed a question around the concern</p>	<p>Movement: Experience → Feelings (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 21-27)</p> <p>1. Entered experience of art therapist preparation</p> <p>Movement: Feelings → Image (p.27-40)</p> <p>2. Described what was at the “Heart of the Matter” (68)</p>	<p>Abbreviation for data type: *<i>JW</i>- journal writing * <i>VI</i>- visual images</p> <p>1. Written narrative of internal and external dimensions of art therapist preparation (<i>JW</i>) and development of self-inventory scale</p> <p>2. Encountered feelings around preparation and used an image to capture the heart of the matter (<i>VI</i>)</p> <p>3. Conducted Self-Inventory</p>

		Scale prior to facilitating art therapy sessions for a 2-week period
Stage 2: Theological Reflection		
Seven Phases of a Heuristic Study (Moustakas, 1990)	Theological Reflection Framework (Killen & DeBeer, 1994)	Data Collection Process and Contents Abbreviation for data type: *JW- journal writing * VI- visual images
Immersion Phase Living the question - engaged in the theological reflection while being alert to tacit knowledge, spontaneous self-dialogue, self-searching, “pursu[ed] intuitive clues or hunches”(Moustakas, 1990, p. 28)	Movement: Image → Insight (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 40-43) Explored the Heart of the Matter in conversation with John 13 through a <i>critical examination</i> of John 13 (Ulrich & Thompson, 1995), and a <i>theology by heart</i> (Graham, Walton, & Ward, 2005) Movement: Insight → Action (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 43-45)	1. Documented free association reflections on John 13 (JW) 2. Engaged in a critical examination of John 13 and a theology by heart reflection (JW) 3. Documented reflections and images on the experience of art therapy preparation in light of John 13 (JW) and conducted Self-Inventory Scale prior to facilitating art therapy sessions for a 6-week period
Stage 3: Post Theological Reflection		
Seven Phases of a Heuristic Study (Moustakas, 1990)	Theological Reflection Framework (Killen & DeBeer, 1994)	Data Collection Process and Contents Abbreviation for data type: *JW- journal writing * VI- visual images
Incubation Phase 1. Retreated from immersion 2. Allowed inner tacit dimensions to unfold and come into	Identified new truths and meaning as an art therapist and as a Christian	Documented insights and images that unfolded during the incubation phase (JW & VI)

awareness (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28)		
Illumination Phase 1. Clustered qualities of experience into themes 2. Remained receptive to new dimensions of the experience, corrections, meanings, essences (29)		Analyzed the following data from Immersion Phase and identified themes (<i>JW</i>): a) theological reflection (critical examination and theology by heart data) b) preparatory prayers c) self-inventory scale results d) journal entries from immersion and incubation phases
Explication Phase Explained themes, various layers, and meanings from <i>illumination phase</i>		Wrote out a “full elucidation of the descriptive qualities and themes that characterize the experience” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31).
Creative Synthesis Phase Put together core themes of research into a creative form (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31-32)		1. Entered a period of solitude to focus on the topic 2. Realized a “comprehensive expression of the essences” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32) for the experience of art therapist preparation in light of John 13
Validation Phase Verified if the explication and creative synthesis “comprehensively, vividly, and accurately “ presented the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32)		Repeated verification of data - <i>JW, VI, self-inventory scale results</i> – to determine if the description and depiction of themes were accurate

Heuristic Methodology

Clark Moustakas’ (1990) heuristic methodology seeks to discover and disclose the meaning of an experience through an exhaustive internal search. *Heuriskein* is the Greek

word, meaning to discover or to find. What the researcher discovers through the deep involvement of self in the search for understanding is a comprehensive “systematic and definite exposition” (40) on the meaning of the experience under study. In a heuristic study it is not unusual that the trigger for the study begins with a crisis-like experience out of which a question or problem emerges. Moustakas explicitly describes the sequence of his own investigation on loneliness as a “search of self in solitude, from which emerged a recognition of the significance of loneliness both as a creative urging and as a frightening and disturbing experience” (Douglas, & Moustakas, 1985, p. 46).

Indeed, the early beginnings of this thesis investigation also began with a crisis-like experience as I confronted serious challenges in my preparations for facilitating art therapy sessions. This came with a creative urge to explore the experience along with a sense of being disturbed by the overwhelming challenge it involved. These perceptions and feelings led to an intense search to know what was at the essence of art therapist preparation. At the same time my premature attempts to discover particular rituals and procedures to overcome my pre-session jitters and anxieties came with early lessons on how the central goal for the search could not be to “prove or disprove the influence of one thing or another, but rather to discover the nature of the problem or phenomenon itself and to explicate it” (42). In order to know the nature of art therapist preparation, I realized the significance of recognizing my internal frame of reference, that is my perceptions, feelings, thoughts, meanings, and senses in relation to the experience of preparation.

Elements of a heuristic study. Moustakas’ (1990) heuristic methodology involves key concepts, processes, and skills such as: self-dialogue, tacit knowing,

intuition, indwelling, focusing, and internal frame of reference. As a starting point for understanding the underlying concepts for this research, this section will briefly identify the heuristic concepts central to the study.

Throughout this research, *self-dialogues* and an *internal frame of reference* provided essential platforms for me to explore relevant questions on the topic and to engage in an honest investigation on the art therapist's experience of preparation in light of John 13. These self-dialogues and internal frame of references were documented in a written journal and obliged the heuristic study to speak for itself out of my direct experience. *Tacit knowing* refers to Polanyi's knowing (1964; 1969; 1983) in which one can "sense the unity or wholeness of something from an understanding of the individual qualities or parts" (Moustakas, 1990, 21). Parts of an experience termed as *subsidiary elements* attract immediate attention to the research but are secondary to the experience's *focal* aspects, which are the unseen and unifying aspects of the experience. When combined with the subsidiary elements the focal aspects create a sense of the whole or essence of the experience (21). This research utilized tacit knowing by documenting elements of the experience of art therapist preparation in light of John 13 primarily through continuous journal writing. On a few occasions visual images were also used. These elements were then integrated together to discover the whole meaning and essence of the experience.

Intuition – another central skill for heuristic research – helped to draw out the meaning of the experience through carefully catching particular observations of art therapist preparation by following and tracking hunches, clues, patterns, and underlying conditions of the experience (23). The intense following of hunches, clues, and patterns

involved a process of *indwelling* – “turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience” (24) and gazing “with unwavering attention and concentration” (24). This skill also relates to the process of *focusing* – a heuristic process in which the researcher clears and creates an inward space to tap into the essence and meaning of the experience (25).

Research Stages and the Seven Heuristic Phases

Stage 1 –Pre-theological reflection.

Initial engagement. In the first heuristic phase of this research, *initial engagement*, I discovered “a passionate concern that call[ed] out to the researcher” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27) Through self-dialogue, tacit awareness, and inner receptiveness, this concern led me to the thesis question and the development of the self-inventory scale. This involved a period of repeatedly meditating and reflecting on John 13. It also involved recording free association observations into a written journal on my challenges around pre-session preparation, to clarify the context out of which the topic of preparation formed and held significance for me. Though it will be described in greater detail under the Theological Reflection section of this chapter, the initial engagement phase involved the first two movements of Killen & DeBeer’s (1990) theological reflection from *experience* to *feelings* and then from *feelings* to *image*.

Stage 2 – Theological reflection.

Immersion. The thesis question was then “lived” during the *immersion* phase in which I engaged in the theological reflection based on Ulrich & Thompson’s (1995)

method for critical examination of John 13. The theological reflection led to the formation of preparatory prayers, which became a part of my pre-session preparatory process. Throughout the theological reflection I was alert to potential hunches and meanings that related to the topic and experienced connections with the question in numerous contexts beyond art therapy. Self-dialogue, theological reflections, prayers, were recorded in written form in a journal. This phase involved a critical examination of the theological reflection based on Ulrich & Thompson (1995) and a *theology by heart* (Graham, Walton, & Ward 2005).

Stage 3 – Post-theological reflection.

Incubation, illumination, explication, creative synthesis, validation. After a focused period of immersing in the topic I retreated from the question during a period of incubation. At this time I completed my practicum term and was therefore able to fully detach from any active involvement with art therapy preparation. During this time I did not engage in direct investigation of the topic, however, I documented any insights from “the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition” (29) that unfolded “on levels outside of immediate awareness” (29).

Following a period of incubation, during the illumination phase, I returned to the research data documented throughout the initial engagement, immersion, and incubation phases including: journal entries on the critical examination of John 13, preparatory prayers, self-inventory scale results, and spontaneous journal reflections throughout. I analyzed qualities of the experience, hidden discoveries, new awareness, and modifications to capture the core themes of the experience. During the explication phase

the “nuances, textures, and constituents of the phenomenon” (31) were brought together to a comprehensive depiction of its central themes and meanings. Time was spent in meditation to synthesize the central themes and meanings from the explication phase, into a creative form towards a “comprehensive expression of the essences of the phenomenon investigated” (32). Central themes and meanings were synthesized together into a creative form and expressed in the final process.

Self-inventory Scale

The self-inventory scale was developed during the initial engagement phase of the research as a means to clarify and identify what I considered to be essential aspects for the *doing* and *being* of an art therapist’s preparation. First, during the initial engagement phase as I explored the central experience of being constantly overwhelmed in my pre-session preparation I recorded the internal and external dimensions of my pre-session preparation experiences through narratives in my journal. Then I carefully dissected the feelings involved in these narratives. Immediately, images that helped to capture the experience emerged. Reflections on my journal narratives and images made me realize that a large portion of my concerns was based on unrealistic ideals and harsh criteria that I had unknowingly created and set for myself.

Weiss’ (2004) and Geller & Greenberg’s (2012) descriptions on therapist self-care, mindfulness, and grounding, informed the first aspect of the scale on holistic therapeutic presence, however, each item of the scale essentially unfolded through a process of identifying personally significant aspects in my approach to art therapy. The development of the self-inventory scale became a process that countered unbalanced

ideals and criteria that I had experienced in my pre-session preparations as I discerned which concerns were really necessary. Essentially the concerns that were identified as being necessary for pre-session preparation related to core principles that grounded my purpose for art therapy practice. These aspects formed each of the following items related to the self-inventory scale: 1) recognizing a wholistic approach to being therapeutically present for each session 2) relying on the presence of God 3) recognizing the importance of a person-centered approach by developing awareness for the client's context 4) centralizing the therapeutic process as creative and expressive processes.

