How to Handle Face-Saving in the Chinese Church Through Servant-Leadership
— Jiying Song

Leaders unknowingly functioning out of face-saving, the tendency to try to protect one's standing or reputation or to avoid losing some aspect of these, have a negative impact on organizational leadership. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how leaders can mitigate the negative influence of face-saving through servant-leadership in the Chinese church setting.

According to Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) researchers, organizational leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004, p. 56). The strong cultural influence of not losing face presents a unique challenge for organizational leaders. "If leaders are as anxious and reactive as the people they serve, those served will not be served well" (Steinke, 1996, p. 96). The desire to gain face and the fear of losing face will likely permeate leaders' decision making processes without even being noticed.

307

Face is an abstract term, intangible, and hard to define. Goffman (1955) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [or herself] by the line others assume he [or she] has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p. 213). Ho (1976) claims that "face is never a purely individual thing" (p. 882) and interprets face in terms of two interacting parties; "face is the reciprocated compliance, respect, and/or deference that each party expects from, and extends to, the other party" (p. 883). He distinguishes face from "authority, standards of behavior, personality, status, dignity, honor, and prestige" (p. 867). Goffman (1955) names the actions taken by a person to maintain face, to avoid losing face, or to gain face as *facework*. And Ho (1976) regards the desire to take facework as "a powerful social motive" (p. 883). Hofstede (2001) introduced the term "face" in his Cultural Dimensions Theory and understands the definition of face from the point of view of the social environment instead of the individual. From the above discussion we can see that face is a socially constructed phenomenon and plays a strong motivational role in organizational leadership (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Ho, 1976).

In this paper, I will discuss the challenge of face-saving in Chinese churches and the characteristics of servant-leadership; then I will use one of my experiences to illustrate how to handle face-saving through awareness and healing from a servant-leadership model. This paper concludes that with the will to love and the will to meaning, leaders' awareness and

healing will help them handle face-saving well and alleviate face-saving's negative impact on leadership.

THE CHALLENGE OF FACE-SAVING IN CHINESE CHURCHES

From my experience of serving in house churches and my study of Chinese church history, I find that the strong cultural influence of not losing face presents a unique challenge for Chinese pastors with regard to healthy spiritual formation and leadership (Friedman, 2007; Scazzero & Bird, 2003; VanVonderen, 1989). The Church in China is wobbling because the emotional aspects of faith are left unaddressed and spiritual formation training is missing. Without knowledge of self, pastors and leaders cannot effectively handle their own emotions. Neither do they function well in church leadership and pastoral care roles since there is a lack of understanding of the implications of the fear of losing face. This situation is a barrier to spiritual formation which is an important part of church leadership.

In Chinese culture, *face* is a concept developed in Confucianism as "the most delicate standard by which Chinese social intercourse is regulated" (Lin, 1935, p. 200). In order to keep social interactions going smoothly, people are required "to convey minimally acceptable public images of themselves and likewise to assist other people in maintaining their social identities as well" (Zhang, Cao, & Grigoriou, 2011, p. 130). Interestingly, in my involvement in ministry to Chinese international students and visiting scholars on the George Fox

University campus for four years, I have encountered this cultural phenomenon in America as well. The struggle of keeping face is especially prominent when these persons experience culture shock.

However, face is not a unique phenomenon to Chinese culture, but is found in other cultures as well. According to Lohse's (1968) study, the Greek word *προσωπον* appears first in Homer and denotes the "face" or "countenance" of man. *Προσωπον* sometimes is used for "form" or "figure" since the face presents the whole appearance of a figure. In the Hellenistic period, *προσωπον* with the sense of "person" indicates a person's position in human society. According to Epictetus, "it is every [person's] business to play well in life the role [*προσωπον*] assigned specifically to him [or her]" (Lohse, 1968, p. 770). Thus face becomes a public self. *Προσωπον* is closely related to the Latin word *persona*, which means "mask," "role," "person," and "prominent personage." Probably under the influence of *persona*, *προσωπον* took on the sense of representing a person legally in the 6th century (Lohse, 1968). Today, for instance, Lee (2011) uses "the face of the other" to represent our neighbor, the person other than ourselves.

Face does not stand by itself, but is built upon other cultural components: hierarchy, humility, and harmony (Kim, Cohen, & Au, 2010). The stability of the hierarchy is valued and individuals should show humility and preserve harmony in their relationships (Miron-Spektor, Paletz, & Lin, 2015). They tend to avoid conflicts and code their words when they speak;

310

additionally, some unspoken rules govern this system which is typically shame-based (VanVonderen, 1989).

In my M.Div. thesis, I researched how Chinese Christians have gone through a very dramatic shift. After the establishment of Western Christianity in China and the emergence of Chinese Christianity, Chinese Christians suddenly faced severe persecution from 1949 to 1979. The Chinese Economic Reform in 1980 opened the door for the reconstruction of Chinese Christianity and contributed to its revival (Song, 2016). However, many Christians who survived the persecution are living with the struggle of shame and loss of face because they compromised their faith in some way in order to survive (Lian, 2010; Whyte, 1988; Ying, 2006). Today in China the Church is growing rapidly, yet the Church is wobbling because there is inadequate spiritual formation to help with the emotional aspects of faith.

Spiritual formation training is largely missing in house churches in China. This work is beyond many pastors' ability because they do not have formal training and hardly see their own true self behind the curtain of face. While I was serving in a house church in China, the church grew from seven people to more than one hundred. During this time, the ideas of emotion, shame, inner being, and spiritual formation were hardly mentioned in the church teaching. Pastors and teachers present truths from the Bible and encourage the believers to live a Christ-like life, but the formation of the inner person in order to live this kind of life has been missing. Emphasis on knowledge of self is missing. Even though some pastors are spiritually

mature, they remain underdeveloped in the formation of the inner person (Friedman, 2007; Scazzero & Bird, 2003; VanVonderen, 1989). As church leaders, without knowledge of self, they are unlikely to handle their own or other members' problems well.

First, the underdevelopment leads some pastors to work extremely hard while repressing their inner struggles. Ignoring their own emotions and past, they are more likely to experience burnout. They rarely realize the effort required to look beneath the surface of their own emotions and seldom know how to break the power of the past and bring healing to the present (Scazzero & Bird, 2003). Within a face culture, they become trapped in the cycle of working harder in order to measure up and gain honor (VanVonderen, 1989).

Second, without knowing self, a pastor cannot handle leadership well. Unaware of their own brokenness (Scazzero & Bird, 2003), pastors and church leaders easily fall into the power struggle trap in order to gain face or avoid losing face. Lacking both strong self-confidence and humility, they more likely use the will to power to attempt to fix people or stay in charge (Friedman, 2007). A house church in China with more than one thousand members split several years ago. The main reason was that the pastor was retiring and he promoted four leaders to lead the church. Several factors were at play; however, without a clear organizational structure and a good model of cooperative leadership, these four pastors were involved in a game of gaining face. It finally led to the split of the church, and people were hurt. One of the four pastors left

with about fifty people. They felt they were rejected by the church, by the community, and further, by God. Later, this pastor started a new house church, and people came back to God again.

Third, without knowing self, pastors can neither deliver good pastoral care nor heal others, or even themselves. If a pastor has not entered his or her own world, how can he or she enter the world of others (Scazzero & Bird, 2003)? If they cannot build wholeness in themselves, how can they lead others and their community to wholeness (Greenleaf, 1977/2002)? Pastors also need to have strong self-differentiation in order to keep separate while remaining connected to their flock. They must manage their own reactivity without becoming lost in the anxious process (Friedman, 2007). Meanwhile, with the fear of losing face, the people in need tend not to look for help or not to communicate their needs, because asking for help means confessing their own inability which leads to shame (VanVonderen, 1989). A closed attitude leaves many people lost in their own struggles without getting help.

Face-saving is one of my own leadership weaknesses as well. My husband told me that I tend to be defensive and want to save face sometimes. I refused to admit this. One day, I bought a computer and told him about it later. He said to me that this computer was not a good brand and I should return it and get another one. I was so upset and questioned him about knowing nothing about my situation since he lives on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. I hung up Skype and did not want to

talk with him. Twenty days later, this computer had a problem, and I had to return it with a 25% restocking fee. Later, I had to admit that I was being defensive and did not want to lose face when he questioned my decision. I want to be correct all the time; this is another of my leadership weaknesses. These two weaknesses prevented me from making the right decision. My husband had been working with all kinds of computer factories for 18 years and, of course, he knew which brand was of good quality. It was so obvious, but I refused to listen to him because I did not want to be corrected and lose face.

Face culture is like an ocean in which fish are swimming without knowing its existence. According to Wittgenstein, we communicate from within a *language game* according to its *grammars* (rules) which are "like banks of rivers channeling communications via certain familiar ways of relating and understanding" (Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 158). For leaders, first we have to gain awareness of what grammars we are playing with and how we can stay above them in order to understand them better (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Lock & Strong, 2010). Second, I would argue that the fear of losing face is out of our own brokenness and will lead to the hurt of others (Friedman, 2007; Scazzero & Bird, 2003; VanVonderen, 1989). We have to examine our own fear and build up our wholeness in order to bring healing to ourselves and to the people we lead. Awareness and healing are two significant characteristics of Greenleaf's servant-leadership, to which I will turn in the next section.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) was a Quaker thinker and servant-leader. Retired from AT&T, he devoted his life to leadership studies. Drawing from his experiential leadership practice and deep Quaker spirituality, he coined the term servant-leadership and defined it as:

> The servant-leader *is* servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 27, italics in original)

I was once a leader in an IT company for twelve years. I worked really hard and strove to lead to help others, but I have to admit that I was leader-first because I was power driven with the desire for success and material possessions. I established my leadership and then wanted to serve. I did not start my path with the natural feeling to serve first. For understanding the servant-leader, let us take a look at Greenleaf's (1977/2002) best test:

> Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is

the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (p. 27, italics in original)

This strikes me; I have to look back carefully. When I was a leader of forty people, some of them became healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous. But probably none of them became or likely would become servants. More importantly, the least privileged in my department probably were not benefited if not further deprived. I am aware that even this evaluation is questionable since the power of evaluation is not in me, but in the people I led. Although Greenleaf and Spears emphasize the test about whether the least privileged in society are deprived (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Spears, 2004, 2010), many servant-leadership scholars omit this part from their literature reviews (e.g., Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Doraiswamy, 2012; Hamilton, 2005; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). When we look at Greenleaf's test for wisdom, we have to have the awareness of not depriving the least privileged by further ignoring them.

Based on Greenleaf's writings, Spears has identified ten characteristics of a servant-leader. I will bring in my understanding of Chinese culture to present these ten characteristics.

Listening

In Chinese culture, hierarchy is highly valued and people usually do not challenge their own leaders. According to traditional leadership paradigms, leaders are persuaders and

316

decision-makers. Leaders have to talk and others have to listen. Although communication is an important skill for servant-leaders, "intense and sustained listening" (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 235) is more important because "true listening builds strength in other people" (p. 31) and it will help people find that "wholeness . . . is only achieved by serving" (p. 235). Servant-leaders listen to not only what is being said and unsaid, but also to one's own inner voice (Spears, 2010). They ask often, "Are we really listening?"

Empathy

While having empathy for their people, many Chinese leaders also see pointing out their members' mistakes as one way to help them grow. Improvement will be better achieved if it is not done at the price of acceptance. Empathy interwoven with acceptance is the opposite of rejection (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). There are no perfect people for us to lead, and leaders are far from being perfect themselves. Servant-leaders lead wisely and distinguish people from their performance. "People grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are" (p. 35). Servant-leaders have empathy for their people and a tolerance of imperfection, including their own.

Healing

Spears (2010) proclaims "One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the potential for healing one's self and one's relationship to others" (p. 27). At first glance, it seems that healing has nothing to do with leadership, especially in the

organizations with making profit as their sole goal. This is also challenging for Chinese leaders because usually they are not supposed to bring emotions into their work. But if we see leadership as happening among people within socially constructed settings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), we will realize that the background of leadership is broken people coming together and searching for wholeness, for oneness, for rightness (Greenleaf, 1998). Servant-leaders see the impediment in organizations as "illness," and they enter the relationship to heal rather than to change or correct (Greenleaf, 1996, p. 92). As healers, they lead toward the healing of themselves and others because all humans share the search for wholeness (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Awareness

Both awareness of the situation and self-awareness strengthen servant-leaders (Spears, 2010). The losses we sustain and the errors we have inherited from our culture, our own experience, and our learning block our conscious access to our awareness (Friedman, 2007; Scazzero & Bird, 2003; Greenleaf, 1977/2002). Some Chinese leaders tend to hold their door of perception tightly so that they can make the "right" decision without being moved. Servant-leaders build up their tolerance for awareness and "take the risks of being moved" (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 329). They are brave enough to widen their awareness so that they can make more intense and meaningful contact with their situation (Greenleaf, 1998).

Persuasion

In a hierarchical culture, leaders often wield power through position in order to enforce their decisions. However, in ancient China, Confucius (2014) said, "A ruler who has rectified himself [or herself] never gives orders, and all goes well. A ruler who has not rectified himself [or herself] gives orders, and the people never follow them" (p. 101). "Rectified" in this context means leading by example. Servant-leaders persuade through words and deeds rather than by positional authority. At the age of the will to power, servant-leaders surrender their positional authority and seek to persuade people by role-modeling and "gentle non-judgmental argument" (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 43).

Conceptualization

Conceptual thinking is based on day-to-day realities, yet goes far beyond them. For Chinese leaders, the "mindless premium" on practices of Western management can be a sign of lack of conceptualization (Chen, 2008, p. 338). Leaders should not be consumed by the needs of short-term operational goals, but strive to provide the visionary and suitable concept for an organization (Spears, 2010). Conceptualization requires servant-leaders' love for the people, clear vision for the future, long-term dedication, and well communicated faith in the worth of people (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Foresight

"If things far away don't concern you, you'll soon mourn things close at hand" (Confucius, 2014, p. 121). Foresight

requires a leader to live at two levels of consciousness, the real world and the detached one (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). The lack of foresight in the past may result in an unethical action in the present (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). Foresight enables servant-leaders to understand the lessons from the past, see and ride above the events in the present, and foresee the consequence of a decision for the indefinite future (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Spears, 2010). Foresight has been recognized as the most important virtue for leaders since ancient China. Chinese historian Sima (1971) wrote approximately 145 B.C. to 86 B.C., "An enlightened [person] sees the end of things while they are still in bud, and a wise [person] knows how to avoid danger before it has taken shape" (p. 294).

Stewardship

The understanding of stewardship disarms the will to misappropriate power because stewardship reminds leaders that we are here to serve others instead of seizing power to pursue our own benefits. Servant-leaders, like stewards, assume "first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others" (Spears, 2010, p. 29). Hsü (1932/2005) regards political stewardship as an integral part of Confucianism. In ancient China, when Emperor Yao chose Shun to sit on the throne, he reminded Shun that Shun was the steward of Heaven (Hsü, 1932/2005).

Commitment to the Growth of People

Emperor Yao said to Shun that "If you let this land of the four seas fall into poverty and desperation, the gift of Heaven is

lost forever" (Confucius, 2014, p. 151). This is the admonition regarding the commitment to the benefit of people. However, today under the influence of capitalism, leaders tend to use all resources to maximize organizational benefit, if not their own. People have been treated as one of the resources. On the contrary, servant-leaders commit to the growth of each individual within the organization. They help individuals to develop their personal and professional skills, give them opportunities to practice their learning, invite them in decision-making, and assist laid-off employees (Spears, 2010).

Building Community

Confucianism emphasizes community and has defined the societal realm for Chinese people through the millennia. One of the disciples of Confucius said, "The most precious fruit of Ritual is harmony" (Confucius, 2014, p. 22). The pursuit of harmony within the community or between communities nurtures the culture of face. However, according to Greenleaf (1977/2002), building community requires servant-leaders demonstrating their own "unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group" (p. 53). Community is a real home of love, a healing shelter, a place where trust and respect can be found and learned, a kind of power which can lift people up and help them grow (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

We can see that servant-leaders commit to build a community in which people become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more willing to serve while the least privileged will not be further deprived (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Face-saving becomes unnecessary in this kind of community since it is a safe and healing place, a loving shelter. Among these ten characteristics, awareness and healing stand out as great tools to handle face-saving. We are going to examine awareness, healing, and face-saving in detail in the next section.

HOW TO HANDLE FACE-SAVING THROUGH AWARENESS AND HEALING

Examining face-saving in leadership is like examining an onion and having the endurance and patience to uncover each layer; sensitivity can be vital. For the sake of this paper, I would like to draw our attention to leadership at an individual level and take a close look at leaders' fear and lack of options. Then I will discuss the will to meaning and the will to love that we need to tackle face-saving and call for awareness and healing. I will use one of my personal experiences to illustrate this process. Hopefully this will inspire church leaders to find a better way to handle face-saving in the Chinese Church.

First, an important consideration is that face-saving is usually done out of fear and shame (Elias, 1994; Goffman, 1955, 1967). Since societies consist of interdependent individuals whose needs are rarely equal, power rises in every act of human relating and usually leans more toward the people with more resources (Stacey, 2012). As leaders, we are in a situation with more positional power, and it is easy for us to exert the will to power to save face or avoid losing face. And "the most modest stage of the will to power" is individualism (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 412). We cover our brokenness by being aggressive; we avoid

changing ourselves by pointing to others; we protect our own authority by driving away people with disagreement; and we prevent ourselves from being hurt by valuing individualism and relational distance (Friedman, 2007; Hofstede, 2001; Scazzero & Bird, 2003; VanVonderen, 1989). We are afraid of shame and "the desire to be powerful is rooted in the intensity of fear. Power gives us the illusion of having triumphed over fear, over our need for love" (hooks, 2001, p. 221).

Second, face-saving often occurs due to a lack of options (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012). According to Nietzsche (1968), "an ideal of the highest degree of powerfulness of the spirit" is nihilism (p. 14). Active nihilism has "increased power of the spirit" and "a violent force of destruction" while passive nihilism has "decline and recession of the power of the spirit" and "a sign of weakness" (pp. 17-18). A person has only two options—to fight or to take flight. This is exactly what we choose to do when our face is threatened. We get stuck in the fear of losing face and the lack of options. We see and hear some facts and generate a negative story out of them; this story results in the rising of fear and we act defensively, either fight or flight; both are motivated by fear (Patterson et al., 2012). At one house church, when a group leader questioned the pastors' theological teaching, she was asked to leave the church. The pastors' fear of losing face, the stories generated about the issue, and the creation of negative emotions were reasons for this defensive action.

Third, we can overcome fear and lack of options by the will to meaning and the will to love (Frankl, 1970, 2000; hooks,

2001). In the eyes of Nietzsche, we can be either destroyers or runaways; this is because he does not look beyond himself. Both nihilism and fear are from the lack of self-transcendence. Self-transcendence is "to strive for something outside of oneself. . . . Only when in service of another does a person truly know his or her humanity" (Frankl, 2000, p. 85). As a person who survived the Auschwitz concentration camp, Frankl never gave up the conviction of the "unconditional meaningfulness of life" (p. 128) and believed that a person can find meaning in life by loving (Frankl, 1970). "When we love, we no longer allow our hearts to be held captive by fear. . . . To return to love, to know perfect love, we surrender the will to power" (hooks, 2001, p. 221).

Fourth, awareness can help us handle face-saving (Brown, Hernandez, & Villarreal, 2011; Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Spears, 2010). This awareness is not the will to power or the desire to control, but the ability to "view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position" (Spears, 2010, p. 27). According to Greenleaf (1977/2002), we need to take in more information from the environment than people normally do and make more intense contact with our situation. Low tolerance for awareness will lead us to miss leadership opportunities. When our doors of perception are wide open, we are facing the stress and uncertainty of life. We have to develop detachment, the ability to stand aside and examine ourselves, and serenity to stand still amidst alarms (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). When we try to save face, with the ability of detachment, we can notice whether we move away by

withdrawing, or move toward by seeking to please, or move against by being aggressive (Horney, 1966; Brown et al., 2011). Critical awareness skills also help us

> move away from reinforcing (I should feel shame), individualizing (I am the only one), and pathologizing (I'm not normal; something is wrong with me) shame to contextualizing (I see the big picture), normalizing (I'm not the only one), and demystifying (I'll learn more about this and share what I know with others) shame. (Brown et al., 2011, p. 367)

Apparently, awareness is "not a giver of solace," but "a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. . . . They have their own inner serenity" (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 41).

Fifth, we can address face-saving through healing as well (Forrester, 2010; Frankl, 1970; Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Ray, 2011). Nietzsche (1968) rules out the option of healing and thus calls for being destroyers (p. 224). On the contrary, "servant-leaders are *healers* in the sense of *making whole* by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would be likely to attain for themselves" (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 240, italics in original). Grace and mercy are in the process of healing, and Nietzsche knows nothing about them. Only with our inner serenity and others' gracious presence, can we face the reality of awareness. Our inner serenity comes from the faith in the ultimate meaning, "preceded by trust in an ultimate being, by trust in God" (Frankl, 1970, p. 145). Meanwhile, others' unconditional

acceptance and healing presence provide "a floor of grace" on which we can experience healing and heal others (Forrester, 2010, p. 218). This search for wholeness is what servant-leaders share with others (Greenleaf, 1977/2002) and love heals all (Ray, 2011).

Finally, I propose a holistic way to handle face-saving using the metaphor of cutting onions as shown in Figure 1. Face-saving is the outer layer of the onion, which represents the individual. Awareness, the disturber and awakener (Greenleaf, 1977/2002), is the knife to cut through the onion in order to examine it. One's inner serenity and others' gracious presence is the healing container to hold the onion (Forrester, 2010; Frankl, 1970; Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Ray, 2011). The will to love and the will to meaning are the sustainable powers to move the whole process (Frankl, 1970, 2000; hooks, 2001). Otherwise, we will either destroy the onion or throw it away (Nietzsche, 1968). I am going to use my personal experience to illustrate this process demonstrated in Figure 1.
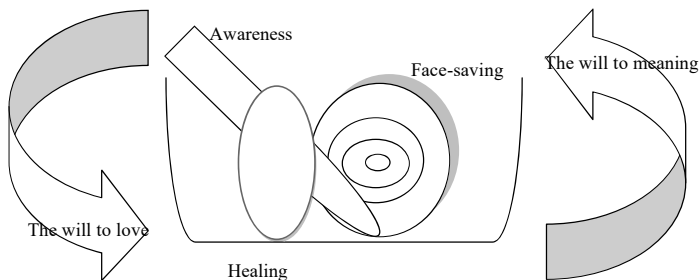

Figure 1. The holistic process of handling face-saving.

I felt the loss of face when I attended my daughter Maria's middle school orientation. My friend Dottie went with me. After the principal's presentation, we were supposed to have a tour of the school building and a tryout of the lockers. Maria was aimlessly following her friends around and later sat down and had cookies. I asked them to follow the tour, but they would not give up their cookies. When they finished eating, the tour was done, and they did not get the chance to try the locker either. The orientation ended with nothing accomplished except cookies in their stomachs. I was so upset, and yelled at Maria. I felt I was losing face because my daughter was not doing the right thing. My feeling of losing face was reinforced by my own yelling as well. I was afraid that people would think my daughter was stupid. Meanwhile, I was ashamed because I felt that I was a loser and a bad mom; otherwise my daughter's behavior would fit normal expectations. I definitely experienced the lack of options because I chose either the fight or flight approach. For a while, I stood back and did not want to have any communication with Maria. I thought "If you are not going to do it, it is your problem and has nothing to do with me." Later, I could not endure this anymore; I chose to fight and yelled at her. I wielded my will to power and failed.

My friend Dottie was with us. She saw me becoming angrier and angrier and said to me, "It is ok, Jenny. Maria will be fine. She will figure it out later. She is smart." But my door of perception was closed, my inner serenity was gone, and I was focusing on saving my face (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). Dottie stood beside me and let me take a deep breath. After the

orientation, she invited me to sit down and had a talk with me. She emphasized that my daughter is smart, and I am a good parent as a single mom, I have done a good job. Her unconditional acceptance gave me the floor of grace (Forrester, 2010), and I began calming down and gaining the awareness of what had happened. Her "positive mirroring" gave me the possibility of "self-mirroring" (p. 219). Upon this foundation of grace, I built my identity with a sense of security and began the process of healing myself (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Ray 2011). "Jenny, it is ok. You are fine. You are not a loser. And Maria will be fine. I love both of you."

Dottie's unconditional love and healing presence moved me from saving face to developing awareness (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Forrester, 2010; Brown et al. 2011). I realized that I had taken actions of saving face. I moved away from Maria by standing back, and later moved against her by being aggressive and yelling at her (Horney, 1966; Brown et al., 2011). I told myself that I should feel ashamed (reinforcing) because my daughter (individualizing) did not do what she was supposed to do and something was wrong with me (pathologizing); otherwise, my daughter would be perfect (Brown et al., 2011).

This awareness generated by love and healing moved me out of face-saving. I unfolded some of my unrealistic expectations (contextualizing), such as I cannot be a perfect student, or a perfect mom; my daughter's behavior was normal for her age, and she was nervous for the new school; we were not alone in our condition and what we experienced was

ordinary (normalizing); I broke the unspoken rules and shared my vulnerability with my daughter (demystifying) (Brown et al., 2011; Brown, 2012).

With better awareness and the healing of myself, I asked my daughter for forgiveness (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Ferch, 2012). I told her how I felt, why I was mad at her, what I had done wrong, and what I thought about what I had done (Brown, 2012). I shared my struggle of saving face and the process of gaining awareness and healing with love and meaning. I apologized for what I had done to her and asked her for forgiveness. We together, with love and awareness, began the process of healing and search for wholeness. With love and self-transcendence, I surrender the will to power and the desire to save face. Church leaders can handle their face-saving tendency through this holistic process as well.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I examined face-saving in the Chinese church setting and my personal leadership. Through the discussion of the challenge of face-saving and ten characteristics of Greenleaf's servant-leadership, I proposed a holistic process of handling face-saving and demonstrated it through my own experience. Face-saving is out of fear and shame and a mindset of a lack of options. In order to handle face-saving, leaders have to develop sharp awareness and promote healing of themselves and others. This is not a once-for-all process, but an ongoing process with the will to love and the will to meaning. Through the model of servant-leadership and this ongoing

process, we may be able to alleviate face-saving's negative impact on church leadership, and we may become great because "everybody can be great because everybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love" (King, 1998, pp. 182-183).

_____

References

Barbuto, J., & Wheeler, D. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management, 31*(3), 300-326.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Brown, B., Hernandez, V. R., & Villarreal, Y. (2011). Connections: A 12-session psychoeducational shame resilience curriculum. In R. L. Dearing & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Shame in the therapy hour* (pp. 355-371). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/12326-015

Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. New York, NY: Gotham Books.

Chen, X. (2008). Independent thinking: A path to outstanding scholarship. *Management & Organization Review, 4*(3), 337-348. doi:10.1111/j.1740-8784.2008.00124.x

Confucius. (2014). In D. Hinton (Ed. & Trans.), *Analects*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint.

Doraiswamy, I. R. (2012). Servant or leader? Who will stand up please? *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3*(9), 178-182. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1010396374

Elias, N. (1994). *The civilizing process: The history of manners and state formation and civilization*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Ferch, S. R. (2012). *Forgiveness and power in the age of atrocity: Servant leadership as a way of life.* Lanham, MD: Lexington

Books.

Forrester, J. A. (2010). *Grace for shame: The forgotten gospel*. Toronto, Canada: Pastor's Attic Press.

Frankl, V. E. (1970). *The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of Logotherapy*. New York, NY: New American Library.

Frankl, V. E. (2000). *Man's search for ultimate meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Pub.

Friedman, E. H. (2007). *A failure of nerve: Leadership in the age of the quick fix*. M. M. Treadwell & E. W. Beal (Eds.). New York, NY: Seabury Books.

Goffman, E. (1955). On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes, 18*, 213-231.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Pub. Co.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1996). *Seeker and servant: Reflections on religious leadership*. A. T. Fraker & L. C. Spears (Eds.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1998). *The power of servant-leadership: Essays*. L. C. Spears (Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Greenleaf, R. K. (2002). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness* (25th anniversary ed.). L. C. Spears (Ed.). New York, NY: Paulist Press.

Hamilton, F. (2005). Practicing servant-leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness. *The Academy of Management Review, 30*(4), 875-877. doi:10.2307/20159176

Ho, D. Y. (1976). On the concept of face. *American Journal of Sociology, 81*(4), 867-884.

Hofstede, G. H. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

hooks, b. (2001). *All about love: New visions*. New York, NY: Perennial.

Horney, K. (1966). *Our inner conflicts: A constructive theory of neurosis*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The*

GLOBE study of 62 societies. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hsü, L. S. (2005). *The political philosophy of Confucianism: An interpretation of the social and political ideas of Confucius, his forerunners, and his early disciples*. London, England: Routledge.

Kim, Y., Cohen, D., & Au, W. (2010). The jury and abjury of my peers: The self in face and dignity cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 98*(6), 904-916. doi:10.1037/a0017936

King, M. L., Jr. (1998). The drum major instinct. In C. Carson, & P. Holloran (Eds.), *A knock at midnight: Inspiration from the great sermons of reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.* (pp. 165-186). New York, NY: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books.

Lee, B. K. (2011). The face of the other: An ethic of delight. *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology, 16*(1), 15-31.

Lian, X. (2010). *Redeemed by fire: The rise of popular Christianity in modern China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Lin, Y. (1935). *My country and my people*. New York, NY: Reynal & Hitchcock.

Lock, A., & Strong, T. (2010). *Social constructionism: Sources and stirrings in theory and practice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Lohse, K. E. (1968). Προσωπον. In G. Kittel (Ed.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 6, pp. 768-780). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Miron-Spektor, E., Paletz, S. B. F., & Lin, C. (2015). To create without losing face: The effects of face cultural logic and social-image affirmation on creativity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 36*(7), 919-943. doi:10.1002/job.2029

Nietzsche, F. W. (1968). *The will to power*. W. A. Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale (Eds.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Ray, S. (2011). *American masculine: Stories*. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press.

Scazzero, P., & Bird, W. (2003). *The emotionally healthy church: A*

strategy for discipleship that actually changes lives. Grand
Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Sima, Q. (1961). *Records of the grand historian of China* (B. Watson
Trans.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Song, J. Y. (2016). *The tree with good fruit or bad fruit: An
evaluation of the House Church Movement and the Three-Self
Patriotic Movement in China* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from
http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/seminary_masters/25

Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and servant leadership: Ten
characteristics of effective, caring leaders. *The Journal of Virtues
& Leadership, 1*(1), 25-30. Retrieved from
http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jvl/vol1_iss1/ho
me.htm

Spears, L. C. (2004). Practicing servant-leadership. *Leader to
Leader, 2004*(34), 7-11. doi:10.1002/ltl.94

Stacey, R. D. (2012). *Tools and techniques of leadership and
management: Meeting the challenge of complexity*. London,
England: Routledge.

Steinke, P. L. (1996). *Healthy congregations: A systems approach*.
Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute.

van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2015). Compassionate love as
a cornerstone of servant leadership: An integration of previous
theorizing and research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 128*(1), 119-
131. doi:10.1007/s10551-014-2085-z

VanVonderen, J. (1989). *Tired of trying to measure up*. Minneapolis,
MN: Bethany House.

Whyte, B. (1988). *Unfinished encounter: China and Christianity* (1st
American ed.). Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse.

Ying, F. T. (2006). *Chong tu yu rong he: Jin dai zhongguo jidu jiao
shi yan jiu lun ji* [Conflict and coalition]. Taibei, Taiwan: Jidu
jiao yu zhou guang quan ren guan huai ji gou.

Zhang, X., Cao, Q., & Grigoriou, N. (2011). Consciousness of social
face: The development and validation of a scale measuring
desire to gain face versus fear of losing face. *The Journal of
Social Psychology, 151*(2), 129-149.
doi:10.1080/00224540903366669

_____

Jiying Song (Jenny Song) received her Master of Engineering in China and Master of Divinity from George Fox University in America. Currently she is completing her doctoral studies at Gonzaga University in Leadership Studies. She worked in an IT company in China for fourteen years and served as the Operation Director and managed two departments for five years. She has been a member, group leader, and co-worker of a house church in China. Her research interest is to explore the impact of face-saving on church leadership.