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Leading with Love: The Confluence of Spirituality and Leadership in College Students

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

LEADING WITH LOVE:
THE CONFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALITY AND LEADERSHIP
IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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The wise know that any success comes only through the support of many individuals, and that we stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us. Writing this dissertation has only been possible because of the encouragement and assistance of a number of people.

My parents were born and raised in Ireland, emigrating as young adults. Having had little formal education herself, my mother treasured the educational opportunities afforded her children. From an early age I remember hearing her mantra, “There is nothing more important than education.” She instilled in me a deep appreciation for the privilege of education – one that she never had – as she and my father worked long, hard hours to provide for their children and scrape together the money for Catholic schooling. I am certain that any educational success I might have, as well as my own career as an educator, would not be possible without the foundation she provided. It is to my mom that I dedicate this dissertation.

As my life partner and best friend, my husband has been a constant support, the root of my strength, and my biggest fan. While I cannot underestimate the value of managing the household and caring for the kids so that I might pursue this dream, it has been his unwavering faith in me that has sustained me most. Greg, I will never have the words to express my profound gratitude for your love and presence in my life.

Having a mom who is working full-time and completing a doctorate could not have been easy on my children. Many nights and weekends at class or at the library took me away from precious time at home. I thank my children, Claire, Daniel, Dana, and Paul for the joy they bring me, and for keeping me focused on what really matters in life. I can only hope that my example of pursuing a worthwhile goal will provide some inspiration for you in your own lives.

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Lastly, all things are made possible through Christ. I thank God for the call to be educator and minister, wife and mother. I will continue to do my best to be faithful to my vocation.

For my mother

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between spirituality and leadership in college students, creating a conceptual framework for student spiritual leadership. Based in the prior work of leadership theory, college student leadership development, faith development, spiritual leadership, spirituality in higher education, and the environment of faith-based institutions, this research built upon previous research to create a framework for future study.

Using a case study method that considered a specific context, fourth-year students at a mid-size Catholic institution were interviewed, along with faculty and staff who offered observations of the students. While these students are a small sample of the college student population, the findings from this case study demonstrate that spirituality and leadership share an important relationship with each other. Spirituality was shown to be a significant influence on leadership in four ways: (1) as motivation, (2) by shaping leadership values, (3) through an emphasis on justice, and (4) through relationships and community. The influence of leadership on spirituality was less significant in this study, although a moderate correlation was found. The case demonstrated the importance of justice in the pedagogy and mission of the program studied. Furthermore, students valued the concept and significance of justice, although a strong connection between personal leadership and justice was not articulated by most of the students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The study of leadership development for college students has emerged in recent years as a salient area of research. The paradigm shift that moved leadership theory from a trait-based, hierarchical model to a more process-oriented, developmental one (Northouse, 2007) provided the springboard for research and practice with college students to adapt to the new paradigm. For instance, the social change model of leadership, developed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI, 1996), adapted to this new understanding of leadership, creating a model based in individual, group, and community factors. More importantly, the purpose of leadership was explicitly stated as the intention to create positive social change for individuals, groups, or society. Along these same lines, Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2007) formulated the relational leadership model, based in process and relationship, with a clear purpose, and the intention to be inclusive. Both of these models conceptualized leadership as a process, rooted in relationship, bounded by a sense of ethics, and directed toward the purpose of positive change in the world. In these models, leaders are not born, but formed over time through experiences, knowledge, and mentoring (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, & Mainella, 2006; Parks, 2000). Leadership skills can be taught through instruction, and measured in new and creative ways.

At the same time these leadership models were emerging, a renewed interest in spirituality within higher education, and in particular with college students, surfaced. Love and Talbot (1999) broached the topic, suggesting that spirituality and spiritual development had been absent from student development theory, leaving a void within the research. Love's challenge was answered by himself (Love, 2002) and others who immersed themselves in explorations of this topic. Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno (2003) researched religion and spirituality in first-year college students. Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) explored themes related to spirituality in higher education including, authenticity, vocation, community, and wholeness. Estanek (2006) called the current trends "a new discourse" (p. 4) and defined spirituality and spiritual development as integrally linked terms. The publication of a national study of college student spirituality by Astin, Astin, Lindholm and Bryant (2005), surveying over 112,000 students, further brought the discussion forward. Astin et al. reported that students were interested in spirituality in large numbers, often practiced a religious faith, and expected colleges and universities to assist them in developing spiritually.

Prior to the above higher education endeavors, Fowler (1981) developed a theory of faith development, based on the work of theorists Piaget (1932) and Erickson (1968). Parks (1986, 2000) furthered Fowler's understanding of spiritual development by specifically examining the spiritual development of young adults. Faith, described by Parks as a process for making meaning, develops in stages for young adults. She built upon Fowler's work by adding a stage "three and a half" (3.5), which corresponds with young adulthood. Young adults often experience a time of crisis, or shipwreck, that

threatens their world-view and causes them to self-assess in a critical manner. As these young people develop, mentors along with a place of belonging in a “holding environment” prove significant to their spiritual growth.

Other avenues of discourse about spirituality have recently begun to emerge as well. Spirituality in the workplace, or the spirituality of work, developed as a topic. A leader in this area, Palmer (1997) wrote and spoke on the significance of spirituality as a teacher and educator, developing his own program of retreats for teachers (couragerenewal.org, 2009). More recently, spiritual leadership as a distinct term used to address workplace spirituality, and in particular the management style of leaders in the workplace, has been embraced by theorists and writers. Fairholm (1997) developed a model of leadership that includes eight dimensions necessary for leadership, including morality, service, and spirituality. Fry (2003) published the beginnings of a theory of spiritual leadership that includes two fundamental underpinnings, a sense of call and a culture based on love. Still others have written on the significance of spirituality in work and in leadership (Benefiel, 2005; Heifetz & Linksy, 2002; Wheatley, 2005). Spirituality and spiritual development emerged as an important aspect of human growth and human well-being in the work environment. Moreover, leadership theory incorporated spirituality into its discourse, recognizing it as a salient factor in leadership style and practice.

These theories and models of leadership and spirituality developed in a parallel manner, at the same time as the interest and study of spirituality shifted into the mainstream of higher education research and discourse. The convergence of these areas

of interest begs the question of whether they can be conceptualized together and developed into a framework of *college student* spiritual leadership. This research project proposed that this possibility might indeed exist, and that spiritual leadership, as a concept, is both a timely and helpful model to understand leadership qualities, themes, and self-understandings for college students.

A Conceptual Framework of College Student Spiritual Leadership

This study was an exploration of spirituality and its effect on college student leadership, with the intent of working toward a model of spiritual leadership for college students. A conceptual framework, consisting of six spheres of influence that may inform a model of spiritual leadership, describes the convergence of these areas for students as they develop and learn leadership. The first five spheres are (1) purpose; (2) ethics; (3) relationship; (4) service; and (5) spirit. The sixth is not a distinct characteristic as much as an underlying support for the other five, and an all-encompassing motivation for leadership: love.

Purpose, the first sphere, refers to the reason for engaging in leadership, and its end goals. It is not an individual pursuit; rather, it encompasses a shared or socialized vision (HERI, 1996). Moreover, purpose is not value-neutral; it exists to bring about positive social change (Komives et al., 2007) or continuous improvement (Fairholm, 1997). Purpose provides a motivation and a direction for leadership.

Closely related to this understanding of purpose is ethics. For this study, ethics was understood as doing the right thing, the right way, for the right reasons. Leadership should support positive change (Burns, 1978; HERI, 1996), seek the integrity of intention

and action (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and be driven by values (Komives et al., 2007) and moral standards (Fairholm, 1997). Ethics roots leadership in a set of ground rules that includes honesty, fair practice, and a desire to seek betterment and continuous improvement for followers.

The third area, relationship, refers to the understanding that leadership is not performed in a vacuum. On the contrary, leadership is a process that arises from and within the context of relationship with others (Burns, 1978; Komives et al, 2007). Developing and valuing community (Fairholm, 1997), collaboration, and citizenship (HERI, 1996) are essential components to leadership and its activities. Relationship values others for their own unique skills and talents, and seeks to empower others to develop and utilize those abilities as part of the leadership process.

Greenleaf (1977) highlighted the fourth area, service, in his theory of servant leadership. Here the purpose of leadership is to serve others first and foremost. Komives et al. (2007) used the term empowerment to reference this idea of service, and Heifetz and Linsky (2002) emphasized that leaders must be attentive to the hearts and minds of others. As such, this sphere of service emphasizes the importance of being attuned to others, valuing their dignity and well being, and serving their needs.

The fifth sphere, spirit, refers to a sense of values, integrity, and congruence *within* the leader (HERI, 1996; Fairholm, 1997; Heifetz & Linksy, 2002). Leadership involves attending to the soul and spirit (Bolman & Deal, 2001) while hope and faith (Fry, 2003) are key components to becoming and being a leader. Meaning and its pursuit motivates the person for leadership. The leader who is influenced by spirit experiences a

calling to lead with commitment and to make a difference. This type of leadership seeks to find meaning in life (Fry, 2003; Fry & Slocum, 2008).

Finally, love, as a unique sphere and also as a ground for all the others, binds spiritual leadership together. Ultimately, altruistic love is based in a deep connection to others. It embodies many characteristics of the other spheres, such as service, helping others, ethical action, and value congruence. Care and concern, appropriate stewardship of resources, and a desire to help, uplift, and advocate for others are at the heart of leadership in this model (Fairholm, 1997; Fry, 2003; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

Astin et al. (2005), in their national study of the spirituality of college students, reported that students today are keenly interested in their spiritual lives, are seeking meaning and purpose for themselves, and are benefiting emotionally and physically from the practice of religion. While higher education as a whole has not always embraced spirituality as a legitimate concern for student development (Love, 2002; Marsden, 1994), its place as a significant aspect in the lives and well-being of students is currently being noted. Like other areas of development, spirituality has the potential to impact leadership skills, styles, and maturity. Through the exploration of this realm of student learning, new insights and recommendations for practice may be advanced for the future.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to explore how college students made sense of their own spirituality and how these understandings influenced their beliefs and actions as leaders. A primary goal of this study was to build an emergent framework of spiritual leadership for college students. More specifically, this study sought to explore

and understand students' self-understandings of their spirituality, and the experiences in their lives that have influenced this spirituality. Furthermore, the study explored the effect of spirituality – beliefs, practices, and experiences – on leadership within a faith-based setting. Finally, the study sought to understand connections between students' understandings of justice and spirituality and leadership.

In this exploratory and qualitative study, traditional-age college students in a faith-based college or university context were asked to reflect on their own spiritual beliefs and practices, and the influence of that spirituality on leadership beliefs, styles, and actions. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How do students describe and understand their own spiritual development?
2. How do leadership experiences within an explicitly faith-based context influence students' understandings of what it means to be and act as a leader?
3. How do students' spiritual beliefs and practices shape how they think about leadership? How might these inform how they choose to act as leaders?
4. How do students' understandings of ethical leadership, and specifically leadership for justice, influence their own spirituality or leadership?

Key Terms

The topics considered in this study can have a variety of meanings. The following paragraphs detail the definitions of the key terms in the study. For *spirituality*, the broadest term referenced, this definition by Schneiders (2003) was used: “the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives” (p. 166). Inherent in this

definition, Schneiders stated, are four main ideas. As experiential, spirituality is a grounded in “personal lived reality” (p. 167) and is not an abstract idea or theory. Second, spirituality implies an approach to life that is integrated, intentional, and ongoing. Third, spirituality encompasses the whole of one’s life and being, and cannot be partitioned or allocated to only some aspects. Finally, self-transcendence implies a positive direction for all genuine spirituality, and this direction must be toward a goal or a value that lies beyond the self.

Religion, derived from spirituality, is a “fundamental life stance” of a person who recognizes complete dependence on a creator or “the source and matrix of being and life” (Schneiders, 2003, p. 168). Religion refers to an organizational structure (Cherry, DeBerg, & Porterfield, 2001) that encompasses a search for the ultimate, uses story and symbol, and holds set doctrine or teachings (Love, 2002). It can be a spiritual tradition in the broad sense of the word, such as Christianity or Hinduism, or an institution such as Roman Catholicism, whose elements contain beliefs, doctrines, sacred texts, and both prescribed and prohibited practices.

Faith is described as process of making meaning from one’s life (Parks, 2000), but also as a response to transcendent power as it has been communicated through religious tradition (Fowler, 1981). In this study, references to faith intended an understanding of a transcendent power at work in the lives of persons. Spirituality is inclusive of both faith and religion, but also encompasses a wider understanding of the search for purpose, meaning, authenticity, and wholeness in life.

Northouse (2007) defined *leadership* as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). While a complex term, leadership for this study was understood to be rooted in a process, impacting a group, and with a purpose in mind. *Ethical leadership* involves “doing what is right, just, and good” (Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004, p. 16) and being “fundamentally concerned with the impact of an individual’s actions on others” (p. 17). This type of leadership “is concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or society finds desirable or appropriate” (Northouse, p. 342). Leading by doing the right thing, according to commonly accepted standards of justice and goodness, and keeping the well-being of others at the forefront of decision-making, is the basis for ethical leadership.

Love is a connectedness to others in a significant way (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), and include qualities of forgiveness, kindness, compassion, trust and humility (Fry, 2003). Leadership grown from love creates a culture “whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for self and others” (Fry, p. 695). Altruistic love puts the needs and well-being of others at the forefront. Moreover, leadership based on love requires personal integrity that encompasses the qualities above within the person of the leader.

Significance of the Study

Students develop in multiple, multi-faceted ways during the college years: socially, cognitively, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. Leadership development encompasses all of the above areas of growth; however, spiritual growth and maturing in the context of leadership has not been explored for college students.

This study sought to surface and integrate the dimension of spirituality into leadership theory for college students, and therefore is significant for several reasons.

First, it brings spirituality into the equation of what constitutes leadership development. Through adding this unexplored area, increases in the understanding of what constitutes leadership and its developmental path in students were gained. This new knowledge can now be integrated into current leadership development practices for students. While precise numbers of leadership programs, courses, and curriculums are not known, institutions are continuing to seek better ways to train and educate their students as leaders (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). By recognizing the influence of spirituality on leadership development, colleges and universities can improve the practice of leadership education.

Next, this study sought to enrich the current body of knowledge pertaining to the significance of spirituality for college students. As research continues in this realm, deeper understandings of the role that spirituality plays in the lives of college students, its significance to student well being, and its influence on the overall growth of the student can be gained. Building upon prior studies, this project adds to the small but growing knowledge base of spirituality in higher education. Furthermore, it desired to broaden the current discourse on spirituality and college students by moving beyond understandings of spirituality as an individual endeavor to a concept intricately linked to community, relationship, and the betterment of others and the world.

Third, making a connection between leadership in action for college students and the underlying beliefs and motivations for leading was a goal of this study. According to

Fry (2003), the ability to “intrinsically motivate oneself and others” (p. 695) is significant to spiritual leadership. Attempting to reach the “why” of leadership, the project aimed to uncover some of the motivating factors of leadership in students for whom spirituality is significant. It sought to investigate whether spirituality influences the choice to lead, and then *how* one chooses to lead once the choice is made.

Finally, the study explored altruistic love as grounding for the desire to lead and to lead purposefully. For Fry (2003), love, or the “genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others” (p. 695), is a key component of spiritual leadership. As this project worked toward an emergent framework of college student spiritual leadership, altruistic love was explored as a motivating factor, a source of meaning, and a guiding purpose for leadership.

Conclusion

Palmer (1997) acknowledged the “inner landscape” of the educator, as well as a “spiritual quest for connectedness” that is part of the human condition (p. 5). He recognized teaching as a vocation, the importance of community, and openness to the transcendent in the quest for truth. Palmer’s insights in *The Courage to Teach* have had an influence on the world of higher education. In recent years, a growing network of scholars has begun to emphasize spirituality and the spiritual development of college students (Astin et al., 2005; Chickering et al., 2006; Estanek, 2006; Love & Talbot, 1999). The spirituality of work and spiritual leadership have emerged as salient topics of theory and research, and leadership education has grown within higher education practice. This study proposed to bring together these distinct topics of spirituality and

leadership and explore their connections within college students. By doing so, the study sought to contribute to the knowledge base of both areas of study, as well as argue that connecting the two topics will increase the understanding of spiritual and leadership development.

The following chapters review salient literature related to the topic areas and research questions posed by the study, and describe the methods of data collection used for the study. Through pursuing the lines of inquiry stated above, the study desired to broaden the understandings of the topics, and to work toward an emergent framework of spiritual leadership for colleges.

As a researcher, I approached this study as a person of faith. My interest in the spiritual lives of college students rose from my 12 years as a full-time minister on a college campus. In those years, I encouraged both spiritual and leadership development within my students, at both the individual and group levels. Additionally, I designed programs that allowed them to lead and develop leadership skills from a faith perspective. My bias in how I approached this study is that I have come to understand spirituality, and faith in particular, as a factor that motivates students to seek to make a difference in the lives of other people. The study sought to explore how this belief may or may not actually play out in practice, with the goal of better understanding the possible connections that may exist between spirituality and leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The college years are a time of growth and development for students. This development takes many forms, and while intellectual growth is a primary aim of higher education, other forms of development are included among the central goals of a college or university education. This section first reviews leadership theory overall, leadership development for college students, and spiritual leadership theory and models. Next, a review of the broad topic of spirituality in higher education is conducted, highlighting recent trends as well as theories of the spiritual and faith development of young adults. Finally, recent research and writings related to faith-based institutions, and the integration of spirituality, values, and mission into the holistic education of the student, is explored. Catholic higher education, as the largest faith-based system of higher education in the United States, and as a particular area of knowledge and interest of myself, is the specific context for this portion of the review.

Leadership Theory

The study of leadership has emerged as a prominent area of research in the past 20 years. Yet, long before that, the traditional ways of conceptualizing leadership, as an individual, trait-based phenomenon, had given way to diverse methods of understanding leadership and its application to modern situations (Northouse, 2007). No longer is leadership considered only as a characteristic given at birth to a select few (Bennis,

1989); nor is there one “right way” to lead in a given situation. Burns (1978) laid the ground for leadership theory to embrace a relational model, and to be process-oriented. Leadership could be a transforming process for both leaders and followers, and was ultimately grounded in ethical concerns and results (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007). About the same time as Burns penned his theory, Greenleaf (1977) posited the theory of servant leadership, wherein the leader’s aim, primarily, is to serve others. The belief that followers are important to leadership challenged the conventional paradigm that understands leadership as positional in nature, with one person “in charge” and the rest as followers. In the emergent relational leadership theories, followers are important, their input is valued, and power can be collaboratively shared among a group (Komives et al., 2007).

When Burns (1978) published his theory of transformational leadership, he emphasized ethics as an integral part of leadership. Burns called this phenomenon “moral leadership.” Moral leadership must focus attention on “mutual needs, aspirations, and values” and “is the kind of leadership that can produce social change” (p. 4). The purpose of leadership, according to Burns, is not only to accomplish a set of goals, but also to encourage interpersonal development, and to be focused on accomplishing a greater good, that is, positive social change. More recently, attention has been paid to the ethical behavior of leaders as a result of scandals in the corporate world, and has attracted the interest of organizational behavioral scholars (Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004). The focus on ethics has emphasized the significant role of followers in ethical leadership (Perreault,

1997) and authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and has highlighted mentoring as the key to ethical decision-making in organizations (Ncube & Wasburn, 2006).

These new ways of thinking about leadership, from Burns and Greenleaf in the 1970s, to Bennis in the 1980s, to the present day literature, ultimately has led to the belief that leadership is not a trait bestowed at birth, but something that can be learned. Through practice, skill development, and reflection, individuals can grow in their leadership ability (Komives et al., 2007). Accordingly, higher education has responded with the development of curricular and co-curricular leadership programs (Posner, 2004; Roberts, 2003; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2006), often referred to as the CAS standards, lists leadership development as one of the 16 major learning and developmental outcome categories for every program and service on campus, and lists leadership development outcomes for each of the 35 areas for which it assesses standards. From advising and distance education, to campus activities and student conduct, the CAS standards weave leadership development into every area and provide specific examples of achievement indicators for each one. However, while leadership studies is an elective course of study at select institutions, the overall attention paid to leadership as part of general education or as an essential component to a college education has been minimal (Astin & Astin, 2000). The lack of full integration into the curricula of higher education institutions notwithstanding, research in the area of college student leadership development has been progressing. Recent research has incorporated a post-industrial,

relational framework, along with a concern for ethical decision-making, social justice, and civic responsibility, into models of college student development.

College Student Leadership Development

Ethics is a component of several major college student leadership models including the social change model (HERI, 1996), the relational model of leadership (Komives et al., 2007), the leadership identity development model (Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006), and to a lesser extent, the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 1998).

The social change model (HERI, 1996) stresses that “leadership ought to bring about desirable social change, that leadership is a process and not a position, that all students are potential leaders . . . and that service is a powerful vehicle for developing leaders” (p. 5). This model stipulates seven core values, which are referred to as “the Seven C’s of Change” (p. 6). The first set of these core values are individual in nature. *Consciousness of self* is fundamentally about self-awareness and mindfulness. *Congruence* is a description of integrity, or “consistency, genuineness, authenticity and honesty” (p. 6). The last personal value is *commitment*, which refers to involvement, investment, and intensity as the self relates to another person, activity, or idea.

Group values form the second set of C’s of change. *Collaboration* is relationally based, sharing authority and responsibility for the group’s processes and goals. Similar to collaboration is a *common purpose*. When group members work together and share responsibility, they build a shared vision that beckons them forward. Finally, groups of people working together are bound to experience conflict. The value of *controversy with*

civility acknowledges the inevitability of differences of opinion and supports approaching those differences openly and with respect. The last core value, in its own category, is *citizenship*. By embracing this societal value, the group can agree and focus on a shared purpose of improving the world around it through active engagement in the leadership process.

Each of these three groups, and the individual values within them, interact with each other, creating a dynamic model based on both personal and interpersonal development for the larger purpose of serving society. Service, a key component to the model, can positively impact leadership development. Within this model one can see the connection to ethics in leadership through the emphasis on right relationship and service, as well as a link to spiritual development in the use of consciousness of self and congruence.

The relational leadership model (RLM), developed by Komives et al. (2007), uses similar concepts as the social change model, and yet is constructed in a different form. Ethics is an integral component of this model, and calls forth “leadership that is driven by values and standards and leadership that is good – moral – in nature” (p. 97). While not all leadership theory rests on the belief that leaders should be driven by values and ethics, Komives et al. argued that most people expect leaders to do the right thing and that leaders have an obligation to attempt to meet those expectations.

At the center of the RLM rests purpose, or the unifying vision that binds the group together and leads the way on the path toward the goals. Purpose is not, in this model, value-neutral; purpose needs to be connected to facilitating positive change. Moreover,

purpose is grounded in a shared or socialized vision that arises from the collective wisdom of the group. Good leaders create the structure and the process for a unifying vision to bubble up from the members within the group. Closely related to embracing a shared purpose is the concept of inclusion. Relational leadership is inclusive of the members of the group – their needs, ideas, and interests – but also of external constituents or stakeholders. It means thinking about diverse ways of reaching out to people, and exploring needs that might not be immediately obvious. The last central component is empowerment. Power is an important factor in group processes and in all leadership. How and when leaders use power, or allow others to do so, will influence the effectiveness of the group. Empowerment can be of the self, of individuals, of the group as a whole, and of the environment. When power is not coercive, hoarded, or reward-based, but instead is shared by the leader with others in the group, the group can create a strong sense of community with one another and also be more productive.

These four components – purpose, ethics, inclusiveness, and empowerment – are situated within a context of process. “Several key processes are essential to relational leadership [including] collaboration, reflection, feedback, civil confrontation, community building, and . . . meaning-making” (Komives et al., 2007, p. 104). These processes bear a strong similarity to some of the values of the social change model. Relational leadership is steeped in process. In order to succeed in the other areas of the model, these interpersonal skills and values must be engaged and developed. In contrast to conventional models of leaders and followers, relational leadership immerses itself into a dynamic and value-based process of relating and working together.

The leadership identity development model (Komives et al., 2006), provides an example of how college students develop their leadership capacity over time. A typical stage model in many ways, it presents six stages of development for leadership, and describes what happens for an individual as the stage emerges, at the time of full immersion within it, and in the transitional period from one stage to the next. However, the model is not linear, but rather a helix, as the stages can be experienced again on a deeper level as the individual matures.

Stage one is *awareness*, or the recognition that leadership is occurring in others. Stage two is *exploration and engagement*, as the person feels a pull to become involved in activities, and to contribute to the group. The third stage is *leader identified*, where the conventional tasks of leadership – getting things done, managing other people – are assumed by the leader. Between stages three and four is a key transition, a paradigm shift that occurs on the personal level. At this point, the individual separates the acts of leading from positional authority, realizing that change can be effected from anywhere within the group. Stage four is *leadership differentiated*. In this stage, trust of others within the group, and the value of participatory processes emerge. The individual sees the self as effective from any place within the group, able to exert influence as well as respect the contributions of others. The transition occurs as the leader thinks about the future of the group after he or she is gone. The fifth stage is *generativity* wherein the leader works to sustain the organization and train others. The sixth and last stage is *integration/synthesis*. A commitment to life-long learning and the leadership development of the self characterizes this stage. The complexities of leadership, faith in

the self as trustworthy, a desire to leave things better, and an imagination to see new opportunities for leadership have developed in the student by this stage.

One of the strengths of this model is that it approaches development from several angles. Individual factors, perception of the self with others, group elements, developmental factors, and the individual view on leadership are all accounted for in the model. Instead of a purely linear model, the authors propose a spiral, through which the stages can be re-experienced in a new context.