Throughout the research the scale provided a means to consistently observe and track my experiences of preparation using a simple rating system. These were completed during my art therapy practicum term immediately before the first client came in for a session. These were conducted at two distinct points during the immersion phase for a set period of time. The first set of self-inventory scale data was collected two weeks *before* engaging in a theological reflection. The second set was collected *while* engaging in a theological reflection for a total of six weeks. Throughout the period of conducting the self-inventory scales, I facilitated sessions at two practicum locations. During this period I worked with the same clients, with no new client intakes during the self-inventory scale data collections.

Chapter III, Figure 2. Self-Inventory Scale Questions

Self-Inventory Scale Questions

After reading through each of the descriptions above, answer the following questions:

1) On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your awareness of present energy level (biopsychosocio-spiritual)?

- 1 - Unable to distinguish energy level for any one of the four dimensions.
- 2 - Minimal awareness of energy level - only able to distinguish one or two of the four dimensions.
- 3 - General awareness of energy level - able to distinguish energy level in most of the dimensions.
- 4 - Aware of energy level, able to identify energy level in all four dimensions -vague sense of contributing factors.
- 5 - Clearly aware of energy level in all four dimensions and able to identify contributing factors with a sense of the type of follow-up that would be beneficial.

Particulars (*Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating*):

2) On a scale of 1-5 what is your sense of being grounded in God's compassion and presence?

- 1 - Little to no sense of God's compassion and presence- no sense of being grounded and feeling closed off.
- 2 - Minimal sense of God's compassion and presence - minimal sense of being grounded and minimal desire to operate from the belief of God's compassion and presence.
- 3 - General but vague sense of God's compassion and presence and of being grounded in this belief. Openness to operate from the belief of God's compassion and presence.
- 4 - Clear sense of God's compassion and presence and of being grounded in this belief. Openness and desire to operate from this belief.
- 5 - Firm sense of God's compassion and presence. Grounded in this belief and strong desire to operate from this belief.

Particulars (*Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating*):

3) On a scale of 1-5 what is your sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and client you are about to facilitate?

- 1 – No sense of being cognizant.
- 2 – Minimal sense of being cognizant.
- 3 – General sense of being cognizant.
- 4 – Overall, a good sense of being cognizant.
- 5 – Very clear sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and client and my personal biases.

Particulars (*Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating*):

4) On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your readiness to engage others in creative and expressive processes?

- 1 – Not ready.
- 2 – Slightly ready.
- 3 – Somewhat ready.
- 4 – Ready.
- 5 – Ready and interested in finding entry points to engage others in their creative and expressive process.

Particulars (*Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating*):

As the chart reflects, the survey measured 5 areas that I identified as functioning somewhat like *sensitizing concepts* (Patton, 2015), selected because they were identified as being essential to my practice of art therapy. These *sensitizing concepts* became starting points for observing and thinking about art therapist preparation to invite further inquiry into what preparation meant for me in light of a theological reflection. The first area regarded the awareness of my biopsychosocial and spiritual energy levels. Of importance was not that I had high energy levels in all dimensions; rather that I was aware of my overall well being and in the case of low energy levels was able to identify potential stressors or causes so that necessary follow-up and self-care needs could be addressed at an appropriate time. The biological energy level referred to my sense of

alertness or lack thereof, awareness of pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, or any other physical symptoms that may have been present. Art therapy sessions can be physically demanding as the art therapist carries and prepares materials; and at times physically assists clients who need mechanical support to work with the materials. Thus, the biological energy level regards my overall sense of kinesthetic mobility and ease of movement. The psychological energy level regarded my awareness of stressors or traumatic life events; awareness of mood or emotional state; sense of clarity and alertness in cognitive processing or lack thereof. The sociological energy level regarded my awareness of positive or negative impacts within family, community, or cultural circumstances; awareness of social supports and assurance of accessing supports if needed. The spiritual energy level regarded a sense of honoring meaning-of-life processes; sense of hope and assurance; and a sense of being in a personal relationship with God.

The second area of the self-inventory scale focused exclusively on the sense of being grounded in the belief of God's compassion and presence. Being in a relationship with God and being sourced by God's compassion and presence in serving clients were central to my calling in art therapy. Thus, this area of the scale focused on measuring my openness and desire to operate from this spiritual calling. The third area regarded cognizance for the context and client in the upcoming art therapy session and my sense of focused attention and awareness of the context, structure, system of the client's world, along with an awareness of my personal biases. This awareness also related to a readiness to understand, to enter into, and to engage in the client's culture, language and experiences. The last area in the self-inventory scale regarded a readiness to engage

clients into a creative, expressive process to their benefit with a commitment to the practice of art therapy and to the calling to serve clients through creative expressive processes. The survey measured each of the 5 areas along a rating scale of 1-5 with simple descriptors for each rating. It also included opportunities to provide additional comments on particular impacts that may have informed the rating in each section.

Theological Reflection

The theological reflection was primarily based on Killen & DeBeer's (1994) framework as a disciplined approach to reflect on experiences in relation to one's religious heritage. It also involved supplemental methods and processes for examining the Scriptural text using Ulrich & Thompson's (1995) critical examination of Scripture and Graham, Walton, Ward's (2005) method of "theology by heart". This section will first describe Killen & De Beer's (1994) framework for theological reflection and the points that merged with the seven heuristic phases before describing Ulrich & Thomsons' (1995) critical examination of Scripture and Graham, Walton, Ward's (2005) method of theology by heart.

Killen & DeBeer's theological reflection framework. Killen & DeBeer (1994) divide life experiences into categories and term these as "*sources for theology*" (54). Though seemingly basic, the simple task of categorizing experiences into sources is quite significant as it "provide[s] stable referent points for organizing and distinguishing the full range of human experience" (54) and in doing so it helps to "slow down its flow and distinguish among its aspects". This slowing down of an experience as a source for

theological reflection was the prerequisite for engaging in the theological reflection and for initiating a heuristic study. Amongst the different sources for theology that Killen & DeBeer identify, they categorize authoritative Scriptures as an example of a *tradition source*. In the Christian tradition Scripture holds authority as a central expression of God's revelation of Himself to humanity. Scripture also provides a means for humans to relate to God and to His wisdom in a powerful way. Furthermore, Killen & DeBeer make explicit specific theological aspects on scripture and on the nature of God that their theological reflection framework presumes:

Theological reflection is the process of seeking meaning that relies on the rich heritage of our Christian tradition as a primary source of wisdom and guidance. It presumes the profoundly incarnational (God present in human lives), providential (God caring for us), and revelatory (source of deepening knowledge of God and self) quality of human experience. (xi)

Upon these beliefs and approaches to Scripture and the nature of God, this research focused on John 13 as a primary source for engaging in the theological reflection.

The first movement of the theological reflection focused on identifying the experience of the art therapist's pre-session preparation and the feelings that emerged in this experience. This involved reentering the experience of preparation and attending to its inner and outer dimensions through a narrative description. This process overlapped with the *initial engagement* phase of Moustakas' (1990) heuristic inquiry, in which the researcher "enter[s] fully into the theme" (p.27), through self-dialogue, tacit awareness, and inner receptiveness as a means to elucidate the context of the experience. The second movement of the theological reflection focused on articulating "the crux of the

situation” (41) by using an image to intensify and deepen the feelings of the art therapist’s experience in order to identify what was at “the heart of the matter” (63). Two images emerged in my process, which provided a significant means to “convey the energy of common but very profound human experiences” (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 40). This process was a continuance of the initial engagement phase of the heuristic inquiry in which I encountered the thesis question – a question that was deeply unique yet universally significant (Moustakas, 1990).

The third movement of the theological reflection explored the heart of the matter “in conversation with the wisdom of the Christian heritage” (Killen & Debeer, 1994, p.69); shifting the theological reflection from image to insight. This involved a critical examination of John 13 using Ulrich & Thompson’s (1995) design for *critical examination of Scriptural* text along with Graham, Walton, & Ward’s (2005) *theology by heart* to discern God’s presence in relation to art therapist preparation. (Both of these methods will be described in greater detail following this section.) The research identified new truths and insights that emerged throughout the theological conversation. Although the scriptural text of John 13 was the primary source to explore the topic I remained alert to resonating experiences in other areas of my life and documented these alongside the critical examination and theology by heart in a written journal. In the final movement of the theological reflection I shifted from insight towards action by forming and engaging in preparatory prayers based on the theological reflection. The preparatory prayers were based on confirmations, shifts in attitude, postures, and feelings that emerged through the theological reflection. These prayers were then used in my preparatory process prior to facilitating art therapy sessions at the practicum sites.

Critical examination of scripture & theology by heart. In applying Ulrich & Thomson's (1995) critical examination of scripture, the process began with a free association of the Scriptural text including associations with images, symbols, etc. I engaged in and documented this process through daily readings of the text for a two-week period through written journal reflections. The Scriptural text was then examined in its major divisions along with key words and phrases, overall themes and movement of thought (35). The critical examination involved references to multiple resources (commentaries and writings) on John 13. I then examined the text by situating its literary and historical context and by clarifying important images, words, and phrases in the text. These processes were important in developing critical awareness of John 13, so that the scriptural text was not used merely to "buttress [my] own unreflective convictions" or "to give clear answers to complicated problems" (38).

Simultaneous to the critical examination of John 13, I engaged in an integrative conversation with Graham, Walton, & Ward's (2005) method of theological reflection through *theology by heart*. *Theology by heart* is one of Graham, Walton, & Ward's (2005) seven methods for theological reflection, in which one approaches "the self and the interior life as the primary space in which the theological awareness is generated and nurtured" (18). In this process, I looked to conversational encounters with myself, with God, and with the topic of preparation. I sought to discern deep personal feelings in relation to the topic of art therapist preparation guided by John 13 as a key source for discerning God's living presence and direction in my life.

Data Collection Methods

Though somewhat repetitive of the research methods already described in this chapter in order to ensure clarification on the nature of the data collected throughout the study, this section will detail the data collection methods used in each stage of the research from its start to finish in terms of content and processes involved in collecting, gathering, and analyzing the data. The data for this heuristic study primarily consisted of written journal entries that were amalgamated into a multi-medium journal that included visual images created by the researcher. In the first pre-theological reflection stage of the heuristic study – during the initial engagement and first movement of the theological reflection – I defined the initial experience of preparing for art therapy sessions as a written narrative and documented these through journal writing. I then identified what was at the heart of the matter through the creation of visual images and developed the self-inventory scale. Using the self-inventory scale, I collected data for a two-week period, prior to facilitating art therapy sessions.

As I engaged in the second stage of the study, I began the critical examination of the theological reflection by documenting free associations of John 13 through journal writing. With the use of commentaries on John 13, the critical examination of the text documented: major divisions, key words, phrases, overall themes and movements of the text, and the literary and historical context of the text. In the final movement of the theological reflection the findings from the critical examination were brought forward into conversation with Graham, Walton, & Ward's (2005) theology by heart. Here again, reflections and explorations of this conversation were documented through journal writing. The data from these journals was then used in the formation of preparatory

prayers, which were written out and enacted for a six-week period during my preparatory process for art therapy sessions. Throughout the six weeks, reflections on the experience of preparing for sessions with the use of the prayers based on the theological reflection of John 13 were recorded through journal writing. As mentioned earlier the self-inventory scale was conducted during these six weeks.

In the final post-theological reflection stage during the incubation phase I used journal writings to document any “inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside the immediate awareness” (Moustakas, 1990, p.29). During the illumination and explication phases all of the data from previous stages were gathered including: the theological reflection, the preparatory prayers, the self-inventory scale results and journal entries from every heuristic phase and theological reflection movement. Qualities of the experience that were documented in the journals throughout the study were analyzed and clustered into themes. Results from the self-inventory scale were analyzed with comparisons made from the two periods that the scale had been conducted, along with shifts and significant impacts identified in the scale. Throughout the data analysis, additional angles, textures, features, refinements, and corrections were documented to further grasp the experience of preparation in conversation with John 13. The summaries of the data analysis process were then gathered together and fully elucidated to convey the qualities and layers of art therapist preparation in light of John 13.

In the creative synthesis phase of the study the three themes, which captured the essence and meaning of my experience of preparation in light of John 13 were synthesized together to create a complete preparatory prayer. Both the explication of the data analysis

and the preparatory prayer were then presented in Chapter Four. In the final validation phase I repeatedly returned to the data from all stages of the research to determine if the description and the depiction of themes were accurate with results presented in Chapter 4. During this phase, I also reflected on personal life transitions and contexts that had had a significant impact on me throughout the research and articulated how these expanded my understanding of preparation and explored additional musings for extended research.

Chapter 4

Data: Self-Inventory Scale Results, Themes, and Creative Synthesis

Introduction

This chapter will present the research data on the experience of preparing for art therapy sessions in light of a theological reflection on John 13 in three distinct sections. It will begin with an analysis of the results from the self-inventory scale conducted over a period of eight weeks prior to and during my experience of engaging in a theological reflection. Following this section, the chapter will dramatically shift into the first movement of the theological reflection with a description of the “heart of the matter” (Killen & DeBeer, 1994) – the underlying catalyst for engaging in a theological reflection. This section will then present three central themes based on journal entries documented throughout the experience of preparation in light of John 13:1-20. The final section of this chapter will close with a creative synthesis of the data – a distillation of the themes culminating in a complete preparatory prayer.

Section I

Self-Inventory Scale

In total, I completed a self-inventory scale (see Appendix) for a period of eight weeks. These were conducted once a week at my practicum sites within 30 minutes before the first client arrived for a session. The first two weeks mark the timeframe prior to engaging in a theological reflection, followed by six weeks that I engaged in a theological reflection in my preparatory process. The self-inventory scale rated four areas

that I identified as being central to preparing for art therapy sessions. These areas included: (1) the awareness of my biopsychosocial-spiritual energy level; (2) the sense of being grounded in God’s compassion and presence; (3) the sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and client(s); (4) readiness to engage clients in creative, expressive processes. The scale ratings ranged from 1 to 5 with 1 generally meaning “low” and 5 meaning “high”. Each rating included qualifying descriptors. For example for the first question “*On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your awareness of present energy level (biopsychosocial-spiritual)?*” A rating of 1 meant that I was “unable to distinguish energy level for any one of the four dimensions”; while a rating of 5 meant that I was “clearly aware of energy level in all four dimensions and able to identify contributing factors”. As well, each question included a section for identifying any particularities that may have impacted the rating.

Chapter IV, Figure 1. Self-Inventory Scale Results

Week	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Total
#1	2	2	2	3	2.25
#2	2	3	4	3	3
#3*	2	2	2	2	2
#4*	3	3	3	3	3
#5*	4	4	4	3	3.75
#6*	3	3	4	3	3.25
#7*	4	3	4	2	3.5
#8*	4	4	4	4	4

**Researcher was engaged in a theological reflection on John 13 during these weeks*

Results

Overall the self-inventory scale results indicate an increase in the total average ratings over the six weeks that I engaged in the theological reflection on John 13. These increases were not necessarily successive as fluctuations were found between the second and third week and between the fifth and sixth week. Given the fact that the study focused on a theological reflection, an increase in my sense of awareness in “*being grounded in God’s compassion and presence*” (Question 2) was no surprise. (Although the ratings for this also reveal fluctuations throughout the fifth to eighth week.) Interestingly enough the most successive increase was found in the “*sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and client*” (Question 4). Familiarity with the context and clients may have naturally developed over time. At the same time the themes that unfolded throughout the theological reflection evidently enabled me to focus my attention on each client. As well, the results of the self-inventory scale reveal increased ratings for my awareness of energy levels.

Particular Influences

As mentioned, the self-inventory scale allowed me to identify any particular influences that may have contributed to the ratings for each question. This section will briefly outline some of the influences that I identified in each question. It is worth mentioning that as the weeks progressed I specified influences with increasing detail, and clarity. This may be due to my familiarity with the self-inventory scale itself as the repetition of completing the same questions for eight weeks cued me to be attuned to aspects pertaining to the self-inventory scale. In fact, I explicitly identified the practice

of completing the self-inventory scale as an effect for one of my ratings commenting: “A simple five minutes of sitting still to complete this self-inventory scale helps me slow down and be more in tune with God’s compassion and presence”.

Question 1 – The particular influence that was identified in Question 1 regarded the way in which I had spent my morning prior to facilitating art therapy sessions. This seemed to influence the awareness of my biopsychosocial-spiritual energy level, whereas a rushed morning routine seemed to relate to a low awareness of energy level. That said by the seventh week despite a rushed morning I indicated a sense of awareness of my energy levels and rated myself at a 4. This could indicate that I was slowly able to shift my perception of equating a rushed morning with a low awareness of energy levels. Instead I acknowledged a rushed morning without allowing it to impact my awareness of energy levels. In this way, I may have positively disassociated the sense of not having enough time in the morning with an awareness of my biopsychosocial-spiritual well-being.

Question 2 – The particular influences identified in the second question most often related to how much time I spent with activities or routines related to spiritual practices, such as prayers and scriptural readings. Another interesting effect that was identified regarded a strange dream that left me feeling ungrounded on the day of art therapy sessions. As well I described a memorable opportunity within the week in which I engaged in an invigorating dialogue regarding my experiences of the theological reflection. In this way, a variety of factors that included internal and external practices, dialogues, and processes seemed to have influenced my ratings.

Question 3 – For the third question I identified supervision sessions that heightened my awareness of the context and issues for a particular client. As well, creating time within the week to reflect on previous sessions seemed to have influenced my sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and the client.

Question 4 –The major influence noted in the fourth question regarded whether or not I had engaged in a creative process within the week. Engaging in a personal creative process during the week influenced my readiness to facilitate others in a creative or expressive process, while the lack of engaging in my own creative process lowered my readiness to engage others in it.

Section II Theological Reflection

The first movement in Killen & DeBeer's (1994) framework for theological reflection involves a process of reentering the catalyst experience that led to the theological reflection. By narrating and associating images of the entry point experience, I explored core aspects of my struggle in preparing for art therapy sessions. Two images revealed two distinct affective states, experienced in two stages of preparation: (1) preparation experiences before arriving at the practicum art therapy session site and (2) preparation experiences after arriving at the practicum art therapy session site. The following reflections from journal entries during the initial movement of the theological reflection reveal the entry point experience:

Narrating the Entry Point Experience

Pre-session crawling. *Though I have the great privilege of supporting clients with the commitment, skills, and expertise that have developed over time through art therapy training and experience, admittedly there is a fundamental aspect of my humanness that will never change. Cradled within the base of my shell- like a babe in the womb snuggled tight snuggled right – I am safely shelled in. In all its interiority my shell reflects the reality that I am but a naked, vulnerable, sleeping child.*



Figure "2 Pre-session Crawling"

The shell also represents the undeniable reality of my separate existence from my clients'. I live, move, breathe, work, think, and exist each day in a wholly separate and different world from my clients. Each of them also live and exist in their own world – within their unique story, situation, and relations. With this separation, there's a great bridge to cross – a great divide before I leave my own world and enter another, yet I cannot leap over it fast enough. Like a slug I need much space and time to crawl out of my shell. Also like a slug it does not take much for a slight stirring to slink me back to hiding into the caverns of my shell.

Pre-session buzzing.

Glazed and golden,

preparing in and out of every season, for each season.

Alone or as a team,

in flight,

in the hive and out,

Gathering, carrying and laboring - all in the name of sweet honey.

Can hardly hear anything else but my own busying buzzing

overwhelmed and frazzled



Figure 3 *Pre-session Buzzing*

Through exploring the images I identified the affective feelings I experienced that helped me to discern what was at the heart of the matter. This process developed into critical questions and launching points for the heuristic investigation. The following reflection captures my exploration into the images to identify core feelings that point toward the heart of the matter - critical questions for the theological reflection process.

Heart of the matter. *Preparation for art therapy sessions is like a process of crawling out of my own shell and out into the world, requiring a forced bold appearance - a dramatic crawling out of the shell. Once out, the tentacles activate in peaked awareness of life in the outer world. My hypersensitive antennas pick up on every stirring in my environment. Not sure how and where the switch happens but suddenly at the peak of preparation when I am at the art therapy session site I can not hear much else but my own self buzzing – I am a bee. It is impossible to be still. The heart beats quickly, feet shuffle to keep up. Antennas pick up on all cues, pulses, tones, and temperatures. Aroused, eyes are wide, noticing every movement, color, and expression. Not a moment to be still and any slight moment of quiet is met with suspicion and distrust, with accusations that the pre-session preparation time is not being maximized. There’s much to be done. Rigid and jumping from one “must-do” to another “should-do” to doubtful “should I’s?” Questions are buzzing. In all of this I long to know how to prepare myself for each client in the interior spaces of all this noise and movement.*

Introducing the Scriptural Text

John is the only gospel that offers an account of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet. This scene, found in John chapter 13, marks the beginning of Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples on his journey towards the cross. Thomas (1991) suggests that the foot washing and the farewell discourses involve preparation for Jesus' departure:

The emphasis on preparation is immensely significant in John 13.1-20, for the whole of John 13 – 17 is devoted to Jesus' preparation of the disciples for his departure and for their subsequent role and function. Standing first in this strategic section of the Johannine narrative, the footwashing account serves to emphasize in a very powerful fashion the disciples' need for adequate preparation and Jesus' personal agency in the preparatory process. (p.59)

The mysterious connection between Jesus' footwashing and his "preparatory process" captivated me to learn and apply Jesus' example of preparation as depicted in John 13 in relation to my struggles of pre-session preparation.

The Scriptural Text (English Standard Version)

*13 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, **4** got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. **5** Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. **6** He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you*

going to wash my feet?” **7** Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” **8** Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” **9** Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” **10** Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet,[b] but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” **11** For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? **13** You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. **14** So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. **15** For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you. **16** Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. **17** If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. **18** I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, ‘The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ **19** I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. **20** Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.”

Framing the Themes

The following section discusses three themes that emerged throughout my experience of preparing for art therapy sessions in conversation with John 13:1-20. The theological reflection involved a *critical examination* (Ulrich & Thompson, 1995) of the scriptural text through examining literary techniques, key phrases, and major movements of the passage as well as repetitive self-reflective processes in a *theology by heart* (Graham, Walton, & Ward, 2005). The themes were identified by analyzing my experiences documented in journal entries throughout the theological reflection and by distilling the content of these journal entries into categories. The themes will be presented in a somewhat sequential order to the scriptural text however; they unfolded in a non-sequential manner. Thus the themes should be likened to snapshots of distilled insights rather than a comprehensive interpretation of the scriptural text or an exhaustive description of the preparatory process. Throughout the heuristic investigation there was a marked distinction between reading about Jesus and encountering him personally in the theological reflection. At times the snapshots involve the perspective of an outside reader who is taking in the scene and making observations that the disciples in the scene would not have had (such as John's introductory description of Jesus' interior "knowing"). At other times, the snapshots involve an imaginative stepping into the scene as one of the disciples -witnessing and receiving Jesus' foot washing; being held accountable to his command to do likewise; and wrestling with Jesus' baffling call to servant hood.

Theme one: knowing. The first theme experienced through the theological reflection regarded Jesus' *knowing* in relation to his *doing* of the foot washing. The scripture passage begins with Jesus' "knowing" and ends with "if you know these things blessed are you if you do these things" (Moloney, 2013, p. 107). Through providing glimpses into the "intimate, interior life of Christ" (Stevick, 2011, p. 23), the first three verses of John 13, make explicit what Jesus knows and how his knowing forms the basis for his actions through the footwashing. Though the introduction is "theologically heavy and linguistically even overladen" (Schnackenburg, 1990, p. 6) with complex lengthy sentence structures, they provide a preliminary basis for understanding who Jesus is, why and how he serves his disciples in this passage. Closely examining Jesus' "knowings" guided me with key insights for the *knowing* necessary in my preparations for art therapy sessions.

Knowing time. The first "knowing" described in John 13 regards Jesus' knowing of the hour – that is, His knowing of an "appointed" time – time ordained by God who accomplishes all things within a perfect plan. Within God's time, the appointed time is *the* hour of Jesus' departure from the world – fully realized in "the final crisis of his mission, culminating in his death and resurrection" (Stevick, 2011, p. 23). While the hour is in God's perfect will, the knowing of "the hour" is in many ways no tranquil, merry knowing of time but a knowing of a critical time – marked by great suffering. As well, Jesus' knowing of *the* hour also refers to his knowing that it was time for "the fullness of [his] love to be shown" (Coloe, 2007, p. 130), which then compels him to wash his disciples feet. Stevick (2011) describes the distinct New Testament and

Johannine time-scheme that “does not think in terms of clock-time – objective bits of mechanically measured succession. It does not see time as a featureless, characterless background for human action. Rather, actions, and purposes, divine and human, give character and significance to lived time” (24).

Though it seems unbecoming to relate the weight of Jesus’ knowing of the hour with art therapy preparation, it must be clarified that the purpose of such an endeavour through the theological reflection was not to parallel Jesus’ love and journey to the Cross with the art therapist’s process of preparation. Rather, through examining and conversing with John 13 and through encountering Jesus the-Servant-Teacher and Saviour, the aim was to deepen my perspective in approaching art therapy sessions. With this in mind, Jesus’ knowing of the hour directed me to approach each session within an expansive sense of time – within time ordained by God.

A sense of expansive time did not make preparation for art therapy sessions an abstract or vague concept, nor did it minimize the particularities for each client and their therapeutic process. Although it is impossible to fully comprehend what is unfolding within this divine, expansive time simply acknowledging the reality that each session and encounter with each client was not *by chance* but was ordained by God, transformed my perspective on the client and the session. This in turn shifted my approach for preparing each session. The certitude that each session was brought together by God within a precisely appointed time within very real and particular seasons and circumstances for each client formed a deep sense of honor to be a part of such carefully orchestrated time. With this came a sense of responsibility to accept and take seriously the specific issues and themes within each hour and session.

Knowing and slowing down. In a critical examination of the literary features of John 13, I discovered that *slowing down* was a literary technique used in chapter 13. Unique to the gospel of John is “its dramatic slowing down of the action of Jesus’ story” (Moloney, 2013, 99), that is his journey to the Cross. In the larger context of the gospel of John, John 13 marks the beginning of a new section often referred to as Jesus’ “Farewell Discourse” made up of four chapters from John chapter 13 to chapter 17 (Keener, 2003; Kostenberger, 2013; Stevick, 2011; Carson, 1991). While the first half of the gospel (ch. 1-12) primarily documents the public ministry of Jesus, from chapter 13 onwards the gospel moves towards Jesus’ departure towards his crucifixion and resurrection. In the midst of this, John 13-17 offers a “careful and lengthy reporting of events and discourses that Jesus shares with his disciples on their final evening together” (Moloney, 2013, 99). John’s use of literary techniques and his dedication of five chapters to Jesus’ self-revelation to His disciples and His farewell (Michaels, 2010) are reflective of this slowing down. With the slowing down comes a fuller awareness of the scene as it unfolds with a present tense verb “rises” in verse four, providing a vivid narrative of the foot washing as though “the writer sees the scene taking place before his very eyes” (Morris, 1995,547).

I quickly noticed that by simply framing art therapy sessions within an awareness of expansive time during my preparatory process I experienced an instant quieting from the nonstop buzzing that depicted my sense of preparation. A prominent layer of fears, doubts, and worst case scenario forecasts were quieted. Although there were still things to do and prepare for each session that required an efficient and calculated use of pre-

session preparation time, my pre-session preparations were no longer driven by an exhaustive “to-do” list or set to a panicked, scurried pace. In reflecting on this shift I realized that with a change in inner noise level there was also a drastic *slowing down* to my preparatory process. My experience of slowing down involved not only a prolonged sense of time or pace before a session began but a shift in how I approached and perceived preparation time before a session; notably in how I approached my roles in and out of therapy sessions. Rather than jumping straight into an art therapist role during my preparatory process I noticed a slight *easing into* the role. In one journal entry I disclose the challenges of quickly transitioning from one role and relationship to another in the varying contexts of my life. In particular, I allude to the struggle of switching from non-professional roles and relationships outside of the art therapy context and session to a professional role with clients in art therapy sessions. The simple awareness of time in and out of art therapy sessions as all being held within Divine, expansive time provided a coherent and overarching perspective that helped diffuse the overwhelming division between being *in* and *out* of the art therapist role.

Knowing expansive time also involved several intentional processes, which began with securing undisturbed time and interior space for the preparatory process by addressing any residual “buzzing”. I found that on numerous occasions the background buzzing continued even well into the preparatory process. (This also reveals how the simple task of focusing and creating interior space for preparation needed to be addressed consistently throughout preparation.) In the process of slowing down I had to re-address any residual buzzing, lingering concerns, and persistent “to-do” items by acknowledging their presence and determining a method and time for when they would be addressed

outside of the preparatory process. In this way slowing down involved a complete prioritizing of creating and maintaining undisturbed time and interior spaces for art therapy preparation.

Knowing identity and purpose. The second aspect of *knowing* relates to Jesus' knowing of His identity and purpose. Jesus knows who he is in relation to the Father and where he is going. The way in which John describes Jesus' *knowing* at the start of the scene sets his *knowing* as an introductory context for the footwashing – furthermore, it becomes a context for the entire farewell discourse which precludes his Passion. What was of particular interest for the researcher was how the Gospel of John depicts Jesus' knowing about his identity and purpose in relation to what he proceeds to do next in serving and washing his disciples. He knows where he came from – “that he had come from God” (vs. 3) and that “the Father had given all things into his hands” (vs. 3). John 13 reveals that what Jesus knows about himself is in complete relation to the Father. Bultmann describes Jesus' knowing as a mystical knowing out of which he “acts as the one who ‘knows’, as the perfected ‘Gnostic’, whose action and suffering do not have their origin or goal in the causal continuity of temporal events, but in whom God himself is active, the God with whom as the “Father” he is at one (Bultmann, 1971, pp. 465-466). In this way, for Jesus it was not only his knowing about his identity in relation to the Father that compelled Him to wash his disciples' feet but also “his sharing in the divine essence” (Whitacre, 1999, p. 328). This reveals, “what God himself is like – he washes feet, even the feet of the one who will betray him” (328). Indeed Jesus' “sharing in the divine essence” (328) of God is truly his unique identity, reserved to him alone.

Having distinguished Jesus' *knowing* as a glimpse into his divine essence, the theological reflection further prompted me to explore the type of *knowing* that would form the context for how I served clients. Over the course of several journal entries I sought to identify my own *knowing* – who I was, where I came from, and what I was called to do. These developed into three solid declarations in my preparatory prayer affirming my identity and purpose as (1) having and receiving life from a Creator God. (2) being called to walk with clients through art therapy, (3) working within a specific community and context to support clients.

Theme Two: Receiving Love

In the Fourth Gospel, God's giving and God's positive judgment are expressed as hospitality toward the other, and this hospitality becomes the model for human attitudes and actions toward others. God's hospitality is all the more striking because it takes place in the face of human inhospitality toward God.

(Lincoln, 2000)

Kottler aptly describes the necessity of love in the therapist-client relationship: "We can speak as euphemistically as we like, using such terms as *positive regard* or *caring*, distancing ourselves through clinical language, but it is indeed a kind of love that we are sending and receiving" (119). *Love* can broadly be described as "a deep affectionate regard for another" (Kottler, 1994, p. 118). Art therapeutic relationships involve real feelings, intuitions, and relational responses between real people. Throughout the study, large portions of the journal entries regarded my inner struggles and doubts around how genuinely and effectively I cared for my clients. These highly introspective struggles were so focused on analyzing the quality and degree of my

authenticity in caring for and supporting clients that at times they became all consuming concerns in my preparatory process and cause for some of my pre-session anxieties. In confronting these struggles through my journal entries, simple questions around authenticity evolved towards a desperate search to understand authenticity at its core: *What is at the essence of authentic care for clients? Where does it come from? How is it nurtured throughout the art therapist's preparatory process?*

With these questions in mind I was shaken by John's introductory verse – explicitly exposing Jesus' underlying motives for serving and washing his disciples feet. “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1). Not only does Jesus' *knowing* initiate his serving but his love for his disciples in the introductory verse frame the context of the chapter and “places all that follows in the perspective of Jesus' love for his own” (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 452). In fact, throughout Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples in chapters 13-17 *love* is repeated thirty-one times (Whitacre, 1999).

In an attempt to understand the intensity of Jesus' authentic love, throughout the theological reflection I situated myself in the scene from varying frames of reference: as an outsider witnessing the foot washing and as one of the disciples having her feet washed. Immediately I was moved by Jesus' unmitigated and individually focused love for his disciples. If Jesus' intentions in washing his disciples' feet were simply to provide them with an example of a good moral lesson on servant hood, he could very well have washed one or two feet and quickly moved on to his teaching. Instead, Jesus washes every one of his disciples' feet - even the feet of the one who would betray him – all 12 individuals with their own personalities and relationships with Jesus.

In one particular meditation on this passage, I noted a poignant resonance with the act of footwashing and the work of art therapy. The foot was a significant reminder of the therapeutic walking alongside and journeying that art therapists engage in with their clients. At times the art therapeutic process involves a walking back to past journeys and places that require much healing in order to support clients to walk forward. In this metaphor of walking with clients, the notion of caring for feet and washing feet was profoundly symbolic. In immersing myself in the scene and witnessing Jesus' manifestation of love through his service, I realized that my reaction to Jesus would not have been much different from Peter's who at first, refused to have his feet washed. Having my feet washed by Jesus meant acknowledging a type of love that upheld humility as a premise. Bultmann (1971) generalizes Peter's refusal of Jesus' footwashing as being reflective of "the basic way men think, the refusal to see the act of salvation in what is lowly, or God in the form of a slave" (468). Thus, accepting Jesus' footwashing is in fact, revolutionary because "it means readiness to accept the disintegration of all the standards which the world uses to judge what is great and divine" (471).

For me it meant being on the receiving end of care, which was an unusual and somewhat uncomfortable position for me as I almost always find myself in a fixed role as "caregiver." Interestingly enough, in the final verse for the theological reflection Jesus himself emphasizes the necessity for *receiving* – a word he repeats to his disciples four times in verse 20. The experience of placing myself in the context of John 13, of having my feet washed by Jesus went even further - it meant receiving Jesus' love as a primary source for my motivation to serve and love clients. What is more, John 13 sheds light on unfathomable aspects of Jesus' love such as his love that enables him to wash the feet of

his betrayer and love that takes on the full appearance of a servant. Love that “seeks out individuals especially among the marginalized” (Burrige, 2007, 346) and as Burrige further describes Jesus’ love, depicted in John 13, it is characterized by service with and in a mixed inclusive community:

John’s careful portrait of how Jesus treated individuals and the mixed, inclusive nature of his community form the perfect backdrop for his ultimately mimetic purpose in writing this biographical narrative that we should follow Jesus’ example of self-sacrificial love within a mixed inclusive community of others who are also responding to his call and reaching out to his world. (p. 346)

Though this may sound simplistic, John 13 reveals a tremendous aspect of Jesus’ love that transcends the ordinary – love that is self-sacrificing. The gospel of John, qualifies Jesus’ love by describing the extent of it: “*he loved them to the end*”. “*To the end*” can be understood to mean Jesus’ love to the end of his life – to his death, “love to the last breath” (Ridderbos, 1997, p. 452). As well, because the Greek word “*to the end*” can refer to “both temporal and intensive meaning” (452), “*to the end*” can also be understood in terms of the intensity of Jesus’ love– “love in its highest intensity” (452). Furthermore, Coloe (2004) describes Jesus’ foot washing as an example that extends beyond service and duty:

“in laying aside his garments and donning the garb of a household servant, Jesus demonstrates the essential relationship within God’s ‘household’. There may be difference in roles and tasks, but there is an equality made possible by love. The example Jesus gives is not of servitude but of the depths of his love (13:1) and of

God's love for us (3:16). The Fourth Gospel does not present Jesus as the "Servant of God," as do the Synoptics; Jesus is rather the Shepherd-King who freely lays down his life for his friends (15:13). To the outside observer, love may appear to be lowly service, as it can also seem to be duty; but the experience of love transcends and transforms service and duty" (p. 415)

Theme Three: Simplified Tasks - Taking off and Tying Around

In this process of attending carefully to our lived experience and looking with new eyes at the categories we use to interpret life, we can be turned upside down and inside out as easily and as often as we are comforted or confirmed in how we are now living.

(Killen & DeBeer, 1994)

In preparation for sessions, I noticed that it was important for me to engage in careful, sufficient planning, researching, reflecting, and consulting with supervisors. In journal entries, I repeatedly describe the importance of developing sufficient and thorough preparatory practices. These entries indicate my satisfaction with developing a well-balanced, wholistic approach to preparation through carefully planned morning routines and ample ideas for each session. Yet at other points in my journal entries I reflect on how my efforts of gathering well-balanced pre-session regimens; a satisfactory collection of information and interventions; a palatable feast of materials, creative art directives; and a concise agenda for therapy goals were not equivalent to good preparation. In fact, excess preparation without essence seemed to distract, complicate and overwhelm me. With these struggles in mind, a critical turning point in the theological reflection unfolded as I realized the simplicity of Jesus' posture, preparation,

and materials for service. The act of Jesus' footwashing is described in two short, to-the-point verses (vs. 4-5) made up of six simple clauses, six actions and four items: Jesus' robe, a towel, water, and a basin (Stevick, 2011, p. 30). "He got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him" (John 13:4-5).

The straightforwardness of these verses reveals the plainness of Jesus' preparation for the task and the minimal use of tools or materials in serving His disciples. The servant task of washing feet is an ordinary and menial task thus the uncomplicated nature of Jesus' preparation and act is in many ways, of no surprise. However, Jesus' actions in preparing by "*taking off*" and "*tying around*" presented two simple but contrasting processes. In order to assess my approach to preparation at its most basic level, I noticed clear distinctions between the tasks involved in planning for sessions from those involved in preparing myself – the person of the art therapist. Though both are inextricably connected with one another, my pre-session anxieties and experience of being overwhelmed necessitated a distinction between the two in order to address and categorize my anxieties. The first two themes of "knowing" and "receiving love" heavily dealt with *preparation-of-self* issues. As the theological reflection on John 13 progressed I realized that this was just the beginning of digging still even deeper into *preparation-of-self* issues. Indeed the entire theological reflection on John 13 was about confronting *preparation-of-self* issues. Journal entries reflect that it seemed easier and more comforting for me to distract my preparatory process with heavy planning and resource gathering activities, however, in proceeding further into the theological reflection, John

13 seemed to delve into introspective processes –engaging me to face my anxieties head on. Through exploring Jesus’ actions before washing his disciples’ feet I was prompted to discern what it was that I had to “take off” and “tie around” in order to serve my clients.

Taking off. In preparation to wash his disciples’ feet after getting up from the table Jesus took off his outer clothing. In some translations “took off”(NRSV) is translated as “laid aside” (KJV, ESV), a word used in several passages that discuss Jesus’ “supreme love to *lay down* one’s life for another” (Stevick, 2011, p. 44). In this sense, Jesus’ laying down of his outer garment points towards something beyond preparation for footwashing – it foreshadows Jesus’ ultimate laying down of himself through his crucifixion. In a poignant meditation on the passage I was deeply struck in realizing that the disrobed sight of Jesus washing his disciples feet would be the same sight the disciples would witness once again, but with bloodshed on a cross. *How and why did Jesus “take off” and serve his disciples? What drove Jesus to become a servant to his disciples? How could he love them to the end – to his death?*

With his death in view, I found that Jesus’ “taking off” was the most complicated and mystifying aspect of Jesus’ example of servitude. It was especially difficult to understand this in relation to serving clients in art therapy. Thus, it was helpful to turn to theological commentaries on John 13 to gain insights into Jesus’ seemingly simple but baffling act. Bauckham (2007) notes that in taking off his outer robe and in washing his disciples feet, Jesus embodied and established a “rejection of social hierarchy and a new form of social relationships based on [his] example” (196). Bauckham further suggests:

Here the socially revolutionary nature of Jesus’ act is evident in the abolition of relationships based on status, which is its consequence among the disciples. If

footwashing is not beneath anyone's dignity, then nothing is. A social group in which each washes the feet of the others can have no social hierarchy, at least of the type symbolized by the limitation of such menial tasks to those of lowest status. (p. 195)

Kostenberger (2013) comments on Jesus' inner freedom that enabled him "to humble himself to a lower position" (134). He emphasizes that Jesus' motives "were not legalism, guilt, or religious obligation. Rather, he was induced by love" (134).

In the context of a professional therapist-client relationship it may seem inappropriate to speak of a "socially revolutionary relationship". The client is after all coming to the therapist with a specific need, seeking help from a trained professional with a specific set of skills. Thus, it should be clarified that a socially revolutionary relationship does not undermine the art therapist's grave responsibility to support clients in the client's best interests within a professional relationship. That said, Jesus' taking off of his outer robe ignited in me a new paradigm for serving clients, which involved a complete overturn of the art therapist's expert-status and upheld a relationship of hospitality. Jesus' "taking off" and "laying down of his life" can not be confused or equated to mean that the art therapist's preparatory process is a salvific act for the client. Rather, the experience of understanding and actualizing Jesus' example of "taking off" came not through enacting heroic deeds or representing meek postures of service but through confronting my own pride, inferiorities, self-protective habits that prevented me from being fully present with each client. In fact, "taking off" involved wrestling through the heuristic study and being attentive to the textures and nuances of the theological reflection that brushed against my weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and fears – many of which

overcrowded my inner space and hindered me from making space for clients. Reflecting on the implications of Jesus' footwashing, Brueggeman (1982) suggests that the footwashing involves a process of confronting such dimensions, "to make contact with the repulsive, abhorrent dimension of our humanity, to make contact with dimensions of our humanity that need personal caring attention" (p. 136). This involved simple shifts within my perspective towards myself and towards each client and session – all requiring some form of letting go and releasing.

Through this process of examining the distractions that overcrowded my inner space, I was convinced that my best efforts to gather more "tricks-in-the-bag" in terms of gathering creative and useful intervention methods for sessions became a security tactic to relieve my worst fears of leaving clients with a boring and unsatisfactory session. Thus, the first process of *taking off* involved acknowledging and letting go of my default mode of scurrying and bustling in the face of fear. Second, in examining my fears I was challenged to re-examine underlying goals for each client– *was it to entertain and provide an experience for clients to enjoy or was it to support clients towards change and healing?* Wrestling through these questions involved a process of vigilantly detecting, discerning, and letting go of biases and preconceived opinions in relation to a client, their circumstances, and their therapeutic process. This also meant letting go of any anticipated outcomes for a session without minimizing the importance of identifying and planning therapeutic objectives, goals, interventions, and art directives. In fact, it was essential for me to engage in preliminary preparations by planning for interventions and art directives for each client. However, in the process of "taking off" all of these plans were acknowledged and then released. In doing so any unrealized grip that I had had on

achieving particular outcomes was released. As a result, as sessions unfolded with clients, I found that “taking off” allowed me to readily adjust and move with what was unfolding for the client at the given moment.

Tying around. After taking off his outer robe, Jesus ties a towel around his waist, fully donning the attire of a servant. The Greek word for *tying* can be understood as “*putting on*” or “*girding*” (Kostenberger, 2004; Ridderbos, 1997). As already mentioned, the plainness of what Jesus needs and uses to prepare for the foot washing convinced me to identify and hold claim to the essence of what I was called to be and do through art therapy. Journal entries reflect the process of refining and simplifying my understanding of what my calling was in serving clients in light of Jesus’ example. This process guided me to identify that *hospitality* was at the heart of my calling. Expounding on the inner freedom that Jesus embodied, Lincoln (2013) describes Jesus’ “memorable act of hospitality” (448) through the washing of His disciples’ feet as part of Jesus’ mutual indwelling with his disciples. He further suggests this hospitality as an act of

“welcoming the other into himself. This hospitality makes space for the other within oneself without entailing the dissolution of the self. Jesus identity is dynamic, capable of readjusting in order to make room for others within himself. His act becomes the paradigm for the outworking of justice among humans” (449).

Within the same breath of “taking off” and letting go of biases and preconceived opinions about a client or session, naming each client in my preparatory prayer with gratitude helped to foster my calling to hospitality. The naming of clients unfolded as a palpable

experience in the preparatory prayer, which involved imagining each client entering the art therapy session room and simulating a welcome with a true sense of joy and gratitude.

Furthermore in the process of *tying around* and equipping I implemented a particular application to my preparatory prayer based on Moon's (2002) approach to "responding to clients through the poetry of their lives" (110). Moon emphasizes the art therapist's unique contribution to the helping profession through their use of aesthetic sensibilities and aesthetic ways of seeing and knowing clients. This involves listening, understanding, attuning and responding to clients' stories, behaviors, and images with "artists' eyes and ears and hearts, attempting to hear the core of poetic truth revealed" (112). In simulating a welcome for each client, within my preparatory prayers, I attempted to focus on a distilled poetic truth response for each client and session, which typically captured a phrase, image, expressive movement, or creative material for a therapeutic process. These are not based on general impressions or convoluted ideals for a client or session but as Moon emphasizes, these are based on careful observations of client's expressions, images, behaviors and narratives. Moon (2002) qualifies that because these poetic truths are not irrefutable truths, it allows the art therapist to "remain grounded in wondering, doubting and questioning" (112). Focusing on a distilled poetic truth response for my clients within my preparatory prayer allowed me to experience a confirmative focus for each session and at the same time a humble submission to whatever might unfold in each session.

Conclusion of the Themes Through Responsive Collages

Grounding is a common concept in general psychotherapy “which reflects a sense of inner steadiness and centeredness” (Geller & Greenberg, 2012, p. 110) through rooting oneself in something. In contrast, being ungrounded relates to “feeling disconnected, having scattered attention and likely a sense of worry or anxiety” (213). To be uncentered is likened to being “off balance and easily swayed emotionally and physically” (213). Both descriptions perfectly describe my initial experiences of preparing for art therapy sessions, which were captured in the introductory narrative of feeling like a fearful slug (Figure 2) and a buzzing bee (Figure 3). In contrast, the experience of preparing for art therapy sessions in light of a theological reflection on Jesus’ footwashing could be summed up as a thoroughly grounding experience. Inner steadiness was experienced through confirming particular “knowings” regarding an expansive sense of time and my identity and purpose through art therapy. The challenges I had experienced in crawling out of my shell to enter into my client’s world no longer felt like taking such a giant leap out. Rather each aspect of the preparatory prayer provided gradual and steady steps necessary to open up interior spaces in order to be present with each client and session.

Figure 4 emerged as a response to the secure yet gentle experiences of grounding that I experienced throughout the research. The bare-footed figures in the center were undoubtedly inspired by John 13, however, the collage unfolded in the midst of immersing myself both in the study of preparation through this research and in the actual lived experience of preparing for major life transitions in my personal life. The creation of this collage expanded the experiences of being grounded into palpable moments and places where I could distinctly imagine myself carefully walking bare-footed in the

sacred and living context of life, that is, in the context of my own life and in the lives of clients and fellow companions.

In the early stages of the research, I came across a photo (Figure 5) of a girl standing in the rain with her head bowed, her eyes nearly closed, and her hands lifted up. Something about the girl's quiet commitment to simply focus on the experience and sensations of the raindrops falling across her small fingertips spoke to me about the significance of *releasing* and *surrendering* to the experience of each moment within and beyond my own control. At the time I could not fully understand how this image would relate to my research, however, I sensed a need to embellish this photo - perhaps as an attempt to somehow commit my focus to the experience of *releasing* and *surrendering*. As a result the theological reflection and the formation of the prayers, indeed, became full experiences of the sort of *releasing* that Figure 5 had evoked in me.

Through imaginative mediations on the scene in John 13, I received and rooted myself in Jesus' love demonstrated through the foot washing and sought to respond to Jesus' calling to serve in the same manner by examining what his actions of "taking off" and "tying around" meant in application to my calling as an art therapist. Through engaging in the preparatory prayers based on John 13, indeed the "taking off" and "tying around" had much to do with releasing many of the distractions and buzzings that were overwhelming me in my initial pre-session preparations. Through carefully identifying what I needed to release, my pre-session anxieties naturally subsided. This then, guided me towards a quiet grounding within my preparatory prayer to welcome clients into each session. While there will likely always be some form of buzzing in the background of each session, taking a moment within my preparatory prayer to identify, acknowledge,

and release the *buzzing* helped me to establish the session as time set apart wholly devoted to the client and their journey.

Section III: Creative Synthesis

A Preparatory Prayer for The Art Therapist (*Based on John 13: 1-20*)

Theme I

Knowing Time, Identity, & Purpose

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of all life

Sovereign God,

Time is in Your hands

This time, *this* season, *this* session is Yours

Her time, his time, our time together is in Your expansive time

In awe I approach Your time

Orchestrated to perfection

Acknowledging what I do not know and trusting that You know

Slowing, quieting, the rushing, the buzzing

Uncoiling, and releasing, haphazard fears,

Wild imaginations of worst-case scenarios

Letting go of trying

to fit his time, her time, Your expansive time into my time.

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of my life

I am because You are

the Great Giver of life

You breathe life in me today, to walk with _____ (*client*)

within the community of fellow advocates at _____ (*context and community of art therapy session site*)

Barefooted and walking together with _____ (*client*) towards hope



Figure 4 "Grounded"

Theme II

Receiving Love

Servant-Christ, disrobed, girding a towel around your waist

And kneeling

You washed 12 times - 12 different feet

Loving each one to the end.

Loving to the highest intensity.

Loving to your death, to the Cross.

*“RECEIVE THE ONE. RECEIVE ME. RECEIVE ME. RECEIVE THE ONE WHO SENT
ME”*

Your status-defying hospitality

Your welcoming, washing hands

Hands to be pierced.

Hands that were pierced.

Still I refuse, “Lord, you will never wash my feet!”

“UNLESS I WASH YOU, YOU HAVE NO SHARE WITH ME”

*“RECEIVE THE ONE. RECEIVE ME. RECEIVE ME. RECEIVE THE ONE WHO SENT
ME”*

Servant-Christ, Holy Lamb I receive you

“DO AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU. WASH ONE ANOTHER’S FEET”

Theme III

Simplified Tasks: Taking Off and Tying Around



Figure 5 “Releasing”

Holy Lamb, Holy Master

Show me what I must take off today in order to be present with _____ (*client*)

**moment of silence to be receptive*

I will take off _____ (name distractions and buzzing that emerge)

Show me what I must release to You today in order to serve and walk with _____

(*client*)

**moment of silence to discern*

I will release _____ (name anything that emerges)

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of _____'s (*client*) life

Thank-you for the life You give _____ (*client*)

**mental image of welcoming of client with joy*

Be the Ground for _____ 's (*client*) process today

** mental image of poetic truth response to client*

Be the Ground on which we walk together within Your time.

In the name of Jesus who loves _____ (*client*) to the end.

Chapter 5

Summary and Validation of the Study

Summary

This heuristic study examined the impact that a theological reflection on Jesus' foot washing found in John 13: 1-20 had on my preparations for facilitating art therapy sessions. Results from a self-inventory scale conducted over a period of eight weeks revealed an overall positive increase in my experiences of preparations based on self-selected areas that were identified as being important for preparation. Shifts were especially evident in the increase of awareness of biopsychosocial-spiritual energy levels before sessions began, as well as an increase in being more cognizant of the art therapy context and the clients. The movements of the overall ratings for the scale for each week reflected that positive increases in my experience of preparation for art therapy sessions in light of a theological reflection were not linear but included fluctuations. The scale also identified a variety of factors that influenced my experience of preparation such as: the pace of my morning routine prior to the session; unresolved dreams; invigorating dialogues during the week; insights gleaned through supervision; and experiences of engaging in personal creative processes.

In the initial engagement phase I explored the inner and outer dimensions of my struggle in preparing for art therapy sessions, which were the entry point experiences for the theological reflection on John 13. Through this process, the following two metaphors depicted these struggles: (1) a slug emerging from its shell (Figure 2) depicted my

anxieties and difficulties in crawling out of my world and into my client's world and (2) the bustling and buzzing movements of a bee (Figure 3) captured the incessant pre-session activity and self-talk noise that overwhelmed me. These metaphors helped to identify what was at the heart of the matter in my struggle around art therapy session preparation steering the direction of the heuristic investigation to focus on the interior spaces where all the noise and activity was taking place.

Following the heuristic phase of immersion I gathered and analyzed journal entries on my explorations, reflections, insights and illuminations during the theological reflection on John 13. Through the heuristic phases of incubation and illumination I identified three central themes based on three observations of Jesus in his preparation to wash his disciples' feet. The first theme regarded Jesus' knowing of the hour within God's time and plan, which inspired an expansive awareness of time. This awareness shifted my approach to art therapy sessions as I began to perceive each hour of each session unfolding within Divine time. Jesus' knowing of his identity and purpose – where he came from and where he was going prompted me to affirm my identity and purpose in direct relation to God and the calling to serve clients through art therapy. In exploring both types of knowing – an awareness of expansive time and a knowing of my identity and purpose – I experienced a slowing down in my preparatory process. The second theme regarded Jesus' love as the central motivation for his humble act of service. In trying to understand this love I situated myself in the scene, which brought me into a real encounter with Jesus' love and challenged me in my inability to receive his love. The third theme examined the simplified tasks of preparation that Jesus engaged in. The first task involved taking off his outer robe in preparation to wash his disciples' feet, which

compelled me to examine what I needed to take off in order to serve my clients. What emerged through this process was a call to release any expert-status identification, biases and my own anticipated outcomes for the session. In the second simplified task that Jesus engaged in, he tied a towel around his waist. The minimal equipment, material, and tools that Jesus used to serve his disciples encouraged me to examine all my elaborate preparatory efforts to pinpoint the *one thing* that what was at the heart of my calling to serve clients through art therapy. Recognizing *hospitality* as being central to my calling grounded my preparations. Identifying which tools and materials were essential for each client was a process of incorporating Moon's (2002) preparatory approaches using distilled *poetic truth* responses for each client within my preparatory prayer.

In the movement from insight to action I engaged in preparatory prayers before sessions began. However, the unfolding of these prayers needs to be clarified. The reality was that within the restricted timeframe before a session began many practical issues had to be dealt with such as the frustration of finding a parking spot on-site or securing a quiet and private space. Thus a deep and thorough reflection on every element of John 13 did not unfold in the timeframe right before a session began. Rather, elements of the theological reflection and prayers were like seeds that grew throughout the week, providing a ground for opening up interior spaces for the prayers to surface even while preparing the practical details and materials for the sessions. As well, although I had anticipated to engage in a "complete" prayer that captured key insights from John 13 before sessions began the insights from John 13 were each individually so rich with meaning that they required their own space and time to be understood and articulated into prayers. In this way, a complete definitive prayer of the entire passage did not develop at

once. Rather the prayers unfolded piece by piece based on the theme that I was engaged in from week to week. As a result the creative synthesis phase became a process of gathering the prayers and carefully assembling them together in light of the core themes to form one comprehensive prayer.

Validation of the Heuristic Process

The final heuristic phase of validation determines whether “the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one’s own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience.

(Moustakas, 1990)

The experience of this investigation involved an asynchronous flow of questions, curiosities, and answers each unfolding in their own unexpected ways, places, and rhythms. What was not reflected thoroughly in the explication of the theological reflection was the challenge of pacing these throughout the investigation. In depicting the development of servitude in my formation as an art therapist it often seemed easier to jump to definitive conclusions of what the “ideal” preparation and formation process would look, sound, and feel like. An honest pacing of my ideals with the reality of the insights and actions that were unfolding – with neither getting ahead of the other - was extremely challenging but consistently necessary throughout the investigation.

Indeed the depictions of my experience of art therapy preparation in conversation with Jesus’ example of servitude found in John 13 derived from a “rigorous, exhaustive self-searching” (32). At times the self-searching generated more questions than answers – a feature reflective throughout the explication of the themes. Many of the questions in

the explication began with an extensive series of preliminary questions that were refined many times over to grasp the meaning of my struggle within my search. Bearing these questions rather than demanding an immediate answer, living with them and weeding through a vast field of thoughts and questions to discern the essence of the search was not easy. However, neither the heuristic process nor the theological reflection promised easy answers. “Searching for meaning through theological reflection is not easy, because it does not yield the security of absolute answers” (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 3).

Initially, I anticipated that a comprehensive preparatory prayer based on a theological reflection of John 13 would unfold in one uniform process. I had planned to work with a complete prayer throughout the theological reflection that would result in a vivid comparison between pre-theological reflection and post-theological reflection processes. However, the emergence and development of each theme and each phrase of the prayer required time not only to be articulated into words but time to be fully discovered and actualized through encountering and embodying each aspect of Jesus’ example from John 13. As a result, the prayers did not form in one sitting. Rather they came piece by piece. The themes unfolded slowly and required much integrity; the process was indeed not what I had anticipated. Accordingly, as Killen & DeBeer (1994) explain, the gradual and somewhat unpredictable pace is an inevitable part of the theological reflection to reach deeper places of knowing and maturation:

Theological reflection is a process that works on us at a variety of levels. Often insights and shifts in sensibilities happen deep within, below our immediate consciousness. Expecting a ‘quick fix’ or ‘immediate solution’ to whatever

situation we bring to reflection derails the reflective process and cuts us off from the deeper wisdom and growth that it offers (80).

As I reflect on the creative synthesis – a complete version of the preparatory prayer – and engage in the prayer in a variety of contexts beyond art therapy preparation, I am stunned by its relevance. The insights that unfolded throughout the study pertaining to the formation of the art therapist were inextricably linked with the formation of the whole self. Thus, the preparatory prayer was not only a depiction of art therapist preparation but preparation of the whole self in contexts and encounters wherever, whenever, and whomever I was called to serve. The themes in their sequence – knowing, receiving love, taking off, and tying around – provide a broad framework for preparing the person of service in direct response to God’s love embodied and demonstrated through Jesus in John 13. Each element of this framework reveals timeless truths of who Jesus is, what he does, how he does it, and what he calls his followers to embody.

Critical Influences

Neither the movement toward insight nor theological reflection is a process we move through only once and then are finished. Reflection proceeds more like a directional spiral, a gyre, as in a dance, which allows backward and forward movement within a larger trajectory.

(Killen & DeBeer, 1994)

As part of the validation phase for this heuristic study in determining how comprehensively the essence of art therapy preparation in light of John 13 was depicted through the explication I was convinced that looming in the backdrop of this study were

several critical effects that could not be left unmentioned. Although I had identified the immediate and prominent buzzing of my anxieties as an art therapist-in-training and the release of these anxieties, imminent in the background was more buzzing – the buzzing of a colony of preparations that were underway. These related to major preparations for personal life transitions that unfolded throughout the study, which included marriage; relocation to a different country; and a complete change in roles and identity in a new community. Inevitably preparation for these life transitions impacted the way I approached the theological reflection on art therapist preparation and the theological reflection in turn impacted my preparations for these life transitions. Although it is impossible to separate these transitions and discuss them as independent events the preparations involved in the transition of relocating to a different country particularly impacted my perspective on preparation and broadened it to a new level.

In reviewing this heuristic study through the lens of my relocation experience three particular reflections unfolded: (1) my cultural heritage impacts my approach to preparation (2) art therapy preparation involves honest post-session reflections that inform pre-session preparations (3) a reflection-preparation loop unfolds within a set time yet the process has no end. Strangely enough all three reflections brought me back to the early phases of this thesis as each intersected in one way or another with Killen & DeBeer's (1994) approach to why and how to engage in theological reflection. These intersections confirmed for me the reasons why I chose to engage in a theological reflection to develop my understanding and practice of art therapist preparation.

(1) My cultural heritage impacts my approach to preparation.

As described in the thesis introduction the emphasis on sufficient “preparation” was a value engrained in my upbringing. In the midst of this research after permanently relocating to Japan I was stunned with a palpable awareness of the theme of preparation embedded in my Japanese heritage. Though there was a vague sense that my unrelenting obsession and curiosity for “proper” preparation was culturally influenced I did not realize the extent of it. In a culture marked by seasons unfolding in accordance to concise rhythms and expressions it seemed that even the simplest of tasks were approached with great care, intentionality, and preparation. In recognizing how my Japanese heritage had impacted my approach to preparation I became startlingly aware of how a variety of intricate factors influence the preparation and formation of the art therapist-in-training. Without a reflective process many of these would go unnoticed. In this way theological reflection offers consistent opportunities for the art therapist within and beyond the context of practice to engage in reflective practices that “hold our heritage, our culture, our community, and our own experience as companions in a conversation, a conversation where the questions and the exchange of discourse reveal new insights (Killen & DeBeer, 1994, p. 3).

(2) Art therapy preparation involves honest post-session reflections that inform pre-session preparations.

Not only did the theological reflection themes in chapter 4, hint at the relevance of engaging in a reflective process with the richness of their insights but they also revealed

how significant the process of reflection was as a consistent habit for art therapy practice. This invited me to further investigate the total loop between reflection and preparation, between post-session preparation and pre-session preparation. After moving to Japan, I encountered many faulty cycles in my reflections that involved unhealthy approaches to reflective practice. In my struggle to accept the changes of the transition I repeatedly blamed myself for what I deemed to be insufficient preparation for my relocation process. In reflecting on why I considered my preparations to be insufficient I realized that I was trying to subdue the challenges related to my experience of relocation by blaming something – anything. In doing so I over-generalized the transition experience and used “insufficient preparation” as an excuse for not entering into an honest reflection.

An honest reflection requires a process of accepting the inevitable changes involved in my relocation – a process that involves time, patience, and courage. Killen & DeBeer (1994) highlight honesty as an essential requirement for engaging in theological reflection and describe the challenges that come with it. “The more deeply we plumb the situation again, the more vulnerable we become because our explorations exposes our cherished beliefs and interpretive frameworks to critique and revision” (76). I was compelled to reflect on my reflective practices in the context of art therapy. I realized that false associations between my pre-session preparations, the outcome of a session, and my post-session reflections led to erroneous beliefs that perfect preparation amounted to perfect sessions. Exaggerated self-criticism of what I sensed to be a negative outcome or a “mistake” on my part during a session was another habitual pattern that led to misinterpretations. During my post-session reflections I often ruminated over decisively negative impressions about certain aspects of a session. However, after

viewing videotapes of these sessions or discussing my concerns with my supervisor I noticed that these were never as bad as I had made them out to be. My initial impressions of a session differed after a thorough reflective process and I realized the significance of processing general impressions through intentional reflections rather than leaving post-session impressions unprocessed. Killen & DeBeer (1994) describe the necessity to “open our interpretative framework to revision so that all our most dearly held beliefs, biases, convictions, and ways of responding to life may be called into question” (xi). I realized that misinterpreted reflections could perpetuate unhealthy cycles that impact pre-session preparations, leading to such habitual interpretations as associating the quality of my preparation with the outcome of a session.

(3) A reflection-preparation loop unfolds within a set time yet it has no end.

In reviewing this heuristic study I noticed that although the reflection-preparation loop requires intentionality, time and space, it also has no finale. Therefore the creative synthesis – the preparatory prayer – is not fixed but open to new angles, insights, emphasis, wording, and phrases. Killen & DeBeer (1994) suggest that honest reflection “leads us to the Mystery that is the context of our lives” (77). Continuously encountering the Mystery through theological reflection was both an opening up and a framing of the reflective-preparatory process. It involved being open to the non-finale aspect of reflection and preparation. At the same time it involved setting parameters in order to arrive at insights that would lead to action. At times when the non-ending aspect of the reflection-preparation loop was void of clarity and direction the research required much trusting - trusting that the processes of reflection and preparation were not

meaningless but necessary. Furthermore, it involved trusting that an intentional process of art therapy preparation attuned to Jesus' example and calling was necessary for my formation to serve others wholeheartedly. As Killen & DeBeer (1993) explain:

Whatever the contours of our insights, they are never for us alone. Prayer and reflection move us beyond ourselves into compassionate action for others. We reflect and we pray so that we can be open to the transformations that allow us to be more faithfully agents of God's reign in the world. (p. 85)

Additional Musings

Upon returning to the original scriptural text of John 13, I am reminded that the timeless truths of this text continuously offer fresh perspectives that can speak powerfully to my journey. These open up palpable insights that are relevant to the subtle landscapes and seasons of my current journey. Thus, as I now return to the foot washing scene with Jesus and his disciples in a landscape and season entirely different from when I first began the study, I discover and encounter new aspects of Jesus – who he is and what he knows, does, and teaches in John 13 – and I am left with lingering questions and further musings about what these mean in relation to my understanding of art therapist preparation. Since the study unfolded within a set timeline based on predetermined practicum schedules, to a degree, these time restraints dictated how long and far I could engage in the theological reflection. As a result, the themes that emerged through this study primarily focused on verses 1-4 and ended somewhat abruptly before the foot washing. In addition to *knowing*, *receiving love*, *taking off*, and *tying around*, an extension of this heuristic study could explore the meaning around *pouring water* and

washing. Additional elements could be added to the thematic framework with particular interest in verse five with the act of pouring water as a whole other topic on its own with its striking relevance to the context of art therapy. Here I will only briefly mention current reflections I have had on the notion of *pouring water*, partially as a means to demonstrate how timeless yet invigorating the reflection-preparation loop is in conversation with the holy and sacred scriptures of God's Word.

In reflecting on Jesus' act of pouring water into a basin, I was immediately reminded of my own pre-session routine of pouring water into paint containers for clients. Water is as essential an item to prepare for each session, as the paints are themselves. Water washes away old colors to introduce new ones and allows for the mixing and creation of new colors. No matter how uncomfortably messy or heavy a creative process and its contents may be, water can bring transition and closure – washing paintbrushes, workspace, and hands for the next process. Water is used as one of the final processes of a session, preparing the client to safely leave the art therapy context. Upon pondering the different uses of water in art therapy, the image of Jesus' pouring water into a basin emerges with profound insights. With his impending death so near he pours water into a basin and washes dirty feet with hands – hands that would soon be nailed onto a cross.

Musing upon this image of Jesus and anticipating the exhaustive details and implications for what *pouring water* and *washing feet* could mean for me as an art therapist reveal the beginning of yet another invitation. This invitation is God's continuous call for me to explore the multi-faceted layers of art therapist preparation in light of who Jesus is and what he embodies. Although the parameters of this research

bring the study to a closure, in actuality the theological reflection on John 13 continues.

Further explorations on additional aspects of this text in relation to art therapist preparation would undoubtedly enrich this research and provide a fuller, comprehensive understanding of Jesus' foot washing and of the art therapist's preparatory process. What is more, the continuity of the theological reflection exists through the embodiment of the insights and illuminations, represented as themes in this study. Essentially, embodying these themes involves active engagement with the preparatory prayers. Such engagement is not simply a matter of lifting up the prayers as a habit of pre-session preparation but of allowing the prayers to continuously form and transform me. As this research comes to an end, I sense myself launching off with great hope in knowing and trusting that these prayers can continuously be offered up in my preparatory process to serve others both in and beyond the art therapy context. The confidence of this hope rests in knowing that these prayers are lifted up to a living God who hears, responds, and engages in my formation as an art therapist and as a human being.

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Appendix A

Self-Inventory Scale

Section I: Description

1) **Awareness** of biopsychosocio-spiritual energy level: General awareness of biopsychosocio-spiritual state. This does not necessarily mean that energy levels are high in all dimensions; rather that there is an awareness of the level of biopsychosocio-spiritual well being and in the case of low energy levels, is able to indentify potential stressors or causes so that follow-up or necessary self-care needs may be addressed at an appropriate time.

- *Biological energy level* – sense of alertness or lack thereof; awareness of pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, or any other physical symptoms that may be present; sense of fluidity and ease of movement or lack thereof
- *Psychological energy level* – awareness of any stressors or traumatic life events; awareness of mood or emotional state; sense of clarity and alertness in cognitive processing or lack thereof
- *Sociological energy level* – awareness of positive or negative impacts within family, community, cultural circumstances; awareness of social supports and assurance of accessing supports if needed
- *Spiritual energy level* – sense of honoring meaning-of-life-processes; sense of hope and assurance; sense of being in a personal relationship with God

2) **Acknowledging** God’s compassion and presence: Sense of being grounded and centered in the belief of God’s compassion and presence with an openness and desire to serve and operate/ from this belief.

3) **Cognizant** of the context and client: This does not necessarily mean that there is a concrete plan or intervention for the client or for the session; rather having a sense of focused attention and awareness about the context, structure, system of the client’s world, along with an awareness of the art therapist’s personal biases. This awareness also relates to a readiness to understand, to enter into and to engage in the client’s culture, language and experiences.

4) **Readiness** to engage others in creative, expressive processes to the benefit of the client with a commitment to the practice of art therapy, along with a focus on the specific calling to serve through creative expressive processes.

Section II: Self-Inventory Scale Questions

After reading through each of the descriptions above, answer the following questions:

1) On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your awareness of present energy level (biopsychosocio-spiritual)?

- 1 - Unable to distinguish energy level for any one of the four dimensions.
- 2 - Minimal awareness of energy level - only able to distinguish one or two of the four dimensions.
- 3 - General awareness of energy level - able to distinguish energy level in most of the dimensions.
- 4 - Aware of energy level, able to identify energy level in all four dimensions -vague sense of contributing factors.
- 5 - Clearly aware of energy level in all four dimensions and able to identify contributing factors with a sense of the type of follow-up that would be beneficial.

Particulars *(Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating):*

2) On a scale of 1-5 what is your sense of being grounded in God's compassion and presence?

- 1 - Little to no sense of God's compassion and presence- no sense of being grounded and feeling closed off.
- 2 - Minimal sense of God's compassion and presence - minimal sense of being grounded and minimal desire to operate from the belief of God's compassion and presence.
- 3 - General but vague sense of God's compassion and presence and of being grounded in this belief. Openness to operate from the belief of God's compassion and presence.
- 4 - Clear sense of God's compassion and presence and of being grounded in this belief. Openness and desire to operate from this belief.
- 5 - Firm sense of God's compassion and presence. Grounded in this belief and strong desire to operate from this belief.

Particulars *(Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating):*

3) On a scale of 1-5 what is your sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and client you are about to facilitate?

- 1 - No sense of being cognizant.
- 2 - Minimal sense of being cognizant.
- 3 - General sense of being cognizant.
- 4 - Overall, a good sense of being cognizant.
- 5 - Very clear sense of being cognizant of the art therapy context and client and my personal biases.

Particulars *(Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating):*

4) On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your readiness to engage others in creative and expressive processes?

- 1 - Not ready.
- 2 - Slightly ready.
- 3 - Somewhat ready.
- 4 - Ready.
- 5 - Ready and interested in finding entry points to engage others in their creative and expressive process.

Particulars *(Describe particular impacts that may inform your rating):*