The Impact of College Leadership Development

The benefits of leadership development for college students are well noted. Between 1990 and 1998 the Kellogg Foundation funded 31 projects related to leadership development in young adults of traditional college age. More than 90 percent of the institutions reported positive growth in awareness of social, civic, and political issues. Additional high scoring areas included volunteerism, communication skills, personal/social responsibility, self-esteem, and problem solving, with all reporting improvements in 73 percent or more of the sample. Furthermore, the participating institutions also cited improvements in the areas of collaboration and networking for the institution as a whole (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999).

Dugan and Komives (2008) utilized the social change model (SCM) as the basis for a national study on leadership development of college students. Surveying over 50,000 students, the seven core values of the SCM were used to assess leadership outcomes in students. While the sample did not differentiate between specific leadership activities, students demonstrated a moderate to large difference between the first and final

year of college in four of the nine outcomes assessed. Of those reporting high scores in the scales used to assess leadership, the findings highlight significant influences on leadership outcomes including the impact of mentoring, involvement on campus, engagement with service, and formal leadership positions and programs. Interestingly, the single strongest predictor of leadership growth in college was engagement in discussions pertaining to socio-cultural matters, including issues of multiculturalism, and social and political issues.

Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (2001) studied the influence of leadership programs on student development by tracking 875 students through a longitudinal study. The researchers found that such programs positively influenced civic responsibility, campus involvement, leadership skills, and conflict resolution skills in addition to greater multicultural awareness and personal and societal values. Moreover, students who had participated in leadership programming demonstrated better leadership skills, more mature values and ethics, and a deeper cognitive understanding of leadership theory. Finally, involvement in service or volunteer activities had a positive impact on leadership development, regardless of participation in any formal leadership activity.

Spirituality and Leadership

So the answer to the question “Why lead?” is both simple and profound. The sources of meaning most essential in the human experience draw from our yearning for connection with other people. The exercise of leadership can give life meaning beyond the usual day-to-day stakes –approval of friends and peers, material gain, or the immediate gratification of success – because, as a practical art, leadership allows us to connect with others in a significant way. The word we use for that connection is love (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 209).

Speaking of love and leadership might seem perfectly natural in some contexts and unprofessional and uncomfortable in others. Nonetheless, spirituality and leadership are being connected in many areas, although the language used to describe spirituality will differ. Often, leadership is related to spiritual concepts such as authenticity (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), meaning-making (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Wheatley, 2005), consciousness of the self and others (Shankman & Allen, 2008), a higher purpose (Parameshwar, 2006), inner landscape (Palmer, 1997), genuineness (Dalton, 2005), and “contemplation, discernment, humility and a larger trust” (Parks, 2008, p. 3).

Fry (2003) drew upon the progression of leadership theory of the last 50 years, citing 1) path-goal theory, which connects tasks to the attributes of those involved; 2) charismatic leadership, with an emphasis on the leader as a role model others wish to emulate; 3) transactional and transformational leadership, with a difference between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards; and 4) servant leadership, in which leadership is motivated by a desire to serve others. Fry argued that these theories have influenced the emerging conceptualizations of spiritual leadership.

Workplace spirituality is a topic currently found in organizational leadership theory. A sense of meaning at work, membership in a community that provides a sense of connection, and a committed, ethical environment are all components of recent research claiming the need for spiritual awareness as part of leadership in the workplace. Most importantly, Fry (2003) embraced the spiritual and religious notion of vocation as one of two central themes in spiritual leadership. Vocation is derived from the Latin word *vocare*, meaning “to call.” Fry states that leaders need to create “a vision wherein

organization members experience a sense of calling in that their life has meaning and makes a difference” (p. 695). This “sense of transcendence” (p. 703) provides workers with a vision and purpose beyond the day-to-day tasks, and can bring “a sense of connection, joy, and completeness” (p. 703).

The second major theme surfaced by Fry is altruistic love. As Heifetz and Linsky (2002) noted, love is what provides deep meaning to our lives, and can provide deep meaning to our work as well. Fry stated that spiritual leadership establishes “a social/organizational culture whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others” (Fry, 2003, p. 695). An environment based in altruistic love lends itself to creating a community where people feel they belong and are valued for themselves and for their contributions.

The spiritual leader, therefore, creates a vision that appeals to all, lights the way as well as the goal, does not sell short ideals or values, encourages hope and faith, and calls all to excellence. The leader engages this vision and the members through altruistic love, which can take many forms. Some qualities of love that Fry listed are integrity, compassion, forgiveness, trust, and humility. Focusing on love is the antidote for destructive influences such as fear, worry, anger, jealousy, and a sense of failure, and can positively influence loyalty and commitment. Lastly, hope and faith are key ingredients to spiritual leadership because they keep people focused on the vision and encourage positive expectations as well as the hard work needed to make them happen. Fry claimed that these three qualities – vision, love, and hope/faith – together form an “intrinsic

motivation cycle” (Fry, 2003, p. 714) that leads to organizational commitment, productivity, and continuous improvement.

Wheatley (2005) agreed calling leadership “spiritual work” (p. 126). Through times of difficulty or chaos, spiritual leaders are needed to help others navigate the terrain. Many similar themes are raised by Wheatley, including meaning as a motivating factor for work, joy arising from service, courage, peacefulness, and interconnectedness. Bolman and Deal (2001) argued that attending to the spirit is essential to good leadership. In leadership there is not a place for individual heroism, but rather a need for grounding in a sense of community, which can then give rise to spiritual leadership. However, Bolman and Deal also emphasized that inner work – confronting the demons of one’s own life – is a requirement for growth as a leader. Finally, spiritual leadership can develop authorship, a means of putting a “signature” on work well done, and leaving it behind for the betterment of others.

Benefiel (2005) also wrote about spirituality and the workplace and claimed that the root of many problems in contemporary organizations is spiritual impoverishment. Fairholm (1997, 1998) echoed this claim by stating that dissatisfaction at work has risen as a result of a disconnect with the spirit within. Leaders who cherish spiritual values are needed to transform organizations. Touting servant leadership as the starting place, Fairholm called for more than just dedication, vision, or even spirit. Spiritual leadership incorporates spiritual elements such as inner awareness, transcendence, contentment, meaning, values and purpose. Moreover, spiritual leaders must attend to both the professional and personal lives of members. The process of this type of leadership

includes attention to high moral standards, community needs, stewardship of resources in the context of service, as well as traditional leadership categories such as vision and competence. The overall goal is continuous improvement of not just programs and services, but of people. Moreover, spiritual leadership is deeply rooted in the values of the individual leader; it is “the process of living out deeply held personal values, of honoring forces of a presence greater than self” (Fairholm, 1997, p. 112).

Similarly, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) stated that leadership must be attentive to the minds and hearts of people, or else it becomes a risky business that can easily lead to dysfunction. The best way to do that is to find ways to connect people to something bigger than themselves, similar to the idea of “vision” espoused by Fry. Like Fry, Heifetz and Linsky claimed that leadership is best rooted in love, with meaning as the motivator not just for the members, but for the leader as well. Without meaning, the reason for leading does not exist. Finally, they called leadership “an expression of your aliveness” (p. 225), similar to Bolman and Deal’s concept of authorship, or as Lisa Stamm (Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006) stated, “leaders set out not to be leaders, *per se*, but rather to express themselves freely and fully” (p. 250).

Spiritual Leadership and Education

The concept of spiritual leadership has emerged largely from organizational leadership related to business, just as most leadership theory overall has risen up from business (Bennis, 1989). Within education, Sokolow and Houston (2008) have elaborated on spiritual concepts that influence leadership. They wrote of “enlightened leaders” who learn to use principles such as intentionality, attentiveness, nurturing the

gifts and talents of others, gratitude, a holistic perspective, and openness as well as “trusting the Universe” (p. 34), “the power of prayer” (p. 16), “spiritual growth” (p. 26), and finding “silver linings” (p. 26). An enlightened leader “does the right things, in the right way, at the right time, for all the right reasons” (p. 34) for the purpose of bringing wisdom to the world and creating a better future for the students and institutions.

While not much is written about spiritual leadership and higher education, some authors have broached the topic tangentially in their work. Shankman and Allen (2008) took the concept of emotional leadership and applied it to college students. Emotional leadership bears many similarities to spiritual leadership. Emotional leadership theory was developed from other leadership theories such as transformational leadership, situational leadership, and authentic leadership, and is based on attentiveness to one’s feelings and using those feelings to guide thinking and action. It requires an intentionality regarding self-consciousness, a consciousness of others, and a consciousness of the environment. Optimism, self-understanding, empathy, humility, and caring about followers are all elements of the theory and bear resemblance to some of the characteristics of spiritual leadership.

Stamm (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006) in her discussion of spirituality in higher education referred to its place in leadership. She argued that institutional leaders are instrumental in bringing spirit back into the academy. In order for spirit to grow, presidents of colleges and universities need to lead the way, bringing values, ethics, and authenticity back into the essence of leadership. Stamm closely related moral leadership to what she termed “leadership for recovering spirit” (p. 243). While moral and ethical

leadership is distinct from spiritual leadership as understood by theorists such as Fry, there are overlapping areas such as integrity/genuineness, self-reflection/prayer, and values-based decision-making/care for others (love). Moreover, she proposed, as Fry did, that staying connected – or reconnecting – with a sense of calling is a pathway to recovering the place of spirit in leaders personally, and in the institutions they serve.

Rogers (2005) also encouraged the incorporation of a spiritual dimension into the work of educating for leadership within higher education. She argued for the importance of spiritual maturity – the state where one’s inner life is connected to service to the world. In a culture where leadership has been inseparable from tasks completed, she challenged that coupling and embraced the notion that leadership is “more about ‘being’ than about ‘doing’” (p. 1). Leaders would benefit from asking spiritual questions, such as “who am I?” and “what am I doing here?” Integrity and congruence between belief and action can be increased through spiritual reflection, which in turn will encourage participation by the members in the overall goal and task. Rogers stated: “People don’t believe the message if they don’t believe the messenger” (p. 3). Furthermore, it is through spiritual reflection and growth that a leader can embody authenticity, transparency, and congruence between values and right action.

Parks (2008) challenged the belief that the academy should only be about academic programs and the conferring of degrees by calling educators “agents of the formation of souls” (p. 7). As she stated, “the academy in its vocation as a formative educational institution committed to the intellectual life does, by intention or default, shape spiritual/religious understanding” (p. 1). To not recognize the role of spirit in the

lives of persons, or in the post-modern paradigms of scientific disciplines that have begun to embrace spiritual and religious language, is to risk the folly of non-responsiveness to the leadership needs of the times. Parks saw leadership and spirituality as intimately connected, and a pressing need within higher education today.

After a lengthy search of the literature, one relevant empirical study of college students and spiritual leadership was identified. Gehrke (2008) sampled 449 students using a correlational design to study the relationship between leadership and spirituality. He found a strong connection between equanimity (peacefulness or serenity, especially in the face of conflict) and socially responsible leadership, but only modest or weak relationships between other factors. This study used the variables from the Spirituality in Higher Education Study (Astin et al., 2005) and the social change model of leadership cited above (HERI, 1996). For Gehrke, the study suggests that there may be some relationship between spirituality and leadership, but that the reality is complex and not yet untangled. The newness of the concept of spiritual leadership applied to organizations, and the lack of a solid theory (Fry, 2003), even though models have emerged, indicates that perhaps more qualitative research is needed first to identify the discrete variables at work in the connection between spirituality and leadership.

Spiritual leadership is an emergent field within leadership theory overall and is just beginning to be explored within college student leadership development. The recent models of leadership for students – the social change model and the leadership identity development model – contain elements that can serve as a foundation for theory development and research for college spiritual leadership. Elements such as *congruence*

and *consciousness of self* in the social change model are easily connected to the spiritual development of the self. The latter stages of the leadership identity model, *generativity*, and *integration/synthesis*, denote a desire for a continuation of leadership and the fruits born of it. College students take pride in their contributions to their institutions and to society, and train younger students to develop leadership skills. Moreover, these models resonate with the descriptions of spiritual leadership above through a commitment to value-based leadership, leadership for the benefit of all involved, and an authentic response to a vocational call to work.

Additionally, the recent emphasis on spirituality in higher education and the spiritual development of college students that has emerged in discourse, theory, and research (Astin, 2004; Astin, Astin, Lindolm, & Bryant, 2005; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006; Estanek, 2006; Love, 2002; Love and Talbot, 1999) demonstrates some of the potential to meld college student leadership theory with the evolving concept of spiritual leadership. The groundwork for future research has been laid, and the time is ripe to extend spiritual leadership models and theory to the development of college students. This next section reviews recent trends in spirituality in higher education that have emerged in the past decade.

Spirituality in Higher Education

The history of higher education within the United States is one closely tied with religion. Colleges and universities, often purposefully designed to educate men to serve as clergy, were originally founded by religious groups. The study of theology, philosophy, and other religious and ethical concerns were standard curricula. With the

arrival of the Enlightenment in the 19th century and the ensuing turn toward a more scientific and positivistic framework for educational goals, matters spiritual began to give way to science and objective ways of thinking, learning, and researching (Marsden, 1994). While some institutions have kept religion and spirituality as part of their mission and focus, in other places and areas of higher education, religion lost its place in the academy due to the scholarly influence of diverse academic areas. Additionally, a growing knowledge of world religions limited the sway of Christianity as a guiding principle for higher education (Cherry, DeBerg & Porterfield, 2001). Religion, and its close sister, spirituality, was for many years suspect, ridiculed as naïve, or simply disregarded. Love (2002) describes spirituality issues as “strongly taboo on many college campuses” (p. 359).

Within higher education in recent years, the topic of spirituality has emerged anew as an interest of researchers (Estanek, 2006). Cherry et al. (2001) engaged in an in-depth study of four institutions to ascertain the prevalence of religion and spirituality on campus, in part to challenge the notion that secularization had reduced religion to the realm of the insignificant. Their study demonstrated that religion is currently an active force on college campuses. Love and Talbot (1999) brought forward to student affairs administrators the assertion that spiritual development is a significant component of overall student development, but is “conspicuously absent” in student affairs practice (p. 361). Parks (1986, 2000) established a theory of young adult faith development, using as a foundation Fowler’s (1981) six-stage theory of faith development. Love (2002) compared the spiritual development theories of Parks and Fowler with several cognitive

development theories: Perry (1970); Baxter Magolda (1992); Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986); and King and Kitchener (1994), and found significant areas of overlap between both faith and cognitive development.

Religion, Faith, and Spirituality

For the purposes of this section of the review, which is focused on spirituality, it is important to define and distinguish between religion, faith, and spirituality. The three have similarities as well as differences, and definitions vary among authors. Using Love's (2002) definition, religion includes 1) a search for the ultimate; 2) the use of story and symbol; and 3) the presence of doctrine, or set teachings. Additionally, religion is often understood as a phenomenon that has some organizational structure (Cherry et al., 2001). Parks (2000) understood faith as a process of meaning-making, done in the context of community, throughout one's entire life. Schneiders (2003) posited a broad definition of spirituality as "the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives" (p. 166). Love and Talbot (1999) used words such as authenticity, connectedness, wholeness, openness to that which is transcendent, and genuineness. Astin (2004) described spirituality as the compass to our interior life, which uses our affect as well as our reason, and embraces our strongest values about who we are, where we are from, and why we are here. For the purposes of this study, spirituality will be understood as having the potential to encompass both faith and religion, but in itself is a much broader phenomenon. Following from Schneiders, it is intentional, rooted in experience, and seeks to find integration through an understanding of the transcendent. It is connected to a desire to be

authentic and genuine, in search for the deeper meanings of life, and the resulting life-purposes that arise from that meaning. Spirituality asks the question, “What is the ‘more’ in life, the transcendent, that I have not yet discovered?” As such, spirituality is a process and a search for continued meaning and guiding values in one’s life.

The Faith Development Theories of Fowler and Parks

Foundational to the study of college student spirituality is the groundwork laid by faith developmental theorists Fowler (1981) and Parks (1986, 2000). Fowler’s theory, based in the work the developmental theorists Piaget (1928, 1932) and Erikson (1968), led the way for understanding spiritual development in stages. In Fowler’s theory, college students will largely find themselves in the middle stages, three and four, synthetic-conventional and individuative-reflective, respectively. In stage three, authority in matters of faith rest outside the self, and the individual seeks to conform to that authority. An ideology of belief has been formed, but critical examination of it has not ensued. A “demythologizing” (p. 182) of a worldview occurs in stage four. The reliance upon outside authority is relinquished and the assumptions about values are challenged. A sense of the bigger picture and the complexity of life and relationships is developed. These developmental stages three and four are similar to other cognitive theories such as Perry (1970) and Baxter Magolda (1992) in the required shift from an external to internal locus of authority. It is highly unlikely that traditional-age college students would reach the last two of Fowler’s stages. Stage five is “unusual before mid-life” (p. 198) and stage six, universalizing faith, is “exceedingly rare” (p. 200). Examples of individuals who

reached stage six include Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi.

Parks (1986, 2000) relied heavily on Fowler, and theorists Piaget and Perry. However, she added another stage to Fowler's theory, three and a half (3.5). This stage corresponds specifically with young adulthood. In this stage, the young adult becomes aware of the self as a distinct entity, and is therefore able to critically assess the self. Out of this critical assessment is the drive to be a determining factor in one's own development. Additionally, she emphasized the significance of community and mentoring in the developmental process, and stressed commitment as the test of adulthood in faith. Again, this is similar to Perry's (1970) later stages focused on the making and keeping of commitments. Using Parks' theory, Cannister (1999) studied the effect of mentoring and its effect on the spiritual well-being of students and demonstrated that mentoring correlated positively with levels of self-reported spiritual wellness for first year college students.

Smith and Snell (2009) conducted a large-scale study with young adults, whom they called "emerging adults" (p. 3). Through surveys and extensive interviews, Smith and Snell investigated how young adults understood and viewed religion and spirituality, their spiritual practices and belief systems, and other closely related issues such as the existing culture and family backgrounds. They discovered through their research that the majority of emerging adults (60%) had an interest if not an investment in religion and spirituality. Of the six major categories they used to characterize religious belief and practice, "committed traditionalists" (p. 166), those who could express a strong

commitment and understanding of their beliefs, comprised 15% of the sample. “Select adherents” (p. 167) chose the aspects of their religion with which they were most comfortable, but also maintained a level of commitment. This group was about 30% of the sample. The “spiritually open” (p. 167) did not express a personal commitment to religion or spirituality, but demonstrated an interest and openness to learning more. Additionally, of the sample, one in three respondents indicated regular church attendance, meaning attendance two or more times a month. Smith and Snell argued that religion and spirituality are still significant factors in the lives of young adults, stating: “We see little evidence here of massive secularization among America’s emerging adults” (p. 112).

Moreover, the influence of parents on emerging adults’ religion and spirituality was found to be the single most significant factor on the spiritual choices of their children, although other factors such as support from other adults, personal religious experiences, prayer and scripture reading, and certainty of faith beliefs were also part of the equation of continuing spiritual and religious beliefs. However, the majority of emerging adults also demonstrated values and beliefs that might not align well with traditional religious beliefs. Consumerism, pursuing education for the sole purpose of a career, a lack of regret about anything in their lives, and a relative moral system based largely on the value of “do no harm,” all characterized the typical young adult in the study. Smith and Snell also pointed out in each major theme elicited from the research, that there were significant minority viewpoints present in the study. For example, in contrast to the majority belief that “helping others is a personal choice” (p. 68), there was also a theme of “we’re responsible for each other” found in a “sizeable minority” of the

participants (p. 68). These adults believed in a personal responsibility to assist others in need as a moral obligation. Overall, Smith and Snell painted a picture of young adults who are products of their culture, their developmental age, and their upbringings. This picture supports an understanding that although they are not as religious as those a generation or two older, spirituality and religion play active and important parts in their lives.

Recent Developments

According to Estanek (2006), the topic of spirituality in higher education began to appear at conferences and in publications in the late 1990s. Since then, a new discourse about spirituality, distinct from religion, has emerged. In 2003, Astin and Astin, with colleagues Lindolm and Bryant, began a multi-year research project examining spirituality and spiritual development in college students. *The Spiritual Life of College Students* from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), assisted in shedding additional light on the topic of the spirituality and spiritual development of college students (2005). This study revealed that contemporary college students are keenly interested in spirituality. Moreover, it supported the positive influence of religious beliefs and practices on students' emotional and physical health. Finally, students reported seeking deeper meaning for their lives overall and engaging in important questions concerning life's purposes and available paths open to them.

More recently, additional publications have emerged related to the topic of spirituality in higher education. The *Journal of College and Character*, an e-journal published from Florida State University, contributes to mainstream higher education

literature, offering perspectives in spiritual development for college students as part of its content. Furthermore, peer-reviewed journals such as *The Review of Higher Education* and the *Journal of College Student Development* have published in this area (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003; Gehrke, 2008, Lindolm & Astin, 2008; Love, 2002). The discussion of spirituality in higher education is making its way into the mainstream, as it continues to develop and gain more prominence and influence. Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) expressed this movement in their book *Encouraging Authenticity and Spirituality in Higher Education*: “Dialogue has begun, centered on examining personal values, meaning, and purpose – including religious and spiritual values – as part of the educational experience” (p. 2). This dialogue is taking many forms, both through theory and research.

Studies in spirituality in higher education have increased, as has the emphasis on spirituality outcomes. A recent trend within higher education has been a move toward a focus on an educational paradigm that is learning-centered, rather than an instructional paradigm. In the learning paradigm, student-centered learning becomes the standard of success (Barr & Tagg, 1995), and therefore learning outcomes are used to judge the quality of a program, course, or service. As Baxter Magolda states, “Learners are in charge of their learning” (2009, p. 4).

An example of a learning paradigm in student affairs practice is the service and program standards set by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2006), more commonly known as the CAS standards. These include, among more traditional learning goals, a detailed section on “Campus Religious and/or Spiritual

Programs” (p. 75). The introduction stated: “As students look toward more diverse options to fulfill their spiritual and religious development, institutions should continue to equip staff with knowledge of issues that surround these programs” (p. 75). Outlining 16 learning outcomes, the authors placed spiritual programs alongside other student services as a means to achieving developmental goals. The standards and guidelines stress that provisions for these types of programs need to be made, including at public institutions where partnerships with external groups and sponsorships of student organizations will be the pathway to creating such programs. In addition to the outcomes that are closely associated with spiritual programs, such as spiritual awareness and clarified values, the standards also listed a large number of outcomes that are more general, such as social responsibility, intellectual growth, effective communication, leadership development, and health behavior. By combining these outcomes in a section on spirituality, the respected CAS standards are highlighting the interaction between spiritual growth and other areas of college student development. Chickering and Mentkowski (2006) agreed: “Spiritual growth is highly interactive and interdependent with other major vectors of human development” (p. 221).

Salient Research on Spirituality and Higher Education

A strong contribution to this emergent dialogue has been the HERI study by Astin et al. noted above. This study of 112, 232 entering first year students “revealed that today’s college students have very high levels of spiritual interest and involvement” (p. 3). This large, multi-year study has resulted in several findings about college students and spirituality. First, students reported being involved in a spiritual search and engaged

in religious matters. More than three fourths indicated an interest in spirituality or involvement in a search for meaning in life. Seeking opportunities to grow spiritually was essential or very important to the majority of the students. For religious engagement, the vast majority of students indicated a belief in God, attending religious services at least occasionally, and participating in discussions about religion or spirituality with friends and family. Moreover, students expected that colleges and universities would “encourage their personal expression of spirituality” (p. 6).

High scores on the spirituality scales were also correlated with moderate to high scores on the equanimity scale, meaning that these students were slightly more likely to find peace or meaning during difficult times. Equanimity is an important characteristic for overall well-being. As Astin and Keen (2006) stated:

[I]t may well be that the quality of [students'] lives and of the contributions they are able to make to the world they live in will ultimately be determined by their capacity to make meaning in the face of ambiguity, uncertainty, and change (p. 4).

Furthermore, spirituality correlated positively with several factors associated with physical well-being, such as abstinence from alcohol and cigarettes, and the tendency to eat a healthy diet. Finally, students with high spirituality scores were more likely to value charitable involvement and an ethic of caring, and demonstrated a higher compassionate self-concept. While the study showed a strong correlation between spirituality and religiosity, it also demonstrated that students are tolerant and accepting of others from different religions or no religion. Overall, the study asserted that students today are interested and invested in spirituality and spiritual development, are seeking

meaning and purpose in their lives, and are benefiting personally from their own spiritual engagement.

Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno (2003) studied first-year students, with a focus on the influence of the first year of college on individual spirituality and religiosity. The sample of 3,680 students was drawn from those who completed the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey and the follow-up survey, Your First College Year (YFCY) distributed the following academic year. The researchers found that even as students demonstrated a decrease in religious activity in the first year of college, there was an overall increase of those who declared the integration of spirituality into their lives as essential or very important. Over two-thirds of students applied some level of importance to this factor each year. High scores on spirituality were found across religious traditions, and spirituality and religious engagement were both correlated and predictive of each other. The study was general in its terminology, never defining spirituality, which might have had a variety of meanings for students surveyed. Moreover, the study used a dataset designed for multiple purposes, and was not focused solely on this topic. However, it did provide a window into the significance of spirituality as a factor in the development of students and a goal that students believe worth pursuing, giving support to other studies that have reported similar findings.

Bryant (2007), using the same CIRP and YFCY dataset found that students who participated in religious groups reported more growth in the knowledge of culturally different people than those who did not. The research questions set out to confirm a hypothesis that religiously engaged people are more *intolerant* of others from culturally

or racially different backgrounds. Bryant posited that religious involvement would correlate positively with “conservative attitudes and behaviors” and would “hinder students’ development of cultural awareness” (p. 5). Kuh & Gonyea (2006) echoed this hesitancy on the part of higher education to embrace spiritual involvement claiming that “some faculty members worry that students who arrive at college holding fast to religious beliefs are conditioned to resist the ‘liberal learning’ curriculum” (p. 40). The results of Bryant’s study demonstrated that religiously involved students tend to be more open and tolerant of those who are different in race and culture. Additionally, religious participants were slightly more likely to feel successful in making and networking with friends, and reported higher rates of emotional well-being and spiritual engagement. Kuh’s study using data from the National Study on Student Engagement (NSSE) showed that spiritual involvement did not have a negative effect on engagement for students, and may positively affect engagement overall. Hayes (2007), through his interviews with Catholic young adults – those in their 20s and 30s – bolstered this emphasis on diversity of spirituality, having stated that there is a great deal of spiritual diversity among the members of this generation, even within the same faith tradition. These studies lend weight to the assertions of those advocating for attention to spiritual matters in higher education, in particular by countering beliefs that religion equates with narrow-mindedness, and by highlighting positive outcomes associated with religious involvement.

Cherry et al. (2001) explored the phenomenon of religion on college campuses, focusing on four colleges representing two religiously affiliated institutions, a historically

black college, and a large public university. Setting out to disprove the belief that institutions of higher education had become mostly secularized, the researchers found that spirituality is alive and well on college campuses. Student initiatives through registered student organizations offered a wide variety of opportunities, especially at the public institution, even though actual attendance at events and services was not a large percentage of the student population. At the religiously affiliated institutions, the students recognized the religious character of the schools, and the universities worked to maintain the religious identity that was part of its tradition and culture. Consistent with the findings of the studies above, “there was a commitment to honoring religious diversity” (p. 281) and respecting religious freedom, even as some tensions around religion were observed in the study. Students connected volunteer and service work with religious values, and classes on religion were valued at all campuses. Cherry and his colleagues arrived at the conclusion that claims of higher education espousing anti-religious sentiments, or being the victim of secularization, are limited at best.

Not all of the outcomes from spiritual involvement are comfortable for students. Many young adults are committed to their spiritual lives, and part of that investment will mean facing times of spiritual struggle. Crisis can be an important precursor to developing spiritually. Parks (2000) referred to it as a time of “shipwreck” that can lead to maturity in faith (p. 30). Holcomb and Nonneman (2004), in the Faithful Change Project, a longitudinal study of students and spiritual development, identified three types of crisis most often experienced – exposure to diverse ways of thinking, multicultural exposure, and general emotional challenges. Bryant and Astin (2008) found that around

20 per cent of students frequently questioned their beliefs and almost that many “struggled to understand evil, suffering, and death” (p. 12). Anger toward God was at least occasionally experienced by almost half of the sample. Correlations with spiritual struggle included psychological distress, poorer health, and less self-confidence. However, spiritual challenge was positively associated with tolerance for others of differing beliefs. Astin et al. (2005) found that those in the midst of struggle are more likely to find meaning in difficulty and to feel at peace. To address the negative effects of grappling with spiritual questions, Gear, Krumrei, and Pargament (2009), along with others, developed a program at Bowling Green State University to intervene with students who were experiencing spiritual struggles. “Winding Road” was designed as a psycho-educational treatment to assist students in working through these struggles. Groups of students met for nine weeks, and after completion of the program “reported experiencing fewer spiritual struggles” (p. 3). Some students reported an easing of the struggles, others an acceptance of them, and still others an appreciation for the growth that arose out of working through that moment of struggle, of turning the crisis or “shipwreck” into a time of gladness.

Spirituality in the Curriculum

Infusing spiritual growth into the curriculum is a pedagogy being used by some. McGee (2003) researched the effects of a spiritual health component as part of an upper-division stress management course. While both sections were taught by the same instructor, the control group received traditional stress management theory in the course and the students participating in the treatment section “had opportunities to increase

awareness of personal spirituality and spiritual health, and engage in activities considered to be conducive to spiritual health enhancement.” These issues were explored through writing assignments and projects (p. 2). The results demonstrated that the students who received the spiritual materials scored significantly higher on the Spirituality Assessment Scale (SAS) used in the study, indicating a higher level of spiritual health and wellness. The SAS measures items that correspond with descriptors of spirituality used in this review, including purpose in life, balance, inner resources, connectedness and openness to transcendence.

Ardelt (2008) used a similar method, but with a slightly larger sample – a treatment group size of 168. Studying 11 courses, with the treatment groups consisting of courses through the Center for Spirituality and Health (CSH) at the University of Florida, Ardelt measured for spiritual beliefs and involvement, purpose in life, subjective health, death acceptance, wisdom, personal growth, and relationships. While the pre-tests between the two groups resulted in no significant differences, the students in the CSH courses showed significant growth in these areas over their peers in the control groups. Although the treatment groups were small, these studies indicated that spirituality can be introduced into a classroom and that curriculum changes can have a positive impact on student’s spiritual and psychosocial well-being.

Moreover, service-learning opportunities have been connected to spiritual growth, although empirical research in this area is not widespread. Radecke (2007) studied 38 students enrolled in a service-learning curriculum. He found that students indicated spiritual growth in several areas after participation in the course, including overcoming

xenophobia – which he defined as “fear of the stranger;” deepening of religious faith; discerning a vocation, or call from God; new images of Jesus Christ that were disorienting to the students’ established beliefs; and reaching a conclusion that one can be “rich in things and poor in soul” (p. 19). Like Parks (2000), Radecke concluded that crisis, which he labeled disequilibrium, could be the opportunity for spiritual growth: “I have come to appreciate and respect the value of the disequilibrium that the students experience. It opens them to the disorienting dilemmas, transformation of perspective, dissolution, and recomposition of meaning that are the core components of faith formation” (p. 28).

Spirituality and Faculty

The other side of the classroom, so to speak, is the spirituality of the faculty. Over ten years ago, Palmer (1997) in his book, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*, injected the search for spiritual meaning into the role of teaching. A university professor, Palmer identified several spiritual issues related to teaching. He wrote of the “inner landscape” and the “spiritual quest for connectedness” (p. 5). Teaching is a vocation, to which he, and others, have been both called and gifted. Dangers to spiritual wholeness are the fear of “encountering an alien otherness” (p. 37) and being trapped in an “either-or” type of thinking, for which only a spiritual connection can offer a solution. Community and mentoring are essential to teaching, and it is only a “community of truth” (p. 102) that provides grace and integrity, and this community is the result of “openness to transcendence” (p. 109). Ultimately, Palmer asserted that it is only self-knowledge that allows us to develop any knowledge of anything truly great. It

is the interior quest that makes all other quests possible. Palmer's message resonated strongly with others, and *Courage to Teach* has been a trademarked program of retreats for teachers since 1997 (Courage Renewal, 2009), and a second edition of the book was printed in 2007.

The spiritual lives of faculty and the influence of spirituality on teaching was the focus of a study by Lindolm and Astin ten years later (2008). The authors' asked the question: What is the effect of faculty's spirituality on pedagogy, specifically "student-centered" (p. 188) pedagogy? Using a definition of spirituality centered in authenticity, genuineness, transcendence, purpose and connectedness, the 40,670 faculty who responded to the survey rated themselves on the importance of spirituality and spiritual growth in their own lives. The results demonstrated that faculty who self-report a high level of spirituality are much more likely to engage in student-centered pedagogy in their courses, indicated by class discussions, cooperative learning, student presentations, group projects, reflective writing, student input into course topics, and student evaluation of both peers and self in the course. While this one study can be critiqued for using a simple three item self-report of spirituality, it supports the assertion that spirituality is an important factor in higher education that needs further study – for students, staff, and faculty – as all are part of the educational enterprise. Qualitative follow-up using similar research questions could offer a more detailed picture of faculty and the influence of spirituality on pedagogy. Research such as this study is the beginning and foundation for promising future research.

New Directions

As a “new discourse” (Estanek, 2006, p. 4), spirituality in higher education is continually being defined and refined. Theories and research are at beginning stages, as understandings of this phenomenon evolve. The studies that have been reported here are good groundwork, pointing the way to future directions for research; yet, they are just a beginning. For example, the spirituality study by Astin et al. (2005) begs many questions, such as: What kind of spirituality? How did students interpret the meaning of spirituality when responding? What difference does it make anyway? How will it affect students’ lives and the lives of others? How does spiritual development fit into the mission of higher education?

Assessment is as of yet an undeveloped area for spirituality. Most of the studies here relied on self-reports of growth, which may be unduly influenced by the desire to please the researcher, especially if the study is related to curricular work. Furthermore, Houck (2002) questioned the ability of anyone to assess a student’s relationship with God. As the discourse and body of knowledge on spirituality grows, so must the creative use of assessment of learning if spiritual development is to have a prominent place within higher education.

A further growing edge of spirituality research is the connection to other subject matter related to it. One such area was alluded to earlier in this review – cognitive development. Faith development, in the theories of Fowler and Parks, is already connected to cognitive development since Fowler and Parks both relied on cognitive theorists for their work. While spiritual development will encompass much more than

cognitive growth, cognitive development belongs within the discourse of spirituality, as the ability to think and reason, and claim one's own values is an integral component for progression to a mature spirituality. Baxter Magolda's (2001) theory of self-authorship supports the need for cognitive development in order to become the "author" of oneself and one's life. Self-authorship involves mature cognitive development in order to lay claim to the values and beliefs that will shape one's decision-making and life direction.

Implicit in cognitive development, but not yet explicit in spiritual development, is ethical and moral development. The definitions of spirituality being formed and used within the context of higher education speak of values, but have not articulated specific values. In fact, any sense of "ought" or "the good" is largely missing from the discourse. With an emphasis on authenticity, genuineness, wholeness, openness, and a compass to the interior life, spirituality in higher education appears stuck in individual relativism, and as such needs itself to mature. Limited is the discussion of community or communal values, or even of definitions of citizenship or contributing to the common good—both non-religious, but ethical values.

A progression from the current focus on the self in spiritual development might occur through a connection to leadership. Ethics has always been a concern for leadership (Northouse, 2007), but some have brought it more explicitly into leadership theory (Avolio and Gardner; 2005, Bass, 1998; Burns, 1978; Kouzes and Posner, 1987), and into college leadership development theory (Astin, 1996, Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 2007; Kouzes and Posner, 1998). Ethics is also a central component of spiritual leadership. This concept is being explored largely in the work world (Benefiel,

2005; Fairholm, 1997, 1998, 2001; Fry, 2003). By adapting spiritual leadership, and combining it with college student leadership development theory, the discourse related to spirituality in higher education can be taken to a new level, one that builds upon both leadership and spirituality theory and practice, and incorporates an ethic of caring for others and for the community in order to better serve college students, as well as the individuals and groups they will serve once leaving the collegiate environment.

Student Development at Faith-Based Institutions

As stated above, the topic of spirituality and spiritual development has not been widely accepted in all arenas of higher education. Even a college or university expressly identified with a religious tradition may or may not have embraced these topics as they apply to student life and development. However, this new discourse on spirituality within higher education could work to include faith-based institutions as it continues to grow and integrate itself into the dialogue of student development. A review of the extant literature in this area has surfaced studies on the influence of faith-based institutions on development and student learning, the significance of reflection for this growth to occur, and the shaping of specific morals and values while at college. Furthermore, desired outcomes have been identified, best practices named, and connections made between the missions of these institutions, which are rooted in the religious traditions, and student learning and development actually occurring. Catholic colleges and universities, numbering 244, and therefore representing the largest single group of denominational institutions, are the focus of the following research (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, 2010).

Discussions of values and ethics permeate the current discourse at these faith-based institutions, intersecting with this trend in both the spirituality and leadership dialogues. These institutions seek to shape and form the values of students, partly, but not exclusively, with the intent of conforming these values to those of the sponsoring religious tradition. Gray and Cidade (2010) found that self-identified Catholic students attending Catholic colleges and universities moved closer to Church teaching, sometimes quite significantly, in terms of beliefs and practices while in college. Although the influence of the culture and the characteristics of the millennial generation still played significant roles, and therefore the percentages of those students in step with Church teaching were still lower than that of the older adult population, enrollment at a Catholic institution supported a stronger movement to Church teaching than enrollment elsewhere. For example, gains toward alignment with Church teaching were noted in regard to the death penalty, military spending, and gun control. Issues of social justice were predominant, with 75% of students stating that it was “essential” or “very important” to reduce pain and suffering in the world, and 58% agreeing that the wealthy should pay higher taxes. On the negative side, there was a movement away from Church teaching on abortion, although less than their counterparts at non-Catholic schools, and a strong divergence from Church teachings on same-sex marriage.

Day (2006) surveyed alumni of Catholic institutions, in comparison to other religious and non-religious privates, as well as public flagship universities, on the influence of their education on several variables, including ones related to values. He found that 83% of respondents from the faith-based schools noted frequent interaction

with students who held a similar set of values as compared to 61% of students at national flagship public universities. Additionally, 75% of those alumni from Catholic institutions reported the integration of values and ethics into discussions in the classroom, compared to only 27% of the participants from the public universities. Finally, the respondents from Catholic colleges and universities overwhelmingly reported, in comparison to their public counterparts, that their institution helped them to become more politically and socially aware and to develop moral principles for their lives. While the overall number of participants, 2063, with 308 participants from Catholic institutions, is not large enough to be fully generalized to the larger population, it does provide a window of insight into the importance of values and value-based discussions at faith-based institutions.

This study also surfaced salient data related to leadership skills gained at Catholic institutions. Separate somewhat from the value-based data, but relevant to the overall topic of integrating spirituality and leadership, Day discovered that respondents from the Catholic institutions reported higher levels of involvement in all activities, except Greek organizations, than their public flagship counterparts. Additionally, they were more likely to graduate in four years, and to attribute their leadership skills to education at their institution. These skills included speaking effectively, writing effectively, solving problems, and decision-making. Additionally, for the general category of leadership, Catholic institutional respondents reported significant differences from their public (70% to 52%), other church-affiliated schools (65%) and other private (62%) counterparts.

A sub-set of the values discourse, especially as it related to faith-based institutions, is the topic of justice. Catholic Social Teaching, derived from writings of the

institutional Church since 1891, and connected to the biblical mandate to care for the poor, is based in the notion of justice rooted in the Christian gospel (Kammer, 1991). The United States Catholic Bishops (1986) distinguished between three types of justice. *Commutative justice* is contractual justice, wherein agreements and exchanges are fair between individuals or groups. *Distributive justice* refers to ensuring that basic material needs of all people are met, especially in light of current wealth of some individuals and nations. A third notion of justice, *social justice*, is based in the belief the every human being has dignity, and that each person has the right and the responsibility to participate and contribute to society. This idea of social justice has also come to include broader notions of resource allocations, work toward the common good, and responsible stewardship of the environment (Kammer, 1991; Massaro, 2000). The “virtue of justice” attempts to “express the demands of Christian love” and includes both rights and duties in all its forms (McBrien, 1994, p. 946). Moreover, justice rooted in faith demands solidarity with the poor and suffering of the world, and work toward the improvement of the conditions that cause poverty and misery (Pope Paul VI, 1967).

Catholic institutions, claiming the Church’s long history and tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, strive to incorporate education for justice within their curricular and co-curricular activities, especially those related to spirituality and/or leadership (Estanek & James, 2007; Fleming, Overstreet, & Chappe, 2006; Nichols, 2009). Buckley (1998), argued the imperative of this type of education from his position as a Catholic Jesuit priest involved in the work of higher education. However, while Catholic institutions have a particular responsibility to alleviate suffering because of faith in Christ Jesus, all

universities, he argued, ought to be committed to the “humane growth of its students” (p. 114), which entails education that attends to human suffering and provides the skills and knowledge to address it. Buckley stated: “The university offers, as no other institution can offer, the reflective atmosphere and the broad range of studies that can awake and refine human sensibilities” (p. 127).

These understandings of justice go beyond conceptualizing justice as fairness, impartiality, or equality. Justice, in these faith terms, is a particular form of ethics and ethical behavior. If ethical leadership is doing the right things, at the right time, for the right reasons (Sokolow and Houston, 2008), then faith-based justice overlays ethics with an imperative to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable, care for the earth, and protect human life. It begins to define what the “right” is. Education for justice, therefore, teaches how to lead and contribute to society in a way that fosters the humane development and growth of the students, so that they might become aware of the plight of many of the world’s persons, and seek to improve it.

Justice education can be viewed in light of a Catholic institution’s overall mission, which includes the academic mission as the primary focus, but embodies characteristics representative of the religious tradition, and of the sponsoring religious organization, usually an order of religious men or women recognized formally by the Church. Nichols (2009) argued, along with 25 of his colleagues from 10 colleges and universities, for the significance of mission for a Catholic institution as integral to the overall education of the student. This mission, and therefore the education of the student, needs to include the integration of faith and reason, a respect for collective wisdom,

attention to the dimension of community in all human action, and education for the purpose of creating a worldview or life's philosophy (Hellwig, 2000). The common denominators for mission across the ten institutions referenced by Nichols are: commitment to the search for truth, respect for the dignity of human persons, spiritual development of students, and engagement in service work and action on the behalf of peace and justice.

Fleming, Overstreet, and Chappe (2006), using the Boston College Questionnaire, surveyed students at four Catholic, Jesuit institutions on the connections between programming and the outcomes related to institutional mission. They found that some activities directly enhanced the institution's mission effectiveness related to student development. Specifically, involvement in spiritual retreat programs, service/immersion trips, service and awareness groups, and different religious organizations were positively correlated with religious practice and with each other, demonstrating to the researchers that they were indicators of the religious and/or spiritual lives of the students. As such, these activities were deemed as significant outcomes of mission-based education. Additionally, the study challenged past research that dichotomized spirituality and religion with a claim that students were largely not religious and instead chose to classify themselves as spiritual (Cherry et al., 2001; Fuller, 2001). Contrarily, Fleming and his colleagues found that being religious, according to their study, was a strong indicator of being spiritual, suggesting that the two are more closely connected than others have argued in the past.

Faith-based institutions also have a stake in the personal development of students. This includes religious activity and mindsets, and social justice education, as referenced above, but other areas as well. Estanek and James (2007) highlighted the importance of education for personal integrity and moral choices that impact one's personal well-being. Moreover, an emphasis on a search for meaning and purpose, and the discernment toward a life's work, or vocation, is seen as essential to education at a Catholic institution. This sense of vocation, or a lifework that "is accomplished in partnership with the God who gives us life and talents" (p. 8), is a theme found directly and indirectly at faith-based institutions. In 2000 the Lilly Endowment provided grants for 20 colleges and universities to develop programming designed to foster vocational discernment and growth. Another 68 institutions were awarded similar grants in the following two years. The vocational exploration programs developed included a wide variety of curricular and co-curricular activities, such as courses on ethics, spiritual growth, religious life, commitment, and social justice, and programming which included retreats, theological reflection, sustainability education, and some programming that also extended to faculty, staff, and members of boards of trustees (Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation, 2010).

Vocation, whether seen as a response to God's calling, a partnership with God, or a return for gifts and talents residing in the individual, is a common theme at faith-based institutions and the educational environment they seek to provide for their students. During a time of life when many students are transitioning into adulthood, developing their own identities, choosing career paths, and making important relational choices,

faith-based institutions are seeking to enhance those developmental opportunities in addition to supporting the college or university's mission by integrating the spiritual element of vocation discernment into curricular and co-curricular programming.

Overall, faith-based institutions are addressing student development from a particular vantage point that includes values clarification and edification, education for justice, mission-based and mission-driven values, and vocation. Activities both within and outside of the classroom contribute to development in these specific areas, but also influence other facets of development such as leadership. These priorities for faith-based colleges and universities provide opportunities for connection with student leadership development, spiritual development, and spiritual leadership development as they have emerged in both higher education and in broader sectors in recent years.

Conclusion

Surveying current literature, there exists a clear record of theories and models of college student leadership development, new and developing understandings of spiritual development and the role of spirituality in higher education, and emerging trends related to the concept of spiritual leadership in a work or business model. While faith-based institutions seek to bring these ideas together through student programming and other implementations of the missions of these institutions, research that addresses the convergence of these three types of development for college students was not found after a thorough search of the literature.

There is little research within college student leadership development theory that specifically addresses spirituality as an influence on leadership. Related themes, such as

ethics, relationship, congruence, civic engagement, and values development are present, and have the potential to be connected to spirituality themes. Student leadership theory might expand and deepen by adding the themes and the particular language of spirituality.

While the literature supports spirituality in higher education and the spiritual and faith development of young adults as prominent topics in recent years, connections between spirituality and issues of leadership, especially leadership for justice, have been largely absent from the literature. In this case, understandings of spirituality might be enhanced through the connection to leadership, giving it a direction and purpose that would go beyond a personal understanding of spirituality to a communal one that would include leadership *for* something significant and valued. Furthermore, understandings of leadership could benefit from the added spiritual and faith-based understanding of ethics, right relationship, right behaviors, and justice.

Finally, spiritual leadership models are seeking to bridge the above gap between leadership and spirituality. Few connections have been made between spiritual leadership and college. While some individual authors have made discrete connections, a strong connection does not yet exist. Spiritual leadership models from organizational theory might provide the framework for making more concrete associations to college students and their development.

These distinct concepts referenced above have been studied in isolation, but not yet in combination with one another. Therefore, this study sought to explore connections between spirituality and leadership for college students using the conceptual framework

proposed in Chapter One. By studying the possible relationship of influence between spirituality and leadership, this research sought to contribute to the extant literature by adding spirituality as a new dimension of leadership, and by enlarging the concept of spirituality in higher education to include an imperative to lead for positive change, especially as that change relates to notions of justice.

As an exploration of possible relationships, a qualitative method was selected with the intent of surfacing connections, common themes, and future research directions that will continue to explore and develop the idea of spiritual leadership for college students. Specifically, a case study approach was utilized to explore in-depth a program at a faith-based institution that integrated both spiritual and leadership development as part of the educational programming. The following section describes the full methods by which this study explored, understood, and connected these concepts as they apply to college students within a faith-based setting.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH CONTEXTS AND METHODS

Having framed the context of the research problem and accompanying questions, followed by a review of the literature that described theory and research related to the research topic, this chapter fleshes out the particular methods that were employed in this exploratory study. In seeking new understandings of spirituality and leadership, and the interplay between these two phenomena, I investigated the expression of these realities, as well as potential connections, in the beliefs and actions of college students.

Approaching this inquiry as a case study of a specific program at a faith-based institution, the research was conducted within a set context, and approached from different angles to best understand the case.

A researcher's approach to a problem or question is contextualized within a particular paradigm that shapes the research design and actions. This collection of beliefs and assumptions ground both thought and practice. "A paradigm is a worldview – a way of thinking about and making sense of the complexities of the real world. . . . Paradigms tell us what is important, legitimate, and reasonable" (Patton, 2002, p. 69). One traditional paradigm, positivism, approaches truth from an objectivist perspective. Positivism suggests that reality can be grasped and understood by objective study, that is, carefully controlled research, which can be hypothesized, measured, quantified, and then

understood. Positivistic inquiry is linear in nature, beginning with predictions, traveling through a structured research processes, and ending with controlled outcomes. It is usually developed through experimental and survey research designs that are largely quantitative (Schwandt, 2006).

Constructivism stands in contrast to positivism as an alternative form of inquiry by understanding truth as a series of complex insights that are built in the process of research. Meaning is not discovered, but rather is constructed. Moreover, there is not one objective truth, but multiple realities that are interpreted by the researcher. In constructivism, the epistemology, or how “we know what we know,” reflects knowledge composition through our own consciousness and through “our engagement with the realities of the world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Truth is not out there waiting for discovery, but rather, is embedded within our own experiences and our subsequent reflection upon those experiences that coalesce into understandings of reality.

Guba and Lincoln (2008) outlined the goal of constructivism as understanding, not as explanation. In this paradigm, knowledge is not positively verifiable, but rather is constructed with a goal toward consensus. In constructivist inquiry, values are essential and formative to the process, and both researcher and participants have a voice and play a role as co-creators of the findings. Furthermore, interpretation is a key component of this form of inquiry, and although one interpretation may never be declared definitive, the quest for a higher or highest quality interpretation is essential (Schwandt, 2006). Constructivist inquiry seeks to make meaning of the multiple realities encountered, and to create new knowledge as it develops.

In this study I utilized the constructivist paradigm to explore the spiritual lives of college students, and the influences of that spirituality on their leadership beliefs and practices. Given this emergent topic of study, and the unknown connections between spirituality and leadership in this sub-group, constructivist inquiry allowed for the participants and me to together arrive at new understandings and create connections among the topics explored.

Within this constructivist epistemology, two theoretical approaches, or “the philosophical stance informing the methodology” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3) were employed. The first, phenomenology, asks, “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Phenomenology inquires about daily experience, and how that experience shapes a person’s consciousness, beliefs, and behavior. A phenomenon can be many things, such as an emotion, a relationship, a job, a program, or an organization. What distinguishes phenomenology as a line of inquiry is its probing of lived experience and how meaning is derived from those who have lived it. In other words, how those involved in the phenomenon interpret it (Patton, 2002). Taking into consideration the importance of interpretation, phenomenology stands as one of the interpretivist theoretical frameworks in which one can conduct constructivist research (Crotty, 1998). For this study, phenomenology allowed the student participants, those who were interviewed and studied through the course of the field work, to construct meaning from their own experiences as student leaders and as persons of faith and spirituality. In turn, I overlaid an

interpretative lens upon the phenomenon, and joined in the construction of meaning for spiritual leadership.

A second interpretivist framework is the hermeneutical perspective. Patton (2002) stated: “What something means depends on the cultural context in which it was originally created as well as the cultural context within which it is subsequently interpreted” (p.113). Patton cited the origin of hermeneutics in philosophy, wherein Schleiermacher and others argued for the importance of understanding the context, that is, the culture, historical period, and audience, in interpretation, specifically in the interpretation of texts. Although traditionally limited to texts, hermeneutics can also be used to “establish context and meaning for what people do” (p. 115).

While the primary theoretical framework for this study was phenomenology, hermeneutics was employed to better understand the experiences of the participants, the observations made by those who knew these students, and the documents that were reviewed as part of the case study. Within the case, a particular sub-culture existed that housed the participants and the program organization of which they were a part. This sub-culture, as well my own perspective, influenced the findings of the study. The reality that was constructed was interpreted in light of the participants who provided the data, and the researcher who collected and interpreted it. While I recognize that my perspectives might have influenced the study, I also sought to be reflexive about my own experiences, and subsequently sought to bracket them, in order to actively suspend judgments and conclusions while the study was being conducted and analyzed.

Methodology

Defined by Crotty (1998) as “the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (p. 3), methodology describes the overall approach to the study and the rationale behind it. It guides the researcher in devising a plan, to choose specific methods, and to employ those methods in an intentional manner. The nature of the research questions drives the methodology selected to answer these questions. In an exploratory study, a qualitative method allows the researcher to ask “what” and “how” questions. What is the phenomenon being experienced here? How are the participants experiencing and understanding this phenomenon? Qualitative inquiry allows the information to emerge and develop in the study, as opposed to specifying in advance the information that will be collected (Cresswell, 2003). Moreover, this type of research allows for connections to be made that are based in human relationship, and to explore questions at a greater depth that quantitative methods allow.

This study, grounded in an epistemology of constructivism, and the theoretical perspectives of phenomenology and hermeneutics, employed phenomenological research as the methodology. Crotty (1998) distinguished phenomenological research as a particular methodology, distinct from the theoretical perspective, and also separate from discrete methods. In this study, phenomenology provided an umbrella for the study and the case and served as an organizing tool for research. As such, this methodology consisted of interviews with participants and those who work with them and studies of

documents, as well as the researcher's own participation in the study and in the phenomenon of spiritual leadership.

Case Study Method

Patton (2002) argued that the “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth” (p. 230). In the study of this phenomenon of spiritual leadership for college students, a case study method allowed for an in-depth exploration of how spiritual leadership becomes manifest in students from multiple perspectives. Allowing for the individuals to express their own experiences and understandings, interviews were conducted with college students who were involved in spiritual and leadership activities. Moreover, faculty and staff who worked directly with these students, shaping the programs that provided the context for leadership, were interviewed. Faculty and staff were key resources, providing another source of data to explore the experience of the students, and also to explain the overall culture, programs, courses, and design of the context in which spiritual leadership was being formed. A review of documents describing the institution and its mission, as well as the particular subtext in which students were participating, rounded out the data.

Case study as a method had been chosen to give life to a story of how and under what circumstances spiritual leadership might develop and grow in college students. As an instrumental case study, the case was not chosen primarily because it was uniquely interesting, but because it had the potential to shed light on the phenomenon of spiritual leadership for students. An instrumental case allows for deeper understandings of a particular topic to emerge (Stake, 1995). Moreover, the study examined the context of a

faith-based institution as influential to spiritual leadership. The case study method is appropriate for research in which the “real-life context” is deemed significant to the study and the “boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Being bounded to one particular context, this study sought to find meaning and insight into the spiritual and leadership lives of students by investigating in-depth a distinct program at a Catholic institution that provided a context for understanding the phenomenon of spiritual leadership.

The strengths of this method included the ability to delve deep into the topic, exploring nuances and details of the concept of spiritual leadership as it manifested itself in students. Stake (1995) described a case as “an integrated system” (p. 2). As such, the case study method provides a picture of the whole, with its dynamic and working parts, providing for understandings of the complexity of people, connections, relationships, and the environment as they all relate to the topic being explored. It is an exploration of the particular with the intention of producing understandings for that case (Stake, 1995), although these understandings might also be generalizable to larger situations (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The research questions for this study lent themselves to case study research insofar as they sought to uncover students’ own understandings of their spirituality and leadership, and to do so within a specific context of a faith-based institution. Moreover, using a case study method for this investigation created the potential to pursue further study of this topic on a larger scale, since it described the particulars of students’ experiences and beliefs that might resonate with the experiences and beliefs of students in other contexts.

While all studies have limitations, Flyvbjerg (2006) argued that misunderstandings exist about the value of case study research. He cited a bias toward context-independent, or theoretical, knowledge. This bias too often disallows the important learning that occurs through the concrete and practical, a manner of learning that is common and essential to human experience. Moreover, Flyvbjerg argued, generalization is possible, and he contended that “formal generalization, whether on the basis of large samples or single cases, is considerably overrated as the main source of scientific progress” (p. 226). Generalization to a larger population has its advantages, but it should not be the only, nor even the foremost, goal of research. Finally, Flyvbjerg suggested that case study research is not just a stepping-stone to generate hypotheses for future, positivistic investigations, but stands on its own as a legitimate method for reaching new understandings.

Therefore, while traditionally understood limitations of case study research might not arguably exist in this study, other limitations do. In order to explore the phenomenon, an extreme case, where it was most likely to exist and could be observed, was selected. The limitations arose from the choice of a context that was well-resourced financially, enrolled above-average students, and was not representative of many diverse populations. Additionally, the researcher’s time was limited, which put necessary, but limiting, parameters on the numbers of participants and hours spent interacting and observing. Case studies can be designed to be as scientifically rigorous as other types of research, but like all research will be limited by resources and time. Accordingly, careful site selection and sampling was essential to obtaining the information desired.

Site Selection and Sampling Strategy

In discussing sampling, Stake (1995) advised that “the first criterion should be to maximize what we can learn” (p. 4). As noted above, an extreme case was selected for this study in order to maximize opportunities to uncover and understand spirituality, leadership, and their relationship in college students. An extreme case allowed for understandings to be gained from “highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon or interest” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). This selection included choosing an institution that was explicitly faith-based, citing faith and spirituality as part of its overall mission. Additionally, as ethics, and in particular social justice, were key topics in the study, the site chosen was expressly committed to notions of social justice in its mission, as expressed through the media that described the specific program.

Yin (2003) recommended single case study design for testing theories with well-formulated propositions. This study sought to consider the experiences of college students and integrate them with the conceptual framework of spiritual leadership outlined in Chapter One. While not “testing” in the exact sense Yin means, the selection of an extreme case in which the propositions were likely to be found, was part of this sampling method.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) claimed that sampling in qualitative inquiry does not seek to be representative of a population, but instead is “contingent and serial” desiring to “maximize the scope of information obtained” (p. 224). Miles and Huberman (1994) asserted that conceptual questions should drive the choice of participants in a case. For this study, the sampling of students to interview and observe was guided by the research

questions, and sought to engage students who were likely to have experiences, thoughts, and beliefs that aligned with the conceptual framework and the main topics of spirituality and leadership. Therefore, students were selected who were already exhibiting leadership in spiritual programs in this faith-based institution context. Additionally, faculty and staff who had the opportunity to work closely with these students, and to observe their leadership and spiritual practices, were selected for interviews to assist in triangulating the data. This study was conducted over the course of a proposed timeline (Appendix A), which spanned six months within a single academic year.

In order to best inform the study, I sought to include students who were in their senior year, and within the context of the institution and program, to have practiced leadership at the collegiate level. I also desired to speak with students who had direct experiences in social justice work, or who could speak to the theme of social justice in their leadership practice. Finally, I also sought to include students who varied in terms of the types of leadership experiences they had completed, as well as in cultural background and religious/faith tradition.

Once the case was selected, a gatekeeper at that institution was identified and contacted by email (Appendix B). According to Cresswell (1998, 2003), a gatekeeper is an insider who can provide access to other informants. This gatekeeper was asked to identify students who met the criteria described in this study. Once a list was generated, the gatekeeper contacted these students by email, sharing with them my invitation to participate in the study and welcoming those who had an interest in the research to contact me directly to complete a short survey (Appendix C) that further determined their

eligibility for participation. At this point, students whose responses aligned with the goals of the study, five in all, were invited to participate, oriented to the study, and asked to provide informed consent (Appendix D) per institutional review board policies. During the informed consent process with students, faculty and staff who could speak about their observations of the students were identified by each student. The student gave permission on the informed consent form for specific faculty or staff to be contacted. These faculty and staff were not current course instructors of the student at that time the interviews were conducted, nor did the student work for faculty or staff informants in a paid capacity. Consistent with the process outlined above, the gatekeeper contacted these faculty and staff by email, shared with them my invitation to participate in the study and welcomed them to contact me directly if they had an interest in participating. Faculty and staff participants gave permission to be interviewed through an informed consent process (Appendix E). I was successful in contacting and interviewing faculty or staff counterparts for four of the five students.

Once participants were selected, data collection consisted of interviews and document analysis. The interview protocols (Appendices F & G) for students, faculty, and staff informants guided this portion of the data collection. Documents consisted of published information about the institution and the specific program, focusing in on mission, vision, and philosophy statements that described the purpose and rationale for existence. The documents analyzed included the web pages of the program, which in addition to descriptive information about the program and its philosophy and mission, included course specific information and learning goals for academic work. The other

main document utilized was the 2009 annual report. These documents complemented the data obtained through the interview process, and assisted in triangulating the data in the case.

Data Collection and Analysis

Stake (1995) claimed that data gathering begins “before there is a commitment to do the study” and the “pool of data begins with the earliest observations” (p. 49). Accordingly, data collection began as part of the site selection process. As potential sites were researched to determine suitability, information was collected through published materials and conversations with possible gatekeepers.

Once a site and gatekeeper were selected, the task of identifying informants began, following the above protocol and rationale. Five students, all seniors planning to graduate at the end of the year, were selected for the study. All the students had significant interaction with the program being studied, as well as leadership experiences that extended beyond the program. Of the students, three were men and two were women, and all were traditional age seniors, 21 or 22 years old. Four of the participants were Caucasian, and these same four were raised Catholic and were currently active in the practice of their faith at the time of the study. The fifth student, a gay man, was bi-racial, and also came from a low-income background. While he was baptized Catholic at the age of five, and catechized in that faith tradition, he had many Protestant influences in his life, and had chosen to leave the Catholic Church about 12-18 months before the study was conducted.

I engaged in one 45 to 60 minute, semi-structured interview with each participant. The interview protocol was followed, yet the flexibility to ask follow-up questions or questions to probe new emergent themes was respected and utilized. The student participants, who were the focal point of the study, were also asked to name faculty and staff who had the opportunity to teach, observe, or work closely with the participants. Upon my request, these individuals were contacted by the gatekeeper to invite participation. Five faculty and staff responded positively and were interviewed, in a manner similar to the students. The goal had been to interview one faculty or staff member from each student's list. Due to a sabbatical of the only faculty member identified by the student, it was not possible to interview a faculty or staff observer for one of the student participants. A second faculty member was selected for a different student, so that the final number equaled five. However, the data gathered from this participant did not prove relevant to the study and was not used in the final analysis.

The interview process with faculty and staff participants followed the same pattern as with the students. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis, and notes were taken during the course of the interview for immediate and future review. A copy of the transcription was given to each participant for verification of the accuracy of the data within four weeks of the interview. Each participant was given one week to review the transcript. If no changes were noted within that week, it was assumed no changes were needed.

Kvale (1996) wrote, "The interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to freely talk about his or her own experiences and feelings" (p.

125). The first step in creating this atmosphere was to choose the right location. Interviews were conducted on site, in an environment comfortable and familiar to the participants, and one that was private to protect confidentiality. The host program provided a small conference room for the interviews with students, and staff and faculty interviews were conducted in their respective offices. Additionally, Kvale suggested key criteria for an interviewer, which included being knowledgeable about the topic, structuring the process, posing clear questions, and being gentle, sensitive, and open. These criteria served as guidelines for me in the interview process as I strove to create an atmosphere of safe sharing.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), meaning can be generated from data in numerous ways, including noting patterns and themes, clustering, making metaphors, making comparisons and contrasts, as well as building a logical chain of evidence, and creating coherence. Tools for such generation include using arrays, a matrix of categories, data displays, frequency charts, and chronological order. Stake (1995) advised that repetition of the phenomena as well as significance in a single instance might be used to formulate meaning and arrive at understanding. In this project, review of data collected through interviews and document analysis was sifted through the above categories, seeking connections and patterns, as well as contrasting data in order to arrive at understandings of the phenomenon of spiritual leadership in college students. As Stake noted, meaning might be found in counting occurrences of specific experiences, beliefs, or practices, but also from a single occurrence from which rich understandings emerge. As a constructionist study, the exact forms of analysis used were developed as the study

progressed. According to Stake, “Each researcher needs, through experience and reflection, to find the forms of analysis that works for him or her” (p. 77) with the intention of constructing a detailed description of the case. I explored many possible options for analysis before settling on the one I believed would best assist in understanding the data.

Specifically, the analysis method chosen after the data was collected was based on a method outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). In this process, with the research questions in mind, the raw text was read and studied. The second step was to identify and mark relevant text, followed by the naming of repeating ideas, which become themes. From these themes arise theoretical constructs and then a theoretical narrative, which ultimately address the research concerns. In this study, I followed this method, albeit with some flexibility, so that eventually the data were categorized into major constructs and a narrative.

After each interview, notes from the interview and general impressions were recorded in a journal. Noteworthy remarks or potential themes were written down. Transcriptions of each interview were conducted within two weeks of the interview; in many cases they were transcribed the same week. By taking the time to transcribe the data myself, I became more familiar with the data than I would have otherwise. After printing out each interview, I read them through carefully and then left them alone for several days. When I returned to the data, I read each interview again, and highlighted what I believed to be salient remarks that would inform the research questions.

Having spent that time with the data, I began to develop the a priori codes that would be used to code the data by themes. Broadly, the codes converged into four major constructs: 1) spirituality, 2) leadership, including connections to spirituality found through leadership, 3) justice, and 4) the mission of the program and the institution. After the master list of codes was developed, the highlighted sections of each interview were given a code or codes. It was not unusual for some parts, especially rich, descriptive responses, to receive multiple codes. When all of the data were coded, they were grouped together according to the a priori codes. For example, under the “spiritual beliefs” code, all data collected from all of the students that were assigned that code, were copied and pasted into a master document of the codes and the data that supported them. This process was done manually, as once again close work with the data allowed me to keep it all fresh in my mind as the process unfolded. The relatively low number of participants in the study made this choice of analysis possible. Having grouped the data this way, the results section followed the major themes and sub-themes of the coding, using specific quotes and references to support each part.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln (1995) argued that “interpretivist inquiry requires as serious a consideration of systematic, thorough, conscious method as does empiricist inquiry” (p. 276). Trustworthiness, or the rigor used within a qualitative study, has been established as a means to confirm knowledge constructed in this methodology. As a counterpart to validity, reliability, and objectivity in quantitative studies, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are standards that mark the rigor of a qualitative study.

Credibility

To ensure the credibility of the research, a number of strategies and methods were utilized. Yin (2003) suggested that the quality of a case study is dependent on multiple sources of evidence, a case study database that details the data collected, and a chain of evidence that connects the research questions to the data collected and the resulting findings. Over the course of six months, data on this case study were collected from multiples sources. Interviews from three different groups of participants, documents, and web pages were explored in order to triangulate the data; that is, to “provide a substantial body of uncontested description” (Stake, 1995, p. 110). To achieve this result, the phenomenon of spiritual leadership for the students was investigated in each of the data sources in order to verify that what is observed and reported “carries the same meaning when found under different circumstances” (Stake, p. 113). Additionally, a database of all data was collected as the study progressed, including interview transcripts, copies of documents, and field notes. A chain of evidence linking the discrete data together was sought as information was collected and analyzed. Notes connecting the three sources of data were created, and memos were written regularly to jot down thoughts, questions, and concerns. The end goal for all methods of collection and analysis was to arrive at a rich description of the case that could be verified and enhanced by approaching it from multiple angles, lending further credibility to the interpretation of the material and demonstrating the coherence and plausibility of the resulting assertions.

In addition to the triangulation of data sources, member-checking provided an important method of verification. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this is “the

most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). Stake (1995) argued that member-checking can provide important observations and interpretation and aids in the process of triangulation. For this study, participants were asked to review transcripts of their interviews to verify accuracy of the data.

Finally, the credibility of the study was enhanced through the use of thick description, and by spending a prolonged time in the field (Cresswell, 2003). I visited the site on multiple occasions, and in addition to the interviews conducted, attended part of a conference sponsored by the program on summer volunteer opportunities. The use of these and the above methods added to the overall trustworthiness of the study and enhanced the “truth value” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296) of the arrived at assertions.

Transferability

As the primary goal, qualitative research does not seek to make generalizations from a small sample to a larger population, even though Flyvbjerg (2006) argued that it is possible to do so. Instead, generally speaking, qualitative or naturalistic inquiry seeks to cultivate knowledge and transfer those understandings to other cases. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that transferability arises from knowing the context of a case, and through thick description and careful analysis, the findings can be transferred to a similar case, in a similar context, elsewhere. Therefore, this study did not seek to generalize to a larger population of college students, but desired to uncover the richness of the case and report it with thick description so that a reader might see parallels between this case and others within a similar context and with similar attributes, or as Lincoln and Guba stated, so that

“working hypotheses from the sending originating context may be applicable in the receiving context” (p. 124).

Dependability and Confirmability

Yin (2003) suggested that poor documentation in past case study research caused the reliability of case studies to become suspect. The antidote for this type of criticism is to generate dependability of the data through careful records and notes, so that an external auditor could repeat the study and arrive at similar conclusions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the use of an audit trail as a tool for careful documentation. The use of a field log and research journal, within the established timeline, is often used to document the course and progress of a study. This audit trail, if followed by another researcher, can then ensure similarities in the research process, which in turn might produce similar results. Furthermore, an audit trail can help to establish confirmability by tracing findings and assertions back to the original sources and demonstrating the connections. In this way, other researchers could affirm that the results are plausible and coherent, connected to the data through a chain of evidence and logical data collecting. In this study, I followed Guba and Lincoln's suggestions for constructing an audit trail, creating a file in which I recorded tasks and events on a weekly basis. This list included contacts made, interviews conducted and transcribed, documents read and analyzed, coding systems, new materials read, and memos written.

Ethical Issues and Protection of Participants

Essential to good research is attention and sensitivity to potential risks to the human subjects in the study. Lincoln (2008) cited the Belmont Report and subsequent

legislation as laying the foundation for four main areas of human subject protection – informed consent, deception, confidentiality of participant’s identities, and privacy of records. These basic protections need to be ensured in any study to safeguard the well-being of participants. Accordingly, formal permission from Loyola University’s Institutional Review Board as well as from the host institution’s research compliance office was sought and obtained before collecting data for this research. This permission was given formally in October, 2010. The research compliance office at the host site also gave written permission for the study to occur.

Informed Consent and Deception

Cresswell (2003) listed six components of informed consent: voluntary participation; purpose of the study; procedures of the study; risks and benefits of the study to the individual; the ability to ask questions and obtain the results of the study, and a physical signature on the informed consent form. Accordingly, in this study, participants received both a verbal and written description of the purpose of the research, the interview process, and the expectations for their role within the study. Participation was voluntary, and informants could choose to leave the study at any point in time. Questions were answered beforehand, and also solicited directly before the interview process. Consent for the study was in writing (Appendix D) in accordance with the procedures outlined by the Institutional Review Board at Loyola University Chicago. After the interview and transcription process, participants were given the opportunity to member-check and review transcriptions. The informed consent (Appendix D), in addition to initial contact (Appendix B) and soliciting and answering questions from the

informants, minimized the possibility of any potential deception of the participants.

Communication of purpose, procedures, and processes were primary goals in preparing informants to participate in the study.

Confidentiality and Privacy

“Reasonable promises of confidentiality that can be fully honored” (Patton, 2002, p. 408) were made with all participants in this study. Efforts were also made to protect the identity of individuals and the institution by the creation of pseudonyms, fictitious locations, and masking of other identifying details. Given the extreme type of case sought as a sample, astute readers might surmise the identity of the institution, and specific data might identify an individual. However, protection of participants’ identities was keenly sought throughout the course of the study through the use of pseudonyms and changing other identifying information related to leadership activities. This same commitment to confidentiality occurred with documents that were analyzed. Direct quotes were never used from documents, especially web pages, as these could be easily placed in a search engine to determine the source. Moreover, I researched other institutions with similar programs to compare the data and generalize it so that it could be applied to a variety of programs. Lastly, I spoke with the gatekeeper to inquire about other institutions’ programs, and she assured me that there were a number of other colleges and universities with programs similar to her own.

Burden on Host

Stake (1995) warned against an unreasonable burden of time and resources on the host site. Creswell (1998) suggested that the use of a gatekeeper requires ethical

considerations surrounding the expectations of that individual. As a means to respect the time and resources of both the gatekeeper and others at the host site, a negotiated schedule for visits and a carefully prepared list of needs and expectations was discussed before data collection began. Sensitivity to burdens placed on the host were continually considered throughout the completion of the study.

Role of the Researcher

This topic of study was chosen because of my strong interest in college student spirituality and leadership. My own experiences, both personally and professionally, over the past 25 years have led me to ask questions about the connections among faith, spirituality, and leadership.

Having been raised by Irish-Catholic immigrants, I was educated within the Catholic school system. Faith and spirituality were foundational in my home environment. This faith was nurtured in elementary school and broadened in high school. At the Catholic university I attended, faith underlay the milieu of the campus, and discussions of church, religion, and faith were commonplace. It was at the university level, however, where I made deep and intentional connections between my own growing spirituality and the leadership positions in which I involved myself. The question of “why lead?” was answered by “to change the world for the better.” “Why change the world?” solicited the reply, “because my faith demands it.” These connections were not made only by me, but were echoed by a multitude of my peers as we chose involvement in social, political, service, and educational endeavors on the basis of deeply held spiritual beliefs. I, myself, gave up a dream of becoming an engineer, not because I did

not like the material or found it too challenging, but because my experiences of both spirituality and leadership convinced me that I was more suited for person-intensive careers.

After a bachelor's degree, my initial years of service brought me to a community of faith that lived out its mission through the care of people with developmental disabilities. After two years there, I formally studied theology and ministry at the graduate level and subsequently spent 12 years working full time in campus ministry. As a campus minister I mentored and formed student leaders within a faith environment. A firm believer in the holistic development of a person, the opportunity to nurture students' spiritual lives and also assist them in developing life-long leadership skills was a natural match for me. My many years of Catholic education and my own faith beliefs taught me that leadership is meant to be exercised for positive change, in particular for the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our society. Moreover, a sense of responsibility to take action on behalf of positive change has pervaded my most significant life choices.

As a doctoral student in a higher education program, I have formally studied leadership theory. In this context, I have arrived at new understandings of leadership and leadership development, in particular for college students. In my studies, I began to see connections between models and theories of leadership and my own experiences as an educator of college students. Intuitively sensing that there might be significant connections between spirituality and leadership, I started my research into this topic to discover emerging themes of "spiritual leadership."

I recognize that because of my experiences I brought a bias to the study and therefore sought to bracket my bias. In addition to the field journal, I kept a reflective journal through which I considered my potential biases, acknowledged their existence, and asked myself questions. Most importantly, I asked myself to consider alternative perspectives and explanations that might have rivaled my initial observations and conclusions.

As a novice researcher, I explored this concept of spiritual leadership, and potential relationships between spirituality and leadership in college students. In this study, I investigated the possible connections in the hope of reaching new understandings of the relationship among faith, spirituality, and leadership for students. I approached this study as a former undergraduate student who was once involved in leadership activities that were connected to faith, as an educator, who has worked with students for many years in a faith environment, and as a believer within the Catholic, Christian tradition whose own faith life has deeply influenced personal beliefs, understandings, and practices.

However, I also arrived at this research as an outsider, 20 years removed from the undergraduate collegiate experience. The world has changed since I was a student, and as a member of a different generation who did not come of age in a technological world, I recognized that I inserted myself into a subculture of youth that is not my own. While I work in this environment every day, it is as an authority figure with a specific, professional role. As I approached this study, I recognized that I had to do so as an outsider, an interloper into a culture that is not my own. As such, I had to do so with

respect and humility, acknowledging that as I sought to understand the inner workings of students, it was holy ground on which I tread.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

On an unusually warm and sunny November day, I arrived at the campus of Faith Catholic College (FCC) to begin two days of interviews exploring spirituality and leadership in college students. The Center for Faith Connections (“Connections”) sat nestled in the midst of this active college community, where many students wore shorts despite the almost bare trees on this Midwestern campus, defying the winter days that were soon to follow. The director of Connections, Paul, had welcomed my study and my direct contact, Julie, a staff member in the program, had invited participants and arranged the logistics for my visit.

I selected Connections as the site for my research, knowing that it was an extreme case study. In order to pursue the research questions outlined in Chapter One, seeking the links between spirituality and leadership in college students, I sought a case that would most likely profile students with strengths and relationships in these areas. Julie had referred to the students on the recruitment list as “the usual suspects,” implying that they were well-known students who had been active in multiple leadership roles. FCC, and Connections in particular, draws many Catholic students. Connections utilizes Catholic Social Teaching (CST) as a main component of the teaching and learning that occurs within its walls and out in the community. Angie, a staff member, told me that

theological reflection and CST are integral to the programs offered. She also noted that an emphasis on prayer and reflection attracted many students. The five students who agreed to participate in this study reflected this phenomenon, as four out of five were active Catholics, participating in the life of the Church as well as private prayer and devotion. The fifth had been raised Catholic, and while missing the sense of community he had found in the Church, he had made the conscious decision to part ways with the organized Catholic Church.

Connections created a warm and welcoming environment, with study and hang-out space for students, staff and faculty offices, and meeting rooms. I was assigned one of the meeting rooms for my visit. Connections shares the building with a number of other programs and offices in the college, and there is a small chapel for everyone's use. On this visit, and my subsequent visits to interview faculty and staff whom my student participants had named, I felt welcomed, but also noticed an intensity that was present for both students and staff alike. Pleasant conversation was overheard frequently in the hallways, but laughter, joking, and the types of raucous behavior to which I am accustomed from my own experience in college settings where students are gathering, were conspicuously absent. Perhaps it was the soft lighting, the warm earth tones of the interior decorating, or the fact that this building was newer and more spacious from those of my own experiences, but the feel was more like a library than a student-centered program building. This intensity began to make more sense to me as I learned about the overall mission and vision for Connections, and how it worked intentionally to not only

provide opportunities for service and spiritual growth, but also for academically rigorous and research-based work.

In this study, I interviewed students, staff, and faculty associated with the Connections program in an effort to learn how they made sense of the relationships among spirituality, ethics, justice, and leadership in the development of student leaders.

Table 1 shows the student participants and corresponding demographic and faith characteristics along with major leadership activities.

Table 1. Student participants and identifying characteristics

Student	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Year	Major	Faith	Leadership
Brian	M	Caucasian	4	Physics	Catholic	Wrestling club captain; African missions
David	M	Caucasian	4	Pre-Med	Catholic	Orphanage in Mexico; medical volunteer; resident assistant
Rianna	F	Caucasian	4	Psychology	Catholic	Disabled children; resident assistant; educational trip leader
Jessica	F	Caucasian	4	Psychology	Catholic	Maltreated children; Psychology club
Eric	M	Bi-racial	4	Psychology	Former Catholic	GLBT groups; human rights groups; homeless shelter

Several areas were explored in the context of the case study. The mission of the program and, in particular, its emphases on Catholic Social Teaching, education for justice, and faith development, set the stage for the student data collected. Next, students' spiritual background, beliefs, and practices were examined, as well as leadership activities and styles. Finally, in the context of the mission of the program, connections between spirituality and leadership were investigated, ending with an exploration of the relationship of justice to spirituality and leadership.

The Mission

Do you have any idea what your responsibility before God and faith is?

– Paul, director of Connections

The annual report of Connections highlighted its mission to educate students about the root causes of poverty and the complexity of social issues. Using Catholic Social Teaching and theological reflection techniques, students were encouraged to examine these issues intellectually, to experience them in service programs or community-based learning, and to engage in research that promoted the common good. Teaching students about their responsibilities to God and their neighbor, encouragement to put faith into practice, and posing serious questions about complex issues were all part of Connections' mission. Paul, the director of Connections stated:

I feel like my role is to make sure that every kid that comes to Faith College is at some point grabbed by the scruff of the neck, by the collar, and told, hey kid, do you have any idea what your responsibility before God and faith is, and before your neighbor, whether they're in the local neighborhood or across the globe? Because if we're not doing that, we're failing them.

Paul went on to say, “We’re going to make sure that our students have an awareness of the poor, those on the margins, and have an understanding of their role or responsibility in reaching out to them.”

An awareness of those who are economically poor or marginalized in other ways was the door into the mission of Connections. This was the starting point for education. Paul described students who have had immersion experiences as “on fire.” They had been exposed to some real world issues related to poverty and injustice and wanted to learn and do more. These experiences could affect them deeply, influencing choice of a major, a thesis topic, or a career. The students I interviewed affirmed how important an awareness of and service to the poor was to their experience at Connections. David, a senior, grew up in a family dedicated to service. His father, a surgeon, helped establish a clinic at an orphanage in Mexico. David had traveled back and forth to this orphanage and clinic many times, and considered it his second home. Connections had allowed David to develop his service in new ways. Working in the homeless shelter, serving in a developing country, and assisting him in organizing trips to Mexico to the above clinic and orphanage, Connections had supported David:

Connections has been integral in our promotion of it, just spreading the word and just a great resource with wonderful people giving great ideas or just support. Like John and Sandy [staff members] have both traveled down there as our faculty advisors and I think they both have been huge proponents of it.

Eric, also a senior, was attracted to the work of Connections because of its focus on poverty, but Eric understood poverty to extend beyond economics. Eric was an example

of direct service and awareness as a doorway to greater involvement, exploration and understanding:

I like Connections because Connections was so focused not just on monetary deprivation, but deprivation of many aspects. Its' Catholic Social Tradition really seemed to inform it to this whole poverty of spirit, poverty of the heart. And so originally it was through the homeless shelter and then as I got to know people within the building. I sort of expanded that as my own interests grew and as I began to know more and more about many different ways in which poverty affects people.

Although awareness and direct service to the poor was a portal into the life of this place, the work of Connections was both deeper and broader than these objectives. Paul, who was also a faculty member, taught a theology course on poverty, which he subtitled, "why are people poor and why should we care." Intellectual and academic development of the student was the milieu in which the activities of Connections were immersed.

Catholic Social Teaching

In addition to studying sociological and historical factors, the primary lens through which programs and courses were focused was Catholic Social Teaching, also called the Catholic Social Tradition or Catholic Social Thought. The web pages listed and described six of the major principles of CST: the common good, human dignity, the rights of workers, option for the poor, environmental stewardship, and subsidiarity – addressing issues at the lowest level possible. CST is commonly considered to have begun formally in 1891, with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on work, *Rerum Novarum*, and includes major documents and encyclicals from the Vatican tackling social issues, as well as pastoral letters from bishops within individual countries (McBrien, 1994).

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) was the foundation for the intellectual and academic development of the students. Both Paul and Angie referred to CST as the Catholic Church's "best kept secret" stating that most students had not been exposed to it at all before walking through the doors of their building. Paul stated that "many of our students aren't aware that the Catholic Church has espoused any, has articulated any sort of principles in the area of justice or social justice." CST had a prominent place on Connections' web page, in its annual report, and promotional materials. The annual report stated that CST was included in all activities of Connections. Paul emphasized that CST was integral to the work of Connections:

There's no doubt that we're very explicit about what Catholic Social Teaching is and, as Catholics and as concerned citizens, [we] may want to take seriously using this as sort of a lens through which to look at the issues we're looking at, but also to be the elixir that would push us into, you know, making a difference and moving on some of these issues and these problems.

Paul explicitly stated that students who engaged in Connections' activities would learn about CST and the Church's perspective on care of the poor, along with more secular data and information available regarding social issues. Angie highlighted the role of CST in the course she taught:

We move into more of the social analysis and Catholic Social Thought, and look more at issues of poverty, race, and violence. So we hope that we engage them in their intellectual or academic dimensions. . . . How do you, beyond the direct service, look at social policy or church teachings; [we ask] what are some of the bigger questions?

The intellectual development of students did not end with CST. Social analysis, historical information, political influences, economic factors, and education about oppression were all part of the curriculum of the community-based learning that was a

large part of the mission. As students were prepared to serve in some way in the larger community, these areas were explored in order to prepare them mentally, and open up their minds to greater learning. Angie intentionally used a process called theological reflection as part of the intellectual development in her courses, bringing faith, scripture, and Church teaching into conversation with the students' experiences of service and immersion into a community.

Jessica, a student, affirmed that Catholic Social Teaching was woven into the service and leadership opportunities she engaged in through the setting:

I think there's a definite connection, Catholic Social Teaching, you know, dignity of the human person and preferential option for the poor, common good, those all work together. Definitely call attention to the social inequalities and what can be done.

Although education about Catholic Social Teaching is central to the mission of Connections, Jessica and Eric were the students who mentioned it specifically. However, the principles of CST did find their way into the statements surrounding faith and service from all of the students, suggesting that they internalized the message and integrated it into their own worldview. This finding will be discussed later in the section on student beliefs, but now I turn to the particular theme of education for justice, which was woven throughout the center.

Justice Education

Julie emphasized the role of educating students on matters of justice as part of Connections' mission. As noted on the website, justice education is one of three main areas highlighted as foundational to the mission of Connections. Both education and an encouragement to act for justice in the community and the world were explicitly stated.

A section of the annual report noted a student who was striving to make a difference by addressing social inequalities. Julie stated that helping students to think about justice, fairness, and equality permeated the life of Connections. Woven into programs and courses, but also present in specific, special events such as lectures on urban poverty, educating for justice was at the heart of Connections' identity. Despite the emphasis on justice education, Julie believed that Connections could be more intentional on defining justice and was looking forward to scheduled conversations focused on clarifying the meaning of justice and its use at the center.

Mission and Faith

A heightened awareness of suffering and injustice, and an intellectual formation in CST and education for justice, were key aspects of Connections' mission. But as Paul suggested, it was the faith perspective that specifically branded Connections' work and set it apart from secular institutions. He claimed it would be "very difficult" to approach these issues without "the faith, the Church, the articulation of the Church's teaching." Although he recognized that some students came to Connections out of an interest in social issues from a humanistic approach, he reported that the faculty and staff look for student leaders who "care about Catholic Social Teaching and understand it and are able to articulate why it's important" and that "our student leaders are compelled by faith to move into it." Connections, I came to understand, was explicitly trying to help students build a bridge between faith and leadership, and a leadership for justice.

Given this part of its mission, Angie stated that a key goal of the center is to assist students in making such connections, but that it is not always easy. She cited the

diversity of belief among students. On one side there were “very conservative Catholics who have very strong practices of piety” who were encouraged to put their faith into practice by serving the poor and those on the margins. On the other side were students who claimed to be “spiritual but not religious” for whom integration of faith could be a challenge. Angie stated that she felt strongly about keeping theological reflection and spiritual development as central to the mission, and actively encouraging students to use prayer and reflection as they seek to integrate their lives.

This faith perspective was specifically connected to leadership, and the development of leaders. Two people on the staff worked specifically with leadership as part of their duties, although all staff members encouraged student leadership practice and development. Angie believed that Connections was intentional about opening up avenues for students to grow as leaders:

I think we have multiple, multiple ways for students to move from an initial experience at Connections to a leadership role. [They can] help lead a [Connections] seminar, or tak[e] courses related to . . . community-based research. [There are] many places [where students can] take initiative and become involved.

Paul, too, affirmed that leadership was an important component of their mission.

Specifically, he recognized that students will graduate and become “CEOs, or Catholic grade school teachers, or stay-at-home parents, or lawyers, or whatever else” and that their leadership in their selected areas can and will influence the world. His hope was to help develop “a social consciousness” in students so that leadership can be shaped by faith. This appeared to be happening at the center because the students whom I

interviewed all made strong connections between their own faith beliefs and the leadership activities in which they engaged. (See the section on leadership that follows).

The three staff and faculty members at Connections whom I interviewed had all been employed at Faith Catholic College for a number of years. They spoke easily and freely of their work with students. It seemed to me that they were highly invested in the academic and intellectual development of the students, but also were thoughtful and reflective when it came to the service experiences and faith lives of their students. For each of the three, voices softened and slowed as they thought about the spiritual and leadership development of students, and it was clear that they felt a real warmth and affection for them as well.

Student Spirituality

God I feel is present in everything I do or see or feel or think.

– David

Spiritual Background and Development

The five students who agreed to participate in this study came from a list recommended by staff at Connections. Julie, my gatekeeper, emailed a list of about 20 students describing the study and invitation to participate, and these five volunteered. As mentioned above, all five were raised Catholic, although one had made the decision to step away from the Church. Similar in many ways, each student described growing up in a context where faith and religion were important and, in some cases, central to their experience. However, each student's story was unique, as were their understandings and images of God.

David arrived early for his appointment with me, sporting a winsome smile and a comfortable demeanor. He was at ease with me instantly, and I with him. As Paul would later say, “to meet him is to almost immediately like him.” I found that to be true in my experience as well. When I received David’s preliminary survey sheet, I was skeptical of his beliefs and practices. His religious language made me wonder about the maturity and integrity of his faith. Quite frankly, I had stereotyped him into a particular ideology and worried about using a participant who might end up preachy and self-righteous. I soon came to regret and refute my pre-judgment.

After we finished with preliminary information, David began to describe his faith growing up. Here was a young man whose Catholic faith was at the center of his family and at the center of his own life. As mentioned earlier, David’s father started a clinic at an orphanage in Mexico, and David grew up in a family committed to service. Faith was the basis for this service, and permeated his family life. For instance, David related this story about the centrality of faith in his family experience:

Watching my parents pray together [was a foundation for me]. We would do a rosary together in the morning, like before school. We have this prayer, like an altar, in the upstairs where all our bedrooms are, where a candle is lit. My dad would leave early a lot, like for surgery, and so we never saw him in the mornings. And he would light the candle in the morning, and pray for us. And so we would wake up and see that candle was lit and we would know that our dad was praying for us.

David also spoke about his fascination with spirituality as a child:

I feel like I have always been a religious kid. . . . I enjoyed going to Mass or being in spiritual places. . . . My mom said little things I said, or like when we would pray, she would be shocked at what a six year old would say. She would walk in on me to hear me talking to Christ in prayer, and she would ask, “Who are you talking to?” And I would be like, “Jesus.” I mean, no big deal.

David viewed God as very close and present to him; he did not see a separation between God and himself. David quoted the Book of Romans Chapter 8 when asked about which teachings of his faith were central to him: “Nothing can separate us from the love of God.”

Although David’s spiritual development had been continuous and ongoing, he cited as significant to his growth a service experience that occurred in a challenging environment in Central America. For example, David told me that a sick man in a hospice died in his arms. He felt completely “out of his element” on this trip, but an order of religious sisters were a “beacon of hope and light in those times of seeing Christ in the poor.” The image of “Jesus on the cross” and seeing God in the poor and suffering strongly influenced David’s faith and spiritual growth. When I asked Paul about David’s spirituality, he referred to growth he witnessed in David while in Central America:

This was a powerful experience for him. And he would write those of us he loves, this large number of people, and he would write, dear brothers and sisters, and . . . I’m not kidding you, he sounded like St. Paul. He would talk about the suffering of the folks and Christ’s suffering, he would talk about his own pain and how it is for the good of all.

David’s faith development was taking him in a different direction at the time of this study. While he would graduate with a pre-med degree, he was seeking a men’s religious order to enter for seminary, with the intention of becoming a priest.

Both Rianna and Jessica were also raised Catholic. But while they were similar to each other, they were also different from David, in that they found faith more through Church and Catholic school structures than through their families. Rianna and Jessica

were taken to Church on Sundays and walked through the Sacraments, but faith was not as integrated into their home life. They each found it in other ways on their own.

Rianna arrived to our interview early, and clearly felt at home in Connections. I heard her chatting with staff in the hallway before and after our time together. She came in beaming with a smile. All through our conversation, she leaned forward in her chair, intensely focused on my questions and her answers. She was engaged and enlivened about discussing her faith and leadership. At the end of the interview, she seemed disappointed when I told her that my study only required one contact with students, and that I would not be seeking her out again. As I learned later from Angie, Rianna came up to staff after a service workshop asking if she could assist at Connections. Here was a young woman with initiative who was actively seeking to enrich her own experiences in all the ways she could.

Rianna told me that she began to practice her faith in middle school, around 7th grade, and “it’s continued to be a really important part of my life.” In high school, she developed her overriding image of God: “God is love. God is self-sacrificing, agapic love.” But her high school years were not easy for her in terms of her faith beliefs and practice.

I had a really rigid idea of faith and it was very much like I felt I had to say a rosary every day and it was very much like formulaic prayers. And I mean it was sincere, but it was almost stressful sometimes. And it kind of became more about me and less about God.

Rianna noted, however, that her faith had changed and grown since she entered college.

Now, she said, her faith felt “much more mature in the way that I practice and understand

and more genuine and less a set of obligations.” When I asked her if this growth had freed her to not be so hard on herself, she replied, “Ye-ah, oh completely.”

Angie reported that Rianna “came to Faith College as quite mature spiritually” and became involved in spiritual matters on campus right away. Angie stated that Rianna’s path through FCC “has been to broaden her sense of spirituality from liturgical practices and private prayer, to being active in the community and coming to understand Catholic Social Thought.” Angie and Rianna would both agree that her spiritual growth was directly related to the service and leadership experiences in which Rianna had been involved.

Jessica, a bright eyed and bubbly student, showed up a little late to our meeting, and I wondered if she might be a no-show. But like Rianna, she was engaged with the questions. She often struggled for words to articulate her experiences and beliefs, and I would need to repeat my question and encourage her to answer. She readily laughed at herself when this would happen. She left our interview stating that I gave her a lot to think about, and that she needed to go “diagram it out” to make all the connections that were trying to form in her head.

In terms of spiritual growth, Jessica believed that her faith developed significantly during her high school years, especially as she struggled with images of God that were demanding and harsh:

As I’ve grown older I’ve kind of struggled with the image of God, and I’m like a very perfectionist person who likes to do things the right way and if I don’t I get very upset with myself. I’m very hard on myself. And so I think it was very easy for me to see God as another person who is just telling me, you know, that you need to do these things this way, and just trying to be, like, that enforcer.

As a college student, this image of God had grown into a “relationally centered” God who was in solidarity and close to humans. For Jessica, God was compassionate, loving, and present in one’s relationships with other people. God was also a “guiding force, for decisions I make, the way that I act in everyday things.”

Jessica relied on God as she negotiated the challenges in her life. She reflected on a difficult time in high school, when her family experienced multiple deaths, and how sharing the experience of faith, “bringing God into the conversation,” positively affected her at that time, and helped her to cope. Moreover, she spoke of her dependence on God as she considered a service project from a previous summer: “And so I kind of grew just so much in humility and just going to God for, I just need you. Like I just suck (laughs). Like, you can do this, I can’t.”

Brian, a self-described “goofy” guy, connected his leadership in intramural sports with the mission of Connections. Before I met him, I was intrigued by Brian’s athletic leadership and how it would connect with this study. He stumbled in late for our appointment, apologetic, stating that he had been up late working on a class project. Despite his clear fatigue, he settled in quickly to the interview, and answered questions with thoughtfulness and honesty. Brian’s genuine nature immediately began to shine through as he spoke. He frequently mentioned humility in the conversation, as a virtue that he strove to actively grow in himself, and his unassuming presence reflected that desire.

Brian’s spiritual background was similar to David’s, in that his family regularly attended church, but Brian moaned a little when he remembered how his parents, whom

he called “strict Catholics,” insisted that he attend Church every week. In his early years, he envisioned God as a friend, but his understanding of God developed further in college through philosophy and theology courses:

I kind of have this sense of God being everywhere. Omnipresent, yea. [I] try to feel God around me and in me, rather than somewhere distant. . . . You don’t pray to a little statue of God. You are just praying to this thing that exists outside of your understanding.

While his belief in God was clear, Brian struggled with the suffering he had witnessed while doing service in college:

Being overseas is pretty big. Just because you see, you see everyone there and they literally just have nothing. And it makes you question a lot. Like, why are we sitting over here with all our nice cars that we drive around, our expensive TVs and clothes and things? And these guys are over there and they barely have enough to eat, and they can’t pay for school, and it just doesn’t seem fair. And you, you kind of question, what kind of God would do that?

Brian enjoyed Catholic Mass on campus, and related that he often discussed the homilies afterward with friends – something he never did growing up. Moreover, in college he had used Sunday as a “big day for evaluation” when he reflected on his behavior during the week and reassessed his choices and direction. Daniel, a staff member from the gym, observed that Brian had grown spiritually during his college years, especially in terms of his ability to look for the complexities in a situation:

I think they [Brian and a co-president] are more open-minded toward helping someone rather than trying to penalize someone right off the bat. And I think this is part of the inner growth within the students. And that’s one of the qualities we look for in leadership: growth.

Daniel understood this growth from a spiritual, but not particularly a faith, perspective. Moral character and fiber, and an ethos of service, were criteria from which Daniel

judged the development of students. His admiration for Brian was self-evident; he clearly believed that Brian had progressed in all of these areas.

Eric's path was different from the others. His family did not start out very religious, but when his mom married his stepfather, and his younger brother was born, his new grandmother insisted on baptism for the boys. Eric was about five years old at the time. He said that he was educated about the Catholic faith, and "considered myself very sort of orthodox traditional Catholic" until confirmation. It was about that time that the sexual abuse scandal in the Church became public:

After all of these scandals and after getting confirmed, it was like, OK, I have reached the end of the road. And sort of not so much with my relationship with God per se, but more with the Church itself, sort of organized religion.

Eric also claimed that he had strong Protestant influences in his life, primarily from the home schooling curriculums that his mother would choose for him, or the communities of home school groups in which they would be involved, as they centered around Protestant churches. In addition to these two main church influences, Eric described himself as always having "had a theological bent." He remembered discussing "500 questions and answers from the Bible" growing up and, as he discussed his theological interests in college, he easily spoke about the underlying philosophical meaning of the Gospel of Matthew, and an historical understanding of King David and the Book of Psalms.

Eric's understanding of God had changed, too, during his college years. He stated, "When I was younger it was very much like, I just want things to be better, can you make that happen?" He embraced a "naturalistic view of God" and a "voiceless presence within." Now, Eric offered, "I think God is more of an idea than necessarily . . .

I can't limit him to being anthropomorphized like a man or a woman." Yet Eric understood God as deeply relational, and in relationship with him.

Eric struck me as insightful and articulate, as well as intelligent and well-versed in religious matters. My early communication with him was difficult, as he didn't respond regularly to my emails, and didn't give me a cell phone number when I asked. He entered the room brusquely when we met, and after shaking my hand, put his head down and fumbled with his book bag for a minute. He mentioned that he was confused on the room location, and seemed a little flustered. But once the interview began, he opened up and talked at length in answer to each question. His interview was about 30% longer than the average of the others. He seemed to relish speaking about religion and faith, and justice as well, even though he did not feel he could be a part of the Catholic Church right now because of his identity as a gay man. Coming out changed his sense of belonging in the Church. In my interview with Julie, she commented on Eric's struggle with the Church as well:

You know my sense is that he, especially because of his leadership on issues of gay and lesbian rights, it's natural that he questions the Church and teachings and you know, may feel disconnected in ways to that, and so I think that affects his spirituality.

Julie's observation of disconnection matched Eric's own descriptions of feeling excluded from the church, which I describe further in the next session on crisis.

Crisis

For some of the students with whom I spoke, moments of crisis shaped their spiritual growth. Parks (2000) called these times "shipwreck." She depicted shipwreck as experiences that can devastate "assumptions about [the] self, how the world work[s], and

even [a] sense of God” (p. 29). Eric’s shipwreck moments were pretty clear – the Church sexual abuse scandal, and his identification as a gay man. In both instances, he felt he needed to separate from the Church, but not from God. He had navigated his thoughts, feelings, and beliefs related to the scandal, and had returned to the Church. However, coming out as a gay man caused him to believe that he was no longer welcome in the Church in the same way as he had been before. He described his most recent understanding related to his sexual identity:

There’s like the Church party and there’s like God’s party. . . . Before I could just walk in between them, like they had an open door policy and we can just walk back and forth. . . . But at least for now that gate is closed and I need to be in God’s party and I’m not going to try to change who I am, because if I am changing who I am to be in the Church’s party then how can I, can I say I am part of God’s group?

Out of this crisis, Eric had deepened a belief that as long as he is “showing and developing the fruits of the spirit,” then he was growing in faith. Eric’s understanding of himself as an outsider had also influenced some of his leadership choices, as discussed below.

Jessica was the other student I interviewed who communicated a profound experience that affected her faith. She had spent a semester studying abroad in Rwanda. As she began to relate her experience, she struggled for words to express the suffering that she claimed really “hit her.” She was visibly upset and began to cry:

When you are there, there is only so much you can process I think and it was really hard faith-wise, like a different language. . . . So I kind of like couldn’t do it anymore and so I really didn’t pray as much and had a really hard time seeing God. Like one place we went to was a church where they committed like a really huge massacre. And seeing Mary looking out on all these people’s clothes that were affected by it. It was really hard.

This spiritual crisis of not “seeing God” continued for her when she returned. Prayer was elusive for her; she “couldn’t really deal with it.” Eventually, it was through studying the Book of Job in a course that she was able to integrate the suffering she experienced with her faith. In addition, a friend who supported her through her uncertainty proved significant. She shared with me her new understanding of God that arose from both her study and her relationship:

You got to see [in Job] the universality over this confusion as to why there is suffering and why this happens, but then knowing at the end that God is still there and He is not a like a fan of it or anything. . . . I mean I think it is so cool in Job how like when his friends first arrive they sit with him and he cries and everything. And so having that feeling, that’s what you need a lot of times, that person to sit with you and I think that is how God acts in my life.

Two other students expressed moments of challenge, as opposed to crisis, which influenced their faith lives. For David, it was the man who died in his arms, and the whole experience of leaving the comfort of doing service with his family to being on his own without that support. For Brian, questioning the unequal distribution of wealth on a global scale led him to ask questions of God and his own faith beliefs, something that Julie relayed in her remarks on student spiritual growth.

According to Connections staffer Julie, few things so successfully jar a student’s worldview than immersion in a foreign culture, in which a student feels displaced, encounters “the stranger,” and witnesses and hears about suffering. In addition to tapping into their own limitations in the face of complex social issues and economic disparities, Julie noted that immersion experiences often led students to raise significant theological questions. In her words:

I think in many ways [these experiences have] implications or ramifications on their faith life in how they think about their place in the world, their relationship to God and their relationship to others. . . . [They raise theological questions] often tied to evil, the role of evil in the world, structural evil. . . . The questioning that atrocities like that could even occur and then, related, where is God in that?

As students' good intentions of giving back and sharing what they have are "turned around," according to Julie, they come to accept that their actions are limited, that their experience is less service than it is learning, and these new understandings can lead to increased solidarity with the poor and awareness of the global community in which the students live.

Beliefs and Practices

The overall beliefs and spiritual practices of the students I interviewed had many common denominators. Despite Angie's wish for more prayer to be woven into the student's experiences at Connections, students were clearly engaging in spiritual practices in other parts of their lives. Communities of faith were important to them, although their definitions of community were broad and not attached to any one parish, group of people, or church structure. The universality of the Catholic faith allowed them to travel in and out of local communities, and communities across the globe.

A strong belief in a compassionate, relational, personal God characterized all of the students' foundational beliefs. "God is love," said Rianna. "God is with us" and "a guiding force" exhorted Jessica. Brian claimed, "If life is a gift, there must be a giver," and Brian, David, and Eric understood God as a presence all around them. This personal, relational God was revealed through Jesus who came humbly as a poor man according to

Rianna, and David and Jessica saw the person of Jesus Christ in the poor and suffering of the world. Brian said that the symbol of Jesus on the crucifix inspired him to evaluate his own life in light of Jesus' humility. Brian, David, and Rianna all specifically mentioned the Eucharist as especially significant, and the latter two regularly engaged in the practice of adoration of the Eucharist as a prayer form. Eric was the only student not to mention Jesus spontaneously until I probed more deeply, asking about teachings of the Church or scripture that inspired him.

Three students were inspired by the "golden rule," understood as loving your neighbor as yourself. Both Rianna and Jessica said that the whole of Jesus' life and his example of love and self-sacrifice motivated them. Brian owned humility as an important teaching for him: "I'm a big fan of the first shall be last and the last shall be first story." Brian also used St. Francis of Assisi as a model, citing his quote, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words." David quoted the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, "when I was hungry, you fed me" and the parable of the rich man who came to Jesus asking for salvation. When Jesus told him to sell all his belongings and "come and follow me," David said:

He couldn't do it and he went away sad. And so, that's really motivated me. I don't want to be that person that goes away sad. I want to give away everything. And live like Christ and do whatever he asks because I know that is going to be my peace and joy.

Paul echoed David's devotion to God when he referred to David as a "young man who is deeply committed to the Lord." Additionally, Paul described him as "faithful to the Sacraments and to worship."

Eric referenced the Gospel of Matthew and in particular the stories relating to the Pharisees and Sadducees, where Jesus challenged the traditional understanding of Jewish law and emphasized “transformation.” All of the students in one way or another connected service to their beliefs and practices. The love of neighbor, and service to others and the community was a theme that ran through all their descriptions of faith. Most understood it as connected to the example of Jesus, but Eric expressed it this way: “I feel like every service you do for another person is a spiritual act. A spiritual act can be anything. I mean, I worked at the homeless shelter for two years and that’s a spiritual act.”

Community

The beliefs of the students did not stand alone, but were integrated with a significant understanding of community. Rianna proclaimed, “We belong to each other.” Having others who share faith and belief and practice was important to these students. Community had been a large part of their overall faith formation. Each of the students expressed the importance of community, but not one particular church, parish, or group. They described being with like-minded people who shared faith beliefs in a variety of contexts.

Mass on campus was significant for most, whether that was Brian’s experience of everyone singing together and discussing the homily afterward, or Rianna’s experience of “just being together on Sunday nights.” David loved “sitting and talking with” the people at Mass and felt a strong sense of community at the sign of peace. Jessica stated that she frequently attended Mass on campus during her first three years, but not as much now

since she moved off-campus. David relayed that while he felt a strong connection to the larger institutional church, he wasn't attached to any one community or group of people. He found community in many places, and would feel connected to others he didn't know just by being in the same sacred space praying individually. David's sense of community also included his spirituality around the poor and service:

I do really love being with the poor. Everything I've worked for, studied, even when I wanted to become a doctor it was because I wanted to serve the poor. And how does it glorify God. That's my main motivation, community. I see that we are one interrelated family.

Brian connected service and community as well, but expressed it in terms of everyday mundane living. He used an example of helping out his roommate by doing his dishes and laundry, and admired a friend who would drop everything to assist with a request.

Rianna had a profound experience with a faith-sharing group on campus with her "ten closest girlfriends." Her experience of friendship had been significant for her spiritually:

They are like really true, good friends, that are like on the same page as me, and have the same kind of, you know, yearnings and stuff. Having a really good conversation with them about this kind of thing and realizing, like wow, that our conversation was like really rooted in God.

Similarly, friendship was central to Jessica's sense of community on campus, and she cherished the faith community she experienced in her family. She spoke of returning home often to work with her family at the church youth group and to lead retreats with them.

Eric had enjoyed Masses on campus, but since coming out in his sophomore year he felt less accepted. He had perceived a level of hypocrisy because the same students

who hugged him at the sign of peace displayed what he believed to be homophobic behavior in other contexts. Eric went on to describe a Protestant church group with which he had been involved. He also left this group because of members' outward criticism of his sexual identity. He lamented that his attempts at community "hit a wall" and "conversation stopped" when he spoke of his identity as a gay man. This loss of a faith community was a struggle for Eric:

There's always the fundamental issue that to be part of a faith community you have to feel in communion. And if you are going to be excluded then there is no community and then in that case I just need to go on developing my personal faith. I realize that I miss that community.

Every student that I interviewed said that community had played an important role in their experience of spirituality, and all but Eric continued to experience faith communities as a significant part of their spiritual lives.

The students in this case study were nominated by staff at Connections because they seemed to embody the overall topic of spirituality and leadership. In their pre-interview surveys, they responded positively to questions inquiring about personal connections between faith and leadership activities. It is important to note, however, that not all of the students who participated in programs and courses at Connections were motivated by faith or spiritual beliefs. All three of the staff I interviewed at Connections expressed this reality. Julie described some students as "motivated by a general humanitarian interest." Paul spoke of students who "have more of a sociologist's approach. You know they're more interested in the social issues . . . and how we might think about solving the problems, but may not be motivated by faith." Angie echoed the phenomenon of students without a spiritual motivation who participated in her programs,

and how she sometimes counseled them on how they could enter into her course at the level of intellect instead of faith, even though the framework of the course is outwardly religious. None of the staff identified percentages of who falls into which category, but all acknowledged that they saw both kinds of students. Paul closed this part of our discussion by stating, “It’s really up to the student, you know, how much they are inspired by faith, how much that faith inspires their leadership. [It’s] hard to sort of figure that out.”

Leadership

I don’t think there is any better way to lead than by example.

– Brian

The five student participants in this study all had unique leadership experiences which they had chosen, and each exhibited a different type of leadership style. A common denominator among them was service – not surprising given the mission of Connections – but the manifestation of that service differed for each student. Indeed, several overarching spiritual values informed the students’ choices and styles of service, as I describe below.

Choices

David’s initial leadership choices in college involved medicine, as he had originally planned to go to medical school. His motivation at the outset was partly to build his resume, as he recognized the competitive nature of medical school applications. He was able to participate in a volunteer medical clinic his sophomore year even though there was a waitlist, because a student director met him and helped him “jump the

waitlist.” Since then he had become a student director himself, assisting with the logistics of a clinic that served the working poor. In this role he also coordinated educational experiences for other students, focused on learning more about different aspects of the medical field. David also participated in a science course that incorporated a volunteer experience meant to emphasize the “humanistic sides of medicine” that taught “students how to be present to a person.” He continued to work as a volunteer with the course after he had finished his term. David had also been active in choosing students to participate in service trips, volunteered in the community at the homeless shelter when he could, and had been a resident assistant (RA) in his hall.

All this said, David’s primary leadership activity had been with the orphanage project in Mexico. He had recruited students to accompany him on trips down there, while working hard to keep this service opportunity connected to Faith College. As Paul said about him:

What I like about David, too, while very faithful, he is very strategic. He’s a very smart kid. He will, he has, he knows he has a certain amount of time here at Faith College, and he really has to get this thing institutionalized before he leaves.

As mentioned above, David had gathered many students around him to believe in the mission and importance of the orphanage. He was pouring considerable time and energy into ensuring that this project would continue at FCC after he graduated.

David described his leadership style as passionate, motivational, and non-hierarchical. He sought to be informal: “just have everyone comfortable and a good setting and community.” When asked to describe a good leader, he started to speak about Mother Teresa of Calcutta, but instead chose to focus on his father. His dad’s leadership

was “very unassuming” with “a quiet, strong presence.” He admired his father’s gentleness and humility, and his willingness to go the extra mile for those with whom he worked. He also believed his father had high expectations of others, which often motivated them to excel.

Brian’s primary choice of leadership on campus had been the wrestling club. As a captain last year, and a co-president this year, he has sought to grow the club into a development opportunity for other students, not just as a way to build skills, but to grow the self-confidence of each of its members. As Brian stated, “we want to build confidence in people, not cockiness.” Brian explained that he didn’t seek out the presidency; rather, he felt like he “fell into it.” He said that he “went out and did my best everyday [and], I guess . . . just ended up in that position. I didn’t run for president, they asked me to be it.”

The wrestling club raised money for an overseas mission through its tournaments, and Brian had taken on additional leadership in that area. Daniel, the staff member from the gym, recognized that under Brian’s leadership the amount of money raised in the previous year doubled, largely through efforts connected to honoring a deceased staff member. Besides fund-raising, Brian had also taken on an active leadership role addressing an infrastructure problem at the mission. After visiting it last year, he discovered that electricity dependability and the ability of the community to reliably use computers because of electricity brown-outs, was an issue at the mission. Upon his return to the states, Brian pursued an independent study to address the problem. He had designed a solution and was currently seeking funding to implement it.

Brian believed in leading by example, by talking and listening to people, and by speaking up. He saw himself as a friendly leader who sought to inspire others. He viewed his own confidence and decisiveness as inspiring confidence in others. He reported that he acted “goofy” in front of his wrestling buddies largely as a strategy to make others feel at ease and comfortable with him. Brian pointed to his roommate as a good example of a leader, lifting up his humility as a key virtue. “Despite how he was at something or what position he was in,” Brian explained, my roommate was “never above anything.” He’s the kind of person who would drop what he was doing to respond to a request, and he inspired others because “you’re going to do whatever your leader asks you to do because you know he would do it for you.” Daniel affirmed Brian’s can-do approach to leadership:

I will email Brian and say, ‘Hey, we have an issue here,’ and in less than 24 hours every time he comes to see me, and we sit down and we talk about it. He’s such a quick responder, and he doesn’t come to ask me what we should do. He comes and says, “How about we do this.” He has a plan, and he has a way to organize, to help me eradicate the problem. I mean that’s leadership.

Daniel also discussed how Brian had stepped up to volunteer and organize memorial services and other actions to honor a deceased staff member, a death that had affected the community in a significant way. In both the spiritual and practical realms, Daniel underscored that Brian, in the last year, provided effective and meaningful leadership.

Rianna also demonstrated her leadership abilities at Faith College in many ways. Like David, Rianna was an RA, and she had also engaged herself in many service and leadership opportunities through Connections. She spent a summer as a volunteer with kids with developmental disabilities, and also spent some time on a service trip to the

Dominican Republic. One semester, she led a group on a trip to Washington DC to learn more about pro-life issues. It was this experience she chose to highlight when I asked her about leadership. She described how she “loved, loved leading small group discussion” and “helping others to use their gifts to contribute to the project.” Rianna described her leadership style as one that brought out the abilities of others, and enhanced their own experiences on a project. She saw herself as caring and thought others viewed her “as a mom.” Leadership for her was about being a “good listener” and “other-focused.” Equally important, she stressed the importance of passion and deep belief surrounding the goals of a project or program. She cited Oscar Romero, the former Archbishop of San Salvador who was assassinated in 1980, as an example of a passionate leader. He put his own life at risk and was eventually martyred for his leadership on behalf of the poor of El Salvador.

Angie described Rianna’s initiative as a leadership skill. Relaying a situation from two years ago, Angie said that Rianna had attended a workshop at Connections. At the end of the session, “Rianna just came up to another member of the staff and said, ‘Do you need anybody? Do you need any student assistance?’ And she’s the only one who has ever done that, to be proactive.” Rianna enjoyed being involved and engaged. Initiative is central to her leadership style.

For her part, Jessica’s leadership activities had included being the service representative for her residence hall for a couple of years, through which she made sure people knew what was happening at Connections, and organized service opportunities for the hall. She had spent some time in a service-learning project for abused and neglected

children, related to her psychology major. She had also volunteered during college, spending one summer with children and a second summer in a homeless shelter. Her role as vice president for the Psychology Club had allowed her to organize service opportunities for the club. Moreover, by developing an educational component for the club, through inviting psychology professors to come and discuss their research interests and clinical work, she filled what she perceived was a deficiency in the club.

Jessica viewed herself as a “supportive leader” who cheered on those around her and made sure that “all the practical mechanisms are in place.” Leadership for her was about “connections, communications, relationships” and “being able to see the need in where I was, and thinking I could do a good job with it.” She reported that a role she had in Psychology Club was that of interpreter and consensus builder, making sure that everyone was on the same page. Leaders should be “in tune with” and “receptive to” the people they are leading. The ability to see the larger picture and “what is important” also defines leadership. She acknowledged her brother as an example of good leadership because “he has such a quiet way of leading” and that “people are drawn to him naturally.” His easygoing ways allowed him to be a positive influence on others, “a natural guide.”

Eric’s leadership choices had revolved largely around connection to and support of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered student population at Faith College. While an officer in two of these groups, Eric also was involved in a gender issues group, since he understood issues of gender identity, sexual identity, and the oppression of women and homosexuals as being inherently related. Eric had recently become involved

with a group that advocated for immigration reform and workers' rights. Additionally, he had been active at the homeless shelter for four years. According to Eric, he helped with "a lot of here and there peace work" and chose to advocate on behalf of those on the margins of society.

When Eric took over as president for one of the GLBT groups on campus, the group "felt disempowered" and was developing "this negative discourse like everything now is just awful" because the group was not feeling supported by college administration. Eric said that he needed to encourage the group to help itself, and to find a new project. They did so by connecting with a city organization that assisted GLBT youth, and offering volunteer help. He felt that he was able to offer the group an alternative, along with some hope and encouragement.

Eric saw himself as a "group-oriented" leader. He believed he heard others, and gave them "the tools to do what they want to do." His goal was to help people in "the best way possible." He also stated that a leader sometimes needs to be decisive and take charge, but only after careful listening. He thought people viewed him as a demanding leader, although he said he needed to act that way sometimes to overcompensate for his extraverted personality, which could lead him to talk to people all the time instead of completing any tasks. Despite his reputation as demanding, Eric believed that people saw him as a person who was really concerned about their lives and the issues they cared about, and that those were his most important leadership qualities.

When asked about Eric's leadership, Julie from the staff remarked that he was "unassuming," but that he had a passion for his areas of interest. Julie found Eric

“personable.” This affability added to the motivational strength of his message and his ability to attract others into his leadership. Even though his areas of interest could be controversial at Faith College, Julie described him as “dialogical, wanting to engage in conversation and dialogue with people as opposed to trying to beat people over the head.” Accordingly, Julie asserted that other students respected Eric as a person and as a leader. This regard was apparent in the interactions she witnessed in a classroom setting.

When asked about a specific leader he admired, Eric brought up a civil rights activist, Bayard Ruston, who worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. Eric related a story of King dismissing Ruston from his inner circle because Ruston was a gay man, and King was advised that this could reflect badly on him and the movement. However, Eric claimed, Ruston continued his activism, including crucial work in organizing the March on Washington, and grassroots work in towns across America. Eric stated that he has “a lot of respect for people who are leaders behind the scenes” and who sacrifice things that are important to them for a larger goal.

All of the students I interviewed saw their leadership choices as a way to serve and be in relationship with others. While each had a different style, service was a common denominator in their leadership choices. As Daniel put it:

Some students come here and want an impressive job resume. And now they see that if you’re a president, it’s a service to the club, it’s a service to the members. It’s not advised to come up here and think that you’ll get special gifts for this, or special perks. It’s not going to happen.

These five students deeply embraced an ethic of service to others as fundamental to their leadership. But how did they link faith and spiritual values to their leadership choices and actions? It is to that question that I now turn.

Spirituality and Leadership

Purpose

The conceptual framework in Chapter One lists purpose as a component of spiritual leadership. To wit, purpose provides a motivation and a direction for leadership, and it is value-laden. It encompasses a shared or socialized vision (HERI, 1996) and exists to bring about positive social change (Komives et al., 2007) or continuous improvement (Fairholm, 1997). The students in this study were quite adept at articulating the purpose(s) underlying their leadership.

David underscored the importance of a higher motivation for his leadership, stressing that his was to share his experience of “Christ in the poor.” He also sought to integrate his experiences with poverty with his life on campus, and integrate his faith into everyday decisions. David believed in the “common good” and working toward that end versus being “power-driven or money-hungry.” Although Brian’s expressed purpose as a leader on the wrestling team was to raise money for the overseas mission, he also wanted to teach others that wrestling was less a sport about domination, and more one that embraced honor and respect for the opponent, based in humility. He referred to his Catholic faith when he described this philosophy, claiming that the idea of dominance in sports, one he actively fought against, would be “the exact opposite of what the Catholic faith would want you to instill in people.”

Rianna viewed her purpose in leadership as bringing out the gifts and abilities of others, and in making an experience the most fruitful possible for those with whom she was working. Faith is a significant part of the purpose beneath her leadership and she

said that without it she would only be focused on herself and self-promotion. Angie said that Rianna admired Mother Teresa and her commitment to faith-inspired “servant leadership.” Rianna’s motivations, Angie observed, were grounded in faith and service, and often in difficult tasks so that she could give the most she had to offer.

Jessica’s faith likewise influenced her daily actions, including her leadership. She told me that it affected everything that she did, “especially in those contexts where you are working so closely with people.” When I asked her to further describe what she meant, she replied, “Like loving God and loving others. . . . [In situations where] other need love slash assistance. . . and being able to meet that call to love others.” Paying attention to her understanding of faith as love in action, Jessica tried to manifest that love through helping others in need.

Eric did not speak as clearly about a connection between faith and purpose, but he stressed that acts of service were “spiritual acts.” He explained that he connected faith, leadership, and service through reflective dialogue. “Having all these internal discussions means that I can bring people together in a much more meaningful way.” Eric understood spirituality as an ongoing, dynamic process within himself. This process, in turn, influenced his choices surrounding service, and how he interpreted his actions and integrated them into this internal spiritual dialogue.

Finally, Daniel spoke of Brian, and all the members of the wrestling club, stating that “when they are motivated by something like this [raising money for the mission], they find ways to overcome any obstacle. . . . to make sure they reach their goal and accomplish it.” Brian was motivated by his faith, which was strengthened through his

hands-on experience of the African mission. After experiencing the impoverished conditions of the environment, combined with a growing love for the people he encountered, Brian's commitment to improving the situation expanded and developed.

Relationships

As I spoke with students about what gave their leadership a sense of purpose or meaning, several highlighted the role of relationship. All spoke, for instance, of specific relationships that influenced leadership. Sometimes they described relationships on a personal, intimate level. Other times, students viewed relationship on a much larger scale, describing the inter-connectedness of the world or an understanding of being linked with diverse people across the globe as a brother or sister in Christ. Either way, relationships provided a motivation and context for leadership for these students.

Consider, for example David, who spoke about his volunteer work with a program that taught future medical professionals "how to be present to a person." His leadership in this area reflected his belief that personal connections were important in leadership. Furthermore, his experience in the orphanage touched his heart through encounters with children whom he described as "family." David also saw a role for relationship on a much larger scale, as it tied to his spiritual beliefs and a subsequent call to action:

Because I mean it's a globalized world. That's what it is. You can't just sit back. I mean everyone is connected. You can't deny that. And to deny that would be to deny human life to others. Denying Christ's purpose.

David's daily interactions with others likewise exemplified this focus on relationships as part of leadership. Paul argued that part of David's success as a leader was the gift he

had for attracting others, inviting them to participate, and being a role model for peers and younger students.

Brian saw relationships as essential to his leadership, at home at abroad. As he put it: “you have to be thinking about who you are leading. That would be a huge quality of a leader, someone who is thinking about who he is leading and what’s best for them.” He described the relationships he developed while visiting the overseas mission in Africa: “When you go over there and you meet these people. . . They became like some of my best friends. . . . Making that human connection, you start to see.” Daniel observed that Brian was actively developing relationships so that those who came after him would be ready to lead the program and sustain the mission.

Having stated clearly her faith in the God who “is love,” Rianna went on to describe how the love she developed in her service relationships was generated by Christ’s love, and how this influenced how she interacted with people daily:

I think it really influences my understanding of the equality of all, and the importance of all human life. And that people who might seem to have nothing in common with me, like who are uneducated or poor or a different race, they are still children of God and they are still my brothers and sisters. And we are all living in like one human community. And I want very badly to be reminded of that and to enter into relationship with them because I believe they are my brothers and sisters.

When leading, Rianna stressed how important it was to involve all in a project or issue, so that everyone could be enriched through the work. Moreover, she stressed that these relationships needed to be tended with care. Jessica also expressed the value of being “in tune with” and “receptive to” the people one was leading and how leaders must support others in their own service goals. Relationship was an important factor in leadership, but

relationships took specific form and character as relationships of service. This next section looks particularly at the commitment to serve others and its role in leadership.

Service

Serving others is at the heart of the leadership of the students I interviewed at Faith College. The programs, events, and courses at Connections integrate service and service-learning into many of their activities. According to Julie, students often came through the doors of Connections with the desire to serve, to “give back,” to help those “less fortunate.” Rianna exemplified this type of student as she conveyed service as “kind of this desire to really give back what I feel God has given me, and to give it back in the best way that I can without it letting become too much about me.” Angie confirmed Rianna was service-oriented, noting her attraction to the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus.

Jessica smiled broadly when I asked her to speak about service. “Oh, service, where do I start?” she queried. “I just love it. I don’t know where else you get to really be together with people as much as when you are in a serving capacity.” Jessica went on to articulate the “equal interaction” and mutuality of service and how learning for her occurred through service engagement. In much the same way, Eric explained that service, and the connections made through serving, allowed him to better understand God on the context of his own experiences. David discussed how his fellow students and the culture of Faith College were “service-oriented.” Through his relationship with God he desired to grow as a servant leader who, like Christ could lead through “example and through service.” And Brian stated that “doing for others. . . is completely what I think

the Christian faith is about, what Christ taught.” For all of these students, service appeared to connect them to God and others. Furthermore, these students’ chosen leadership opportunities had put the service of others at the center of their actions.

Connections encouraged this connection between spirituality and service in multiple ways. Through its explicit pedagogy using Catholic Social Teaching, active support for prayer and spiritual development – including a chapel in the building – and a variety of spiritual opportunities, the center “encourages [students] to put faith into practice” (Angie). However, while Paul said that many students “are really interested in serving the Church and have this wonderful commitment,” Angie claimed that “it is an ongoing struggle” to integrate prayer and spirituality into the programs of Connections, not from a philosophical standpoint, but more from the reality of finite resources when so many activities are occurring. Angie reported that she has argued for keeping “theological reflection and spiritual development as a prominent part” of the mission of Connections, as students are hungering for the integration of service, faith, and leadership.

In these past two sections, the themes of relationship and service have been highlighted. While closely related, service is a specific type of relationship, or way of relating to another, as seen in the students’ choices to serve others in their leadership. These leadership qualities are also woven through the next section on values. However, breaking down these values into more discrete categories can enhance our overall understanding of students’ leadership, and how it is informed and influenced by spiritual beliefs. By delving deeper into the meanings that support and reinforce leadership for the

students, I discovered an array of values that they incorporated into their understandings and manifestations of leadership.

Values

In learning about and exploring how these students made sense of their own leadership in relation to spirituality, I created a category that I labeled “spiritual values.” Four main themes comprise the spiritual value category: internal congruence and meaning, the poor and marginalized, humility, and fruits of the spirit. The first three represent values that students brought with them into their leadership. Characterizing values that the students had previously integrated into their belief systems, these understandings influenced students’ choices and commitments. The fourth spiritual value, fruits of the spirit, was broken down into specific fruits. These fruits were understood by the students as spiritual outcomes resulting from their leadership experiences. As I came to understand, students did not necessarily have these fruits when they emerged as leaders, but rather, these fruits appeared to be an outgrowth of their involvement with leadership. Not all students spoke of experiences or beliefs that fit into each of these four themes, but overall they articulated understandings of leadership that reflected deep values based in them.

Congruence. As defined in the social change model of leadership (HERI, 1996) congruence can be understood as integrity or “consistency, genuineness, authenticity and honesty” (p. 6). In this study, I found that student participants consistently strove for congruence in their leadership and in their lives. Brian wanted the wrestling team to be consistent with its expressed commitment to raise money for the overseas mission, so he

organized a way to visit the site and bring the experience back through stories, multi-media, and his own passion for the cause. He said he needed to “see what they were doing so that we could kind of bring it back over here and tell people what was happening.” David resonated with the “well-rounded” and “well-balanced” students he knew, and described how students “thrive off each other’s zeal for social justice.” Jessica stated that her work in service and justice was so intertwined with her faith life that she couldn’t possibly separate it. Eric articulated his struggles with integrating his feelings as both a person of privilege, as an educated North American, and his solidarity with the marginalized as a gay, low-income, person of color. He admitted that becoming “an integrated person” had taken him “a lot of time and a lot of thinking,” but that finding congruence was important to him because “to be a leader you have to know who you are and what your role is.”

Poor and marginalized. The students in this study not only spoke about serving those in need, but also stressed their commitment to the poor and marginalized in society. This commitment, labeled “solidarity” in Connections’ documents and their references to Catholic Social Teaching, often anchored these students’ desires to serve others or to work for justice. A human bond with those who were disenfranchised or lacking power economically, socially, or politically informed a significant component of their spirituality and accompanying values.

Eric emphasized his commitment to the poor through his work at the homeless shelter and how he came to understand poverty:

I really saw it not just as something that I was experiencing but something that was a bigger issue. And once again poverty is not just a poverty of

money, of monetary resources, but poverty of spirit, poverty of power, poverty of the ability to have a voice. Poverty is a sort of a deprivation, but it can be a deprivation of many, many things.

Furthermore, through his work with immigration and workers' rights, Eric noted how he had started "to realize these connections, the rights of the immigrant, [that] the rights of the . . . disempowered are the same across all minorities." This emerging sense of solidarity with his own experiences of feeling disempowered, challenged Eric to practice leadership on behalf of those without power. Julie affirmed this part of Eric's development, stating that he worked on behalf of the rights of others through his writing, speaking, and leadership activities.

Rianna spoke of her belief in the sanctity of every human life, and her belief in the equality and dignity of all persons, emphasizing particularly those who might be different from her – those "who are uneducated or of a different race." Angie related a service experience by Rianna, where she chose to work with the most profoundly handicapped children at the site, those most challenging and most in need. Angie understood Rianna as one who intentionally chose to be with those who were more weak, limited, and on the margins because she felt called by God to be connected to the poor. Rianna's own descriptions reinforce this observation. For example, Rianna described a salient experience with a young child in the Dominican Republic on her trip there:

I'm a white college-age woman, and have had an education, and I am not poor, and I'm from the Western world. . . . I worked with kids, and so this little girl, I always think of her, Rosa. And she's an orphan in the Dominican Republic. . . . We had this connection. . . . We just bonded. We didn't even speak the same language. . . . And leaving was so hard; it was just like leaving my little nieces and nephews back home. . . . She is made by God just like I am. And we were just given different life situations.

Rianna's sense of solidarity was exemplified in her belief that this girl is "just like I am." All the exterior differences are small compared to the profound connection she felt, comparing the child to her relationships with children in her family.

In my interview with him, David spoke about Mother Teresa and how her example of service to those most in need, the dying and abandoned of India, had inspired his own leadership and service of "seeing Christ in the poor." Moreover, he quoted Jesus in a Gospel story of a rich man asking for the path to eternal life. David told me, "And Christ says, sell your belongings and come and follow me. And he couldn't do it and he went away sad." David went on to say that he had no desire to be like the rich man; "I don't want to be that person who goes away sad." In his commitment to Christ, he reported that this story motivated him to be detached from possessions and give his life away for others.

Moreover, David used the language of family to describe his experience of serving and leading in a developing country: "I don't see the kids in the orphanage in Mexico as orphans. I see them as my brothers and sisters. I really truly do. David articulated how he finds "Christ in the poor." One of his primary images of God is Jesus on the cross, a suffering God. He stated:

I do really love being with the poor. That's where I am really most joyful, so I do try to do things like that. Everything I worked for, studied, even when I wanted to become a doctor it was because I wanted to serve the poor.

A significant part of the mission of Connections is to educate students about poverty and the call from Catholic Social Teaching to be in solidarity with the poor. Julie

affirmed this part of Connections' mission when she spoke of exposing students to social and economic injustice. Paul stated that one of the things that made Connections unique was its focus on ensuring "that our students have an awareness of the poor, those on the margins, and have an understanding of their role or responsibility in reaching out to them." Toward this end, language addressing the needs of the poor and the marginalized, healthcare for the poor, immigration and migrant issues, and the global developing world were highlighted on the web page of Connections. Moreover, service sites focused on urban and rural poverty were described as opportunities for curricular and co-curricular activities for interested students.

Humility. A few of the students highlighted humility as a valued leadership characteristic. Brian maintained:

I am a big fan of the last shall be first and the first shall be last story. . . . Especially, like, with wrestling. It's kind of a sport by nature that brings out a bad attitude in people. Like this idea of physical domination, like I am going to beat you and I am better than you. And that's the exact opposite of what the Catholic faith would want you to instill in people. So in order for us to, like, really be with that mission, we have to teach wrestling completely different than maybe in a lot of other places. So this idea of humility, which kind of instills that even though this is an individual competition, this is a team sport.

Jessica stressed a humble type of leadership, of "just knowing the importance of humility, of servanthood." And David, drawing on his admiration for Mother Teresa and his father as "humble and very thoughtful" leaders, explained feeling humbled himself when others complemented him on his leadership stating "it's not me that they are seeing, it's more Christ working through me.

Fruits of the spirit. As I listened to David speak clearly about his experiences of joy and radiance through his leadership, the “fruits of the spirit” as written in the Book of Galatians, Chapter 5, came to mind (New Oxford Annotated Bible, 1977). While joy is one of the fruits listed in Galatians, the other fruits described below do not directly parallel those of St. Paul. However, the meaning I give to the category of fruits is an intended or unintended positive result from practicing leadership and understanding it through a spiritual lens. Unlike the other spiritual values that the students brought with them to leadership, the fruits arose from the experience of leading. These values do not fit the other defined categories, but can be understood as characteristics, values, or results that are appreciated from a spiritual standpoint. Referring back to Schneiders’ description of spirituality from Chapter One, positive directionality toward a goal or value beyond the self is a main idea of spirituality. These fruits describe such positive directions.

David’s experience of joy was the most well-articulated spiritual fruit of all the students I interviewed. He exclaimed that he wanted to “live like Christ and do whatever he asks because I know that is going to be my peace and joy.” He described the religious sisters in his service site as having joy that radiated to others, which was a comfort and strength to him. He believed that his own experience of God, such as that on a recent retreat, “radiated joy” to others, and that he could positively affect others through his sharing of this joy. Paul described David as “warm, engaging, can tell a passionate story, utterly tenacious.” This charisma invited others and included them in David’s sense of joy.

In a different manifestation of a spiritual fruit, Brian described how he inspired confidence and hope in others through his own leadership, especially on the wrestling team. For Brian, trust was an essential component for a leader, and one that increased the responsibility of the leader. Daniel described Brian as “a joy” to work with, and it was apparent to me that Daniel trusted him completely as a leader. For Rianna, the ability to inspire others was the mark of a good leader. Last, Eric spoke of a “deep basin” of compassion that has been carved out in him through his leadership practices, and how his leadership is fed and inspired through reflection, silence and spiritual practices.

These fruits – joy, peace, confidence, trust, inspiration, compassion, calmness, and nourishment – were values verbalized by the students as significant outcomes from leadership practice and experience. This grouping is not intended to be limited; the category of spiritual fruits could be enlarged to include additional spiritual values, for example, forgiveness or equanimity. In this study, the above fruits were specifically named by students as results of leadership, and therefore are highlighted here. They are a beginning in the quest to better understand the types of outcomes related to leading from a spiritual perspective or vision.

Love

Spiritual leadership is rooted in purpose, integrity, commitment, and values. These traits together are bound into a love for others made manifest through the actions of leadership. As noted in Chapter One, love is not so much a separate characteristic, but a basis for the desire to lead and to lead purposefully. Using Fry’s (2003) definition, love is a “genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others” (p. 695). In my

research, some students spoke specifically about love, but all conveyed genuine care, concern, and appreciation for those with whom they worked and served directly.

For Rianna, her primary image of God is love. As mentioned earlier, she understood the love of Christ as generating love within her. She spoke of her belief that Christians are to imitate Christ by giving themselves away to others. In her experience in the Dominican Republic, for example, she described her service as a “constant experience of love and being loved.” Of her leadership in the pro-life movement, she argued for the importance of conveying a message “of what we really believe in, which is love, and which is the dignity of the human person. . . . It’s about loving the person.”

When probed about her faith beliefs, her leadership, and how the two might be connected, Jessica discussed them as interwoven, which made it hard for her to articulate them as distinct. Loving God and loving others were one in the same, and she worked to combine the two through service to those who need assistance. The call to love God and others “influence[s] directly everything that I do.” Jessica’s choice to work closely with maltreated children in several contexts embodied her own care and concern for children who suffer.

As Brian discussed his trip to Africa, he declared that he “went over there and just fell in love with the people.” Brian’s care for the people of that country also led him to return to seek a solution to their electricity problem, which in turn was affecting their ability to use computers. It was also apparent in speaking with Brian that he cared genuinely for the students in the wrestling program. Having to counsel a student away

from competing, because the student wasn't ready in terms of ability, was one of the hardest things Brian ever had to do.

David asserted that Christ's will for his life would bring him joy and peace and that he was "going to be overflowing with love." David's care for the orphans in Mexico and his love for the poor motivated him in his leadership choices, and in his desire to enter the seminary to study for the priesthood. Eric didn't mention love specifically, but his care and concern for others, especially the disempowered as he called them, was evident throughout our interview. Eric relayed a sensitivity to others who did not have a voice, or a strong voice, or the power to make that voice heard so that change could be effected.

All of the students I interviewed chose to be active in service, to lead within that service context, and to ground their servant leadership in a relationship with Christ, whose care, concern, and love for others inspired them to do the same. From this love came an understanding of justice, which was explicitly connected to these students' understandings of God and God's call to them. Language related to justice was prevalent through Connections' materials and in the interviews conducted with staff. The next section explores the concept of justice, how Connections taught it, and what students came to understand about this foundational biblical value.

Justice

As mentioned, education for justice was a central component of the pedagogy of Connections. Julie stated that "it's really a pervading, a pervading and overall education that we provide the students." She went on to say that Connections attempted "to help

students think about issues of justice, equality, and fairness” in various ways and through multiple avenues. By justice, Julie explained that she and her colleagues specifically focused on social and economic justice. The documents of Connections, the web page, the annual report, and individual course descriptions highlighted education for justice as a key learning goal of the center.

Definitions

In their understandings of justice, students articulated a variety of descriptions, but most were linked to faith or God in some way. David understood justice as the common good, a central principle from Catholic Social Teaching, and according to Julie, a value that the institution as a whole had begun to articulate more directly in its mission. David also believed that a just person was one who followed the great commandments of loving God and loving one’s neighbor as oneself. Rianna reflected this thought a little differently by stating that acting justly meant treating others as God would treat them. She understood justice as a “God concept.” Justice was about fairness, but fairness through a divine lens, where people are given what “they are due” because of their dignity as a human person loved by God.

Jessica defined justice as “right relationship” and “restoring relationship” to a balanced state of equality. For Brian, justice was about freedom and equal opportunities for growth and betterment, and implied that people treat each other in fair and equal ways. Eric stated that “justice is about empowering people” and “giving people the choices to do the right things, to help them help themselves.” Finally, Eric declared that

“justice isn’t something that is going to happen. . . . It’s something that we do.

Something we have to get our hands on.”

Justice and Spirituality

Explicit connections to faith and understandings of God arose as the students spoke of their convictions about justice. Rianna’s idea of justice as a “God concept” led her to believe that everyone should “treat people as you believe they deserve as human beings, not just what they earned.” While she did not draw on it specifically, her view regarding the rights and dignity of the human person is foundational to Catholic Social Teaching (McBrien, 1994). In contrast, Jessica voiced this connection to CST plainly, quoting the principles of human dignity, option for the poor, and the common good when verbalizing her perspectives on justice.

David and Eric both articulated their definitions of justice that related to their own spirituality. For instance, David asked himself, “If this is Christ, how would I treat them?” He explained that he sought to be fair in how he treats others because his actions “reflect your inner relationship with God.” Eric expressed his fascination with Jesus and how the Gospel stories portray him interacting with “social lepers” such as prostitutes and tax collectors. He also asserted that justice and spirituality are linked because God, as a “just person,” cries with humanity in its vulnerability and suffering.

These spiritual connections to justice beckoned these students to action. As Brian put it, “We’re all in this together, and the reason that people are in bad situations is that we’re not doing something about it.” David voiced a similar perspective, “It’s everyone’s problem. I mean if we are letting this occur down there [in Mexico] then

there is an issue with all of our living and all of our relationships. Because I mean it's a globalized world." Eric stressed that he struggled with combining his faith which entails "doing the right thing" with the experience of the "disempowered and with people who don't necessarily have those choices." His views on spirituality and the inequalities of the world compelled him to act on behalf of others.

Justice and Leadership

When asked how their views on justice influenced their leadership activities, every student except Eric struggled to make this connection easily. While all had strong drives to serve others, and to serve those who were affected by social and economic injustices, acting as leaders for justice was not in their vocabulary. Surprisingly, while some students quoted Catholic Social Teaching easily, a more integrated understanding of the overarching role of justice in their lives as leaders was seldom present.

To illustrate, Brian reflected on the economic disparities he witnessed in Africa, comparing children there with children in a local school at which he spoke about his experiences. He felt an imperative to act on behalf of those in developing countries, but he did not articulate his own leadership as connected to justice specifically. Daniel, the staff member from the gym, however, believed that Brian was "all about" making the world a better place, a more just place.

Jessica thought that her leadership opportunities, since they were all tied to service, were therefore somewhat connected to justice, but it was my probing of that connection that made this present to her. As she told me, "I am not sure I would have thought of that before." Rianna said that "there is not an explicit connection there, but

that [connecting my leadership to justice] is something I should think about more.” She continued, “I am focused on the direct service of the person, and not so much on advocacy or changing systems.” Angie confirmed Rianna’s self-understanding, stating:

I wouldn’t say the strongest part of her is a sense of social justice. I think she is very committed to service. . . . I think she is aware of social issues but. . . I don’t see that’s where she is drawn.

David was able to connect his leadership to justice, but specifically through his early desire to be a doctor, which had since changed for him. He said that the lack of health care for the poor originally motivated his desire to pursue medicine. When I asked Paul about David’s understandings of justice, he said that David did have a grasp of it, but that perhaps his conception was more focused on charity than justice.

Eric, however, claimed justice work as part of his leadership specifically. He saw his actions on behalf of the disempowered as working toward justice. Moreover, his own economic standing as a low-income student, along with the marginalization he experienced as a gay man had influenced how he saw poverty and the leadership experiences he had chosen. Julie confirmed Eric’s view of himself as a leader for justice. She reported that equality and human rights seemed “to be the common theme or thread among the groups he’s involved in.” She further described actions he had taken in the form of letters to the editor of the school newspaper, demonstrations, and events he had organized that challenged the injustices Eric had perceived.

Conclusion

These descriptions of spirituality, leadership, and justice offered by students, faculty and staff, especially when contextualized within the mission of the Connections

center, have brought into focus a picture of spiritual leadership for college students. This portrait includes students from a faith background, in this case Roman Catholic, who actively pursued spirituality and spiritual development through their years in college. Each student expressed a commitment to the Christian faith and teachings of Christ, and to the importance of community, although one of the students had chosen to separate from the Catholic religion. However, all students engaged in regular spiritual practices and described God as relational, personal, and loving.

All of the students I interviewed were involved in leadership, and the manifestation of that leadership included a variety of diverse settings including residence halls, a sports team, social service agencies, mission trips, and a homeless shelter. The common denominator among the students and their leadership choices was their spiritual motivation for leading. Spirituality as an influence on leadership was characterized through a shared purpose to improve the lives of others, a focus on relationship, a commitment to serve others, and the embodiment of spiritual values. These spiritual values included solidarity with the poor and marginalized, personal humility, and congruence or integration. From leadership, the students expressed that certain fruits of the spirit grew within them, including compassion, joy, and peace, in addition to others. Foundational to their leadership was love, a genuine care and concern of others, which was relayed in a multitude of ways throughout the interviews.

The context for the study, Connections, provided an environment where Catholic Social Teaching informed the pedagogy of the center as students were formed in their emerging commitments to human dignity, solidarity with the poor, and the common

good. Through teaching and programs, Connections strove to live out its mission of education for justice. The students came to understand these values and the overall mission, and sought to incorporate and integrate justice into their leadership in college. This integration, coupled with their spiritual background, beliefs, and practices, allowed for leadership practiced through a spiritual lens or perspective, which might otherwise be named spiritual leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

In this study I sought to explore student understandings of their own faith and spirituality, as well as their experiences and choices for leadership, and the ways in which these areas might connect with one another. Furthermore, this study explored an additional subject, justice, and its relationship with both spirituality and leadership. As a case study design, this inquiry was focused on a particular program at a Catholic institution of higher learning, and sought to understand how the environment influenced the students' learnings and understandings in these areas. In addition to student interviews, data were also gathered from faculty and staff interviews and from document analysis. The case study structure allowed for a triangulation of the data through these multiple sources while also analyzing the context of the program studied. This in turn led to deeper understandings of how the environment, through its pedagogy and programming, nurtured faith and leadership in college students. As a result of all data gathered, a number of key findings have emerged.

Key Findings

Spirituality is Central

The students who participated in this study were not only engaged in their spiritual lives and development, but also understood their faith, in God and Jesus, as foundational and integral to the rest of their lives. For several of the students, daily

practices of prayer, reflection, or attendance at worship services demonstrated a daily commitment to the practice of religion. Even Eric, who did not claim a faith community or particular practice, saw everyday service to others as a spiritual act. These students viewed God as close to them, in a personal relationship, whose presence was always near. Moreover, they saw God's influence as strong and continual in their relationships, in their decision-making, in their growth as individuals, and in their lives overall.

Spirituality is a Strong Motivation for Leadership

Since these students viewed spirituality as integral to their lives in multiple ways, it was not surprising to discover that faith in God and spirituality (1) motivated them to choose to lead in the first place; (2) influenced their choices for leadership; and (3) directly affected how they chose to lead. All of the students were positively oriented toward service, and sought to assist the poor, those on the margins of society, and those who needed help.

Spirituality was closely related to the purpose beneath these leadership choices for students. Experiencing Christ in the poor, being other-centered, implementing the teachings of Jesus Christ and Catholicism, and giving back to the community were all cited as reasons for leading. Experience and belief in the love of God, as well as seeing others as children of God, and thus brothers or sisters, motivated these students to want to improve the situations of the economically or socially deprived. When asked if they would still be leaders were it not for their faith, one said an outright "no," three said that they would but it would be for their own self-benefit, and the last said "yes," but believed he would not be as flexible, and would not be as successful without the nourishment that

comes from faith. For all participants, spirituality was woven into their lives in such a way that it was hard for them to envision leadership in the same way; spirituality was a significant influence and motivation.

However, significant support was not as strong for the reverse. Leadership as an explicit influence back to spirituality and spiritual beliefs was not as obvious. Moderate support for an influence arose as students expressed how their experiences of leadership, in particular leadership in service, reinforced their spiritual understandings of the teachings of Jesus, education about CST, and commitment to serve those on the margins as Jesus had. However, reinforcement, as opposed to newer or deeper learning, more aptly describes this influence of leadership on spirituality. Two of the students did wrestle with the theological question of evil and suffering in the world as a result of their leadership. Although they expressed some new faith understanding as a result, the question appeared to still be active for them. The one place where the influence of leadership on spirituality was apparent, however, was the spiritual fruits outcomes. Through experiences of leadership, positive outcomes of joy, compassion, trust and other fruits of the spirit were identified. However, the spiritual fruits outcomes were a small, discrete portion of the data; more fully integrated spiritual understandings as a result of leadership were not conveyed by the students.

Two of the staff I interviewed raised this disconnect, stating that while they hoped that spiritual growth would occur as a result of leadership and service experiences, they were unable to articulate any actual examples of such an influence. One staff member, however, cited several examples of where this did *not* occur with students. A third staff

member suggested that a meaningful connection did occur – that it was a circular kind of learning – but she did not provide evidence to support the type of development she discussed.

Spirituality is Correlated with Explicit Leadership Values

The students interviewed named a number of leadership values related to spirituality, including several that had been discussed in existing spiritual leadership theory. Service was primary among them. Although it functioned as a motivator, it was also a strong independent value. All of the students expressed service as an essential value in leadership. Helping others, working to make the world a better place, giving of the self for the benefit of others, and finding enjoyment in service were all listed as valued activities by the students.

Humility surfaced as an unexpected value, one not considered in the original conceptual framework, and with only a minor mention in the literature. However, humility was a theme in several of the student interviews. In particular, the example of Jesus as one who humbled himself was cited more than once. Three of the students directly mentioned the desire to serve humbly, and most of the students mentioned a dependence on God to do what they could not. There was recognition that the abilities required for leadership ultimately came from God. God is at work in the world, and an appreciation for the power and grace of God for the individual and in particular situations was alluded to several times by participants.

Integrity, or congruence, was also valued by the students. They expressed a desire for their actions to be in line with their spiritual beliefs, to live authentically as

believers and citizens of the world, and to take their talents and share them with others.

Additionally, they sought to be in solidarity with the poor, embracing that tenet of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Finally, between the five students, they articulated the values of compassion, joy, confidence, hope and inspiration as woven throughout leadership.

Love, not so much an independent value as an overarching one, was interlaced among the other values conveyed by the students. Love as a genuine concern for others was evident as a basis for the students' leadership choices and actions. Traveling overseas, raising money, noting poverty and difficult conditions, embracing others as brothers and sisters, working with disabled and maltreated children, mentoring younger students, seeking to bring out the gifts of others, and seeking refuge for others from the pain of marginalization – all of these demonstrated participants' loving care and concern for others. However, it was not just this list of activities that illustrated love as these students' overarching basis for action. Each also conveyed in their words, body language, and tone their passion for serving and helping others. This awareness of the poor and those in need mentioned above translated into concrete actions to improve lives and situations. Whether the impact of their service was big or small, love of others was at the core of their leadership. They all referred to relationships in leadership and service as sources of great meaning. Several used the term "servant leadership." As Heifetz and Linsky (2002) put it, we yearn to be connected with others and "as a practical art, leadership allows us to connect with others in a significant way. The word we use for the connection is love" (p. 209).

An Emphasis on Justice

Being in an environment where justice and responsibility to care for others in the world was stressed, and immersed in a milieu in which spirituality was appreciated and actively fostered, significantly influenced how these spiritually committed students understood justice. All the participants viewed spirituality and leadership through a lens of serving the poor, the marginalized, and those in need. These were students who had, at some point, been “grabbed by the scruff of the neck” and had chosen to engage the question posed by Paul, the director of Connections, “Do you have any idea what your responsibility before God and faith is, and before your neighbor?” Although each student’s response was different, all emphasized that their Christian faith had impelled them to respond.

Justice was understood in different ways. The common good, right relationship, treating others as God would treat them, the freedom to grow and prosper, and the empowerment of others were some of the ways the students described justice. CST teachings of human dignity, solidarity with the poor, and working for the common good were assimilated into the students’ understandings of justice. Interestingly, however, while students valued justice as a principle, only one clearly articulated a connection between justice and his own leadership choices. The other four student participants struggled as I probed the possible connections between their leadership and justice. For both staff and students, their main understanding of justice involved working to change structures or systems that influenced poverty. Four of the students saw themselves contributing to direct service and charitable efforts, but not justice leadership. The

concept of connecting justice to leadership seemed new for two of the students, with both saying that they wanted to think about it more.

As a result of the inability to recognize associations between justice and their leadership, I found incongruence in these four students. They all spoke eloquently about working for the common good, being in solidarity with the poor, and serving those in need, but could not articulate justice as part of their own leadership. I suggest that while the program placed a strong emphasis on justice, something might be missing in how the students integrated that message. Perhaps the definition of leadership for justice that the center advanced came across to students as being too narrow. For example, they may have tied it specifically to political work to change structures. Or, perhaps something was lacking in the center's pedagogy, wherein students were taught principles of justice through CST, but were not taught how to integrate those more fully into their experiences of leadership. Overall, I was surprised that the students struggled to connect understandings of justice to their leadership, as I thought from their descriptions of leadership that issues of justice were certainly present.

Relationships and Community

The students I interviewed valued highly the relationships that were part of their leadership experiences. As stated above, service to others was integral to their activities and motivations. For them, the purpose of leadership rested solidly in serving, supporting, or empowering others. Creating positive change for those with whom they were connected through relationships was a central goal. It is important to note that these students were not attempting to effect change from a distance; they were personally

involved and invested in actual people whom they encountered. A child in the Dominican Republic, a community in Africa, victims of abuse, handicapped children, gay and lesbian students, and an orphanage full of “brothers and sisters” exemplified for these students the real-life people that motivated them to lead and, I would argue, sustained their leadership. These emotional connections were foundational for their leadership choices.

Moreover, communities of faith played an important role for each student. Spiritual and emotional nourishment was found in the context of these communities and each student expressed the significance of community in their lives. The religious community of the Catholic Church in particular surfaced most often in students' descriptions. Catholic Mass and devotional practices such as adoration, rosary, and private prayer, were mentioned in some combination by all of the students, although as stated previously, Eric had made a decision to part ways with the institutional Church. In addition to the celebration of the Eucharist and other traditional Catholic practices, other experiences of community were reported as meaningful and integrated into the spiritual lives of the students. Being with those in poverty, participating in a local church, engaging with others in an ongoing faith-sharing group, joining a praise and worship community, and giving generously to those within one's immediate daily life – a roommate in this case – were all cited as experiences of community that influenced and formed the spirituality of the students.

Therefore, for the students in this study, leadership and spirituality were understood in the context of community and relationships. Being there for others,

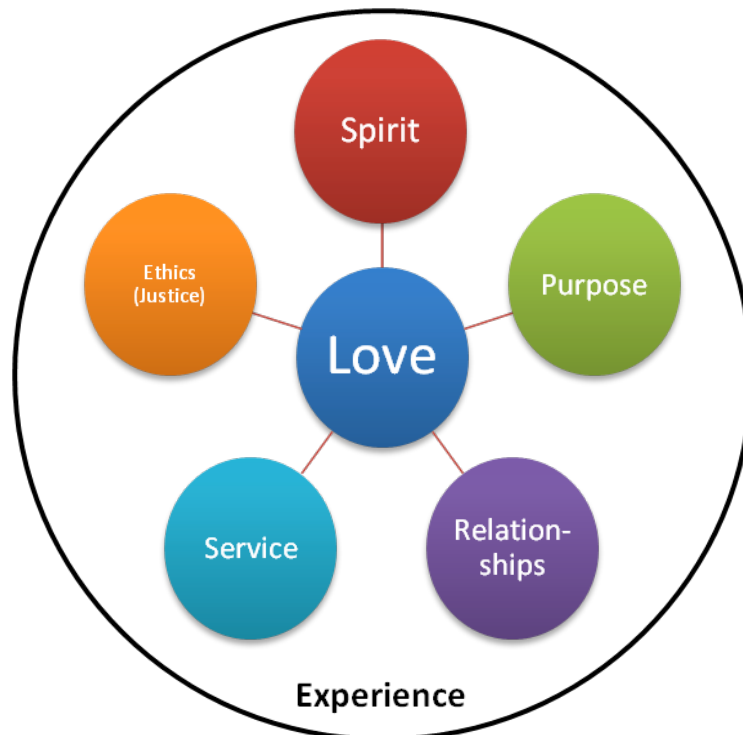
connecting, empowering, serving, and listening were all mentioned as important components of leadership. Additionally, being grounded in a strong sense of community provided support and nourishment for the student leaders in their faith lives and in their leadership choices. The absence of a religious community, as noted by Eric, left a gap, a sense that something was missing, in his life. He mourned the loss of community, although he expressed his confidence in the decision that brought him to that point. All of these points of data support the finding that relationship and community are integral to these students' understanding of leadership and spirituality.

An Emerging Conceptual Framework

The key findings of this study provide support for the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter One. Figure 1 displays an emerging spiritual leadership framework for college students, based on the findings of the study. As noted, love is an anchor for spiritual leadership and is therefore central to the framework. All of the other components are connected to love; that is, the genuine care and concern of others. It is from this starting point that the rest of the framework emerges. The key findings of purpose, service, spiritual values, relationships, and ethics/justice, are rooted in love. These components are described in Chapters One and Four. However, a brief review of their descriptions are as follows: (1) Purpose provides the motivation for leadership and its subsequent direction – ultimately, purpose is about bringing about positive social change; (2) service is any type of assistance provided to others, but particularly to those who are in need or lacking certain societal advantages; (3) spirit refers to values that have been connected to spiritual leadership theory such as humility, trust, forgiveness,

compassion, and peacefulness; (4) relationship refers to the priority of relationship for those within leadership – positive, life-affirming relationships are essential; (5) ethics or justice describes treating others well, doing what is right, and working toward the common good; and (6) love is the overarching value that ties the components together, and is described as genuine care, concern, and appreciation for self and others (Fry, 2003). These six elements are all present in and influenced by experience.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of college spiritual leadership



This framework is a beginning, a place from which to consider further exploration of the concept of spiritual leadership as a whole, and how it might be particularly differentiated

for college students who articulate that their leadership choices and styles are connected to spirituality.

Building Bridges: Connecting this Study's Findings to the Extant Literature

Prior to beginning this inquiry into the connections between spirituality and leadership in college students, a review of the literature was conducted. The intent of the review was to inform the study and provide a foundation on which to build this current inquiry. Having completed my study, I now return to the extant literature, connecting salient findings with previous research.

Leadership

The findings and conceptual framework of this study largely support past research as described in Chapter Two. Although the findings affirm previous research in these areas, this study goes further in bringing these separate areas together for new understandings of spirituality and leadership. By exploring spirituality and leadership together within a faith-based institution, the concept of spiritual leadership as put forward by previous theorists dovetails with prior exploration into the spiritual and leadership arenas for college students.

Relational and process-based leadership, embodying values related to the spiritual dimension of human beings such as congruence, inclusivity, empowerment of others, and a purpose focused on positive change accurately depicts the leadership of the students involved in this study. These descriptions also apply to the mission and philosophy of the program studied. These findings confirm previous work on college leadership development such as the social change model of leadership (HERI, 1996) and the

relational leadership model (Komives et al., 2007), both described in Chapter Two. They were grounded in relationship as they carried out their various activities. They valued sharing leadership with others, and empowering them in the process. Moreover, the students strove to do good things and treat others well, in the hope of making a positive difference in people's lives. These actions closely mirror the values of ethics and citizenship found in the leadership models above.

Additionally, previous research had demonstrated a significant correlation between leadership development and subsequent growth in social and political awareness, an increased involvement in volunteerism, and a sense of personal and social responsibility. Conversely, a study by Dugan and Komives (2008), demonstrated that engagement in socio-political matters was a strong predictor of leadership growth in students. In this study, Connections, the program in which students participated, strove to promote students' leadership growth and development within a context of social and political awareness that especially emphasized Catholic Social Teaching.

Finally, while ethics and positive change are concepts central to the above leadership models, justice is not articulated directly. A sense of changing the world to provide each person with equal opportunities, to change structures to be more fair to all, or to work to alleviate pain and suffering because everyone deserves humane treatment, were not found in the literature on college student leadership. The studies from faith-based institutions that were reviewed measure students' propensity to use religious and justice language to describe their understandings, but these are not directly connected to leadership growth and development. This current study brings together leadership,

spirituality, and justice in a novel way, attempting to demonstrate new ways of integrating these areas in college students and, therefore, enhancing understanding of student experience, growth, and development.

Spirituality in Higher Education

As demonstrated in the literature on spirituality in higher education, this study affirms the importance of spirituality to college students and young adults. The population interviewed is most accurately characterized by Smith and Snell's (2009) traditionalist category. Traditionalists are described as those who are firmly connected to a religious tradition, both in belief and practice. About 15% of the population in that study, and therefore a minority segment of this age group, were found by Smith and Snell to be traditionalists. However, previous research showed that for religious and non-religious students alike, spirituality was an important component of their lives and development. Moreover, religion remains relevant on college campuses (Cherry et al., 2001). The students in this study, as religious *and* spiritual, reveal a subset of the overall population who are committed to a particular religious understanding as they manifest and live out this larger yearning for meaning, purpose, and authenticity in their lives.

What is especially important to point out here, however, is that previous studies on the spirituality of college students have focused on personal understanding, desires, and embodiment of spiritual matters. The definitions of spirituality being formed and used within the context of higher education speak of values, but not of what those values should be. In fact, a sense of "ought" or "the good" is missing in the discourse. With an emphasis on authenticity, genuineness, wholeness, openness, and a compass to the

interior life, spirituality has focused on primarily on the individual to the exclusion of the valuable and necessary role of the community. Lacking are significant discussions of community or communal values, definitions of citizenship, or contributing to the common good. Broadening the understandings of spirituality within higher education research to move from a perspective of individual spirituality to a larger outlook that integrates the importance of community and society will enrich the entire area of study.

That said, an emphasis on communal values, as related to ethics and purpose, has been articulated in the leadership studies cited above. Moreover, it has been studied in the work on institutional mission at faith-based institutions (Fleming et al., 2006; Nichols, 2009) and in the self-reported values of alumni at Catholic institutions (Day, 2006). What this current study begins to explore is how understandings of spirituality in college students can be further explored and deepened to include a sense of responsibility for others, and an accompanying imperative to act on behalf of those others; to work toward justice as leaders in society.

Spiritual Leadership

This study supports the previous research and theory-building on spiritual leadership. As noted in those theories, consciousness of self and others, commitment to a higher purpose, altruistic love, humility, compassion, joy, and strong personal values all characterize spiritual leadership. The participants in this study reflected those ideals and articulated them as part of their leadership beliefs and activities. Again, the dimension of justice furthers and deepens the understanding of spiritual leadership as portrayed in earlier research. It provides flesh to the skeletal concepts of working toward a higher

purpose, or acting with altruistic love. The goal of assisting those who are poor, on the margins, or otherwise treated unjustly by individuals or structures, adds a rich layer to the previous work of spiritual leadership models. This current study demonstrates that spirituality can motivate individuals to lead in areas of injustice, can shape and characterize how they lead with values such as compassion, joy, and humility, and nourish their continued leadership in areas of need.

The findings of this study support previous research, and build upon it by bringing together the areas of spiritual and leadership in college students in a new way. The models of college student leadership, in conjunction with the recent research in spirituality in higher education, provide a basis in which to integrate the understandings of spiritual leadership research and theory. Through the creation of a conceptual framework, the integration of all these areas can be visualized and might be tested more concretely in the future. In addition to supporting future research, which will be discussed in a later section, the findings provide possible directions for current practice, as I discuss next.

Implications for Practice

Spirituality and spiritual development are important to college students. Moreover, spiritual development and practice can positively affect students' leadership and can be embraced as an avenue to encourage student development. Support for spiritual activities and development is an important factor in holistic growth, and this study raised several implications for how to better support it in college student programs.

How can those involved in student development outside of the classroom better recognize that spirituality is an aspect of human experience, and one that could be more effectively nurtured in college as part of overall student development? One practical way to do this is to support diverse expressions of faith and religion as students demonstrate interest and need of them. Student affairs professionals, student activities staff, and residence life programming might begin first by welcoming student initiatives for spiritual practice, but could also go further by developing programming that explores spiritual characteristics like meaning, authenticity, vocation, and spiritual values such as joy, compassion, humility, and forgiveness. For example, spiritual dimensions could be added to programs or services that seek to assist in identity development, relational growth, and career choices. Enhancing a program through spiritual exploration does not necessarily mean a bias toward specific religious tradition. A program or activity could utilize perspectives from multiple faith traditions or incorporate overarching spiritual values representing a variety of diverse beliefs. The significant piece for development is to have students ask themselves questions such as: What do I believe? What does that mean for how I approach this topic? How do my beliefs influence my thoughts and decision-making? Integration of spirituality into already new established programs can add a richness and depth to student experience.

Moreover, spirituality can positively affect leadership growth and development, including the motivation to lead in the first place and the type of leadership one provides. As another practical suggestion then, this study underscores the importance of better integrating spirituality as part of student development into leadership areas. Leadership

programming and curricular work can incorporate the spiritual dimension of students by requiring activities that examine spiritual beliefs and practices and applying them to actual leadership. Whether students are believers of a particular faith tradition or not, exploration of a faith tradition, and how the associated doctrines might influence leadership, could be a meaningful exercise. Like the students who take courses through Connections, the program in this study, a particular faith lens such as Catholic Social Teaching can positively influence a student's leadership development and enhance students' overall learning.

In the realm of spirituality, campus ministers, religious studies and theology faculty, and other religious leaders on campus occupy a unique position to support the spiritual dimension of students. The recommendations above – support for spiritual development and integrating spirituality into leadership – are often implemented in the course of everyday programming and other learning opportunities. Therefore, for those who work primarily with college student spirituality, recognizing the potential strength of intentionally focusing on spiritual leadership for students might enrich current offerings. These staff and faculty could utilize the components of the conceptual framework discussed previously to design spiritual programming or course curriculum that incorporates its components. Or, current offerings could be evaluated to investigate whether all components of the framework are present and operational within existing courses and programs. Finally, these practitioners could assess the place of justice in leadership programming as a means to deepening the link between spirituality and leadership for students.

As relationships and community were found in this study to be integral to spiritual growth and development, programming that understands the communal aspect of spirituality, and its importance for ongoing support, mentoring, and challenge can positively affect spiritual leadership. Spirituality is not an individual venture. Individual reflection and private religious practices are important, but, as the students in this study demonstrated, connection to others in religious belief and practice is essential. Accordingly, activities or assignments combining spirituality and leadership have the potential to be especially effective in group settings. Through dialogue, shared reflection, and group work, deeper learning might occur. Additionally, mentoring and support from faculty and staff are significant for spiritual growth. Parks (1986, 2000) discussed the role mentors play in the faith development of young adults. Relationships with mentors are part of the communal experiences of college students and can be not only relevant to spiritual growth, but also to the integration of spirituality with leadership. In light of this, practitioners might do well to consider the role that mentoring could play for student development in these areas.

For those institutions or programs that include education for justice in their mission, explicit connections between leadership and justice has the potential to enhance significantly the pedagogy used both in- and outside the classroom. These associations can lead to more enhanced understandings of justice and how it might be connected to spiritual leadership. For instance, students could be asked: What is justice? What does it mean to act justly? How can justice be incorporated into their leadership? Questions such as these can lead to further understandings of justice and what it means to lead from

a framework of justice. Moreover, exposure to other cultures and subsets of society, whether on a local, national, or global scale, might enhance learning for justice as students grapple with economic and social disparities in the world as they experience feelings of being on the outside or "margins" of a culture.

This study underscores that spirituality influences leadership, but questions whether leadership in turn influences spirituality. We can do more to bring the circle back for students, exploring how leadership activities and practices influence one's spirituality. Again, opportunities for individual and group thinking, reflection, and discussion intentionally exploring how leadership activities might change or influence the ways in which students understand their spirituality could lead to opportunities for growth. For example, structured reflection opportunities could be offered in group settings that would focus on leadership experience and questions of spirituality. This type of experience might best be spread out over the course of several months of leadership, examining images of God, religious beliefs, and spiritual values both at the beginning and the end of the leadership experience.

These types of practices could inform the emerging framework of spiritual leadership for college students providing information and data about how the framework is working in the field, and possibly lead to adaptations to it. Of course, further research exploring and developing the concept of spiritual leadership would add to the findings from this study and continue work toward a theory for college students. This next section suggests considerations for future study of this topic.

Directions for Future Research

This study was a glimpse into a small group of students in a particular program at one institution. As a case study, I described in detail what I observed and learned over the course of a few months. While the findings might be interesting, this is one small study – a quick snapshot of one place and time. It is my hope that this research could be a starting point for future research studies, of diverse designs, so as to increase the knowledge and understandings pertinent to college student leadership. As I conceptualized the possibilities for new research, the following possibilities arose.

In this case study, I interviewed a small group of people connected to a program at a Catholic institution. Furthermore, the students I met with self-identified as leaders in the program for whom spirituality was significant in their lives. As the program attracted large numbers of Catholic students, the student participants had strong affiliations with the Catholic Church, either currently or in the past. Additional studies that expanded the student sample to include more diversity would add to the data pool. For instance, a sample of students that included a variety of religious traditions, as well as students who don't claim a specific tradition, would enrich the data collected and allow for comparisons between religious traditions. Instead of a case study, a phenomenological study that drew participants from multiple institutions could purposefully select students from different religious backgrounds, or other types of demographics that would allow for greater diversity of student characteristics. In this same type of study, students could be drawn from a cross-section of religious institutions to provide for the desired religious diversity.

Of course, a multiple-case study of a number of different programs at separate institutions could also provide for desired variables in the study, such as type of institution, diversity in student demographics, and geographical location. Additionally, the multi-case model would continue to allow for participation of faculty and staff to comment on their observations of students. A multiple-case study would also incorporate the mission, philosophy, and pedagogy of particular programs and provide further insight into how those factors influence students' spiritual leadership. Besides colleges and universities, affiliated programs, such as Jewish Hillel centers, Catholic Newman Centers, and Muslim centers on campuses, could participate in such studies.

If more time and resources are available, a grounded theory methodology could result in a theory of college student leadership that emerges from the data. The conceptual framework represented here could be more fully explored and adapted as a theory is developed. In order to design a grounded theory study, extensive research, which would include differing types of institutions and a larger student pool, would be needed. Designing a longitudinal study over two to three years is an additional option for a grounded theory study, although a phenomenological study could also study student development of spiritual leadership over time. Whichever methodology used, a longitudinal study would show how students change over time, and could factor in variables such as courses, activities, and programs in which the students participate during their college years to determine their influences on spiritual leadership development.

While the above methods are qualitative in nature, a quantitative study through the use of a survey instrument would build upon the findings in this current study. Survey questions could be developed from the components of the conceptual framework, or if a grounded theory study had been conducted, from the emergent themes of the theory. Such a survey could be administered to a large number of students at a variety of institutions nationwide to result in aggregate findings for a large population of students. In order for a credible theory of college student leadership to develop, large studies of both a qualitative and quantitative nature would be needed.

Conclusion

This study began with questions surrounding the possibility of bridging spirituality and leadership in college students in a novel way. By exploring the experience of students, the observations of faculty and staff with whom they worked and studied, and a context of a faith-based program, this research resulted in understandings of the connections between students' religious and spiritual beliefs and practices and their leadership activities.

Of particular note in this study was the justice-centered mission of the program, and student response to the teachings and emphasis on justice and service to others. An understanding of faith-based justice – of creating positive change for others as a responsibility of faith – emerged from the interviews with the students and their faculty and staff observers. For the students in this study, the question posed by the director: “Do you know your responsibility before God and before your neighbor?” can only be answered with a resounding “yes.” Leadership in society is integrally connected to

service of others, especially the poor and marginalized, and the motivation to lead arises from a profound understanding that the call to love God and others demands such a response.

While these students are a small sample of the college student population, the findings from this case study demonstrate that spirituality and leadership share an important relationship with each other. Although this study provides only a starting point for further research, it offers the exciting prospect that this confluence between spirituality and leadership in college students can and must be further explored through future research and practice. My hope is that such research will, in fact, continue, since the students in this study have helped me to see ever more clearly that building bridges among spirituality, justice, and leadership has the very real potential to influence positively the next generation of spiritual leaders.

APPENDIX A:
TIMELINE OF THE STUDY

July 2010

- Research proposal approved
- Letters e-mailed to potential gatekeepers

August through September 2010

- Case identified – permission in writing obtained from the gatekeeper
- Consent of Institutional Review Board of host institution requested and granted
- Institutional Review Board application submitted
- Document collection begins

October through November 2010

- Institutional Review Board permission granted
- Participants identified
- Visit logistics
- Arrangements for interviews
- Site visit
- Interviews with participants conducted
- Finish document collection

January 2010 through April 2011

- Completed remaining interviews on two additional site visits
- Attendance at a conference at the site
- Coding of data for themes and categories
- Data analysis

May 2011

- Presentation of findings

APPENDIX B:
LETTER TO GATEKEEPER

Dear _____:

I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago. In order to complete the requirements of my degree program, I am conducting an original research study to learn about the influence of spirituality on college student leadership beliefs and practices. Your institution and specific program meet the criteria I am using for selection of a case study. I am writing to ask your assistance in providing me access to students on your campus, to documents that support the mission of your center and institution, and assistance in identifying participants for interviews.

Design of the Study

During an onsite visit, I plan to interview four to six students who have experienced a connection between spirituality and leadership, and four to six faculty and/or staff who can speak to the students' spirituality, faith practices, and leadership activities. Additionally, I will seek documents that describe the mission of the center and the institution, especially as they relate to faith, spirituality, ethics and social justice, and leadership development of students. The study will ask the following questions:

1. How do students describe and understand their own spiritual development?
2. How do leadership experiences within an explicitly faith-based context influence students' understandings of what it means to be and act as a leader?
3. How do students' spiritual beliefs and practices shape how they think about leadership? How might these inform how they choose to act as leaders?
4. How do students' understandings of ethical or just leadership influence their own spirituality or leadership?

Each of the interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes. All project-related data and information will be safeguarded and personal and institutional identities will be kept in confidence. Participation is voluntary and participants may choose to end their participation at any time.

I hope you will be willing to offer your center as a site for this project. Participation of your program in this project will help to establish greater understandings of the confluence and integration of spirituality and leadership in college students, an area that has yet to be fully explored. If you have any questions about this study or for further information, please contact me at (708) 704-9361 or edohert@luc.edu. Dr. Jennifer Haworth serves as my dissertation advisor and can be reached at (312) 915-6937 or jhawort@luc.edu. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Eileen P. Doherty
 Ph.D. Candidate
 Loyola University Chicago

APPENDIX C:
SELECTION SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

Please answer each question to the best of your ability by marking the answer that most closely relates to your experience. All information provided will be kept confidential.

Gender M F

Class Standing 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year 5th year

Faith Tradition

- _____ Roman Catholic
 _____ Christian (Protestant)
 _____ Christian (Orthodox)
 _____ Christian (Other/Not Specified)
 _____ Jewish
 _____ Buddhist
 _____ Hindu
 _____ Muslim
 _____ Other (please specify: _____)

- Do your faith/spiritual beliefs influence the types of leadership activity you choose? YES NO
 Do your faith/spiritual beliefs influence how you practice leadership? YES NO
 Do your faith/spiritual beliefs influence your practices of social justice? YES NO
 Do you engage in spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, reflective journaling,
 or contemplative walks in nature, at least occasionally? YES NO

Please respond with short phrases or sentences. Use an additional sheet of paper if necessary.

Leadership roles in college:

Describe in a few sentences the importance that spirituality plays in your life:

APPENDIX D:
INFORMED CONSENT FOR STUDENTS

Project Title: Leading with Love: The Confluence of Spirituality and Leadership in College Students
Researcher: Eileen P. Doherty
Faculty Sponsor: Jennifer Haworth, Ph.D.

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted for a doctoral dissertation by Eileen Doherty under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Haworth in the Higher Education Program at Loyola University Chicago. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose

I am conducting an original research study to learn about the influence of spirituality on college student leadership beliefs and practices. As a participant in this study you would provide information to me about the connection between spirituality and leadership beliefs and practices of college students.

During an onsite visit, I plan to interview four to six students who have experienced a connection between spirituality and leadership, and four to six faculty and/or staff who can speak to the students' spirituality, faith practices, and leadership activities. Students are asked to identify and give permission to contact these faculty and staff at the end of this form. Additionally, I will seek documents that describe the mission of the center and the institution, especially as they relate to faith, spirituality, ethics and social justice, and leadership development of students. The study will ask the following questions:

1. How do students describe and understand their own spiritual development?
2. How do leadership experiences within an explicitly faith-based context influence students' understandings of what it means to be and act as a leader?
3. How do students' spiritual beliefs and practices shape how they think about leadership? How might these inform how they choose to act as leaders?
4. How do students' understandings of ethical or just leadership influence their own spirituality or leadership?

Procedure

Student participants in this study agree to first complete a short survey regarding their religious and faith background, and their spiritual and leadership activities on campus.

Student participants who choose to participate in the second part of the study agree to a 60-90 minute recorded interview, consisting of open-ended questions related to the above questions, which will be conducted on [*institution's*] campus at the [*name of program*] in a private office or conference room at an agreed upon time. Additionally, faculty and staff who know you may be asked to comment on their observations of you as a student during their interviews. Recorded interviews will be transcribed by myself, the researcher. Within four weeks of your participation, you will be sent via email a transcript of your interview to review for accuracy. If you do not respond within one week, the transcript will be assumed to be accurate and no changes are necessary.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

All data obtained in the study will be safeguarded, personally-identifiable information will be removed, and pseudonyms will be used. Interviews will be digitally recorded, stored in a safe location, and destroyed at the conclusion of the project. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you agree to participate, you are free not to answer any question or

to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will have no effect on your role as a student leader at your institution, employment at the institution, or a grade in any related course.

Risks and Benefits of Participating

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There are no direct benefits to participants from participating. However, your part in exploring the possible influences of spirituality on leadership will help increase understanding of the relationship between these two areas, which can assist educators and students alike.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about this study or for further information, please contact me at (708) 704-9361 or edohert@luc.edu. Dr. Jennifer Haworth serves as my dissertation advisor and can be reached at (312) 915-6937 or jhawort@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Permission to Interview Faculty and Staff:

By writing in the names of faculty and staff below, you give permission for the researcher to contact these named individuals and request information, through an interview format, about their observations, thoughts, and reflections of you only regarding the research topics of spirituality, faith, leadership, and social justice. You may revoke this consent at any time prior to the actual interview process by contacting the researcher. Please do not name a faculty or staff member you have as an instructor this term, or anyone you work for in a paid, employment capacity, as they are exempt from participation.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Statement of Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX E:
INFORMED CONSENT FOR FACULTY/STAFF

Project Title: Leading with Love: The Confluence of Spirituality and Leadership in College Students
Researcher: Eileen P. Doherty
Faculty Sponsor: Jennifer Haworth, Ph.D.

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted for a doctoral dissertation by Eileen Doherty under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Haworth in the Higher Education Program at Loyola University Chicago. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose

I am conducting an original research study to learn about the influence of spirituality on college student leadership beliefs and practices. As a participant in this study you would provide information to me about the connection between spirituality and leadership beliefs and practices of college students.

During an onsite visit, I plan to interview four to six students who have experienced a connection between spirituality and leadership. During the student informed consent process, students will be asked to identify and give explicit permission for me to contact and interview faculty and staff members who can speak to their observations of the student. From these names four to six faculty and/or staff who can speak to the students' spirituality, faith practices, and leadership activities will be selected for interviews. Additionally, I will seek documents that describe the mission of the center and the institution, especially as they relate to faith, spirituality, ethics and social justice, and leadership development of students. The study will ask the following questions:

1. How do students describe and understand their own spiritual development?
2. How do leadership experiences within an explicitly faith-based context influence students' understandings of what it means to be and act as a leader?
3. How do students' spiritual beliefs and practices shape how they think about leadership? How might these inform how they choose to act as leaders?
4. How do students' understandings of ethical or just leadership influence their own spirituality or leadership?

Procedure

Faculty and staff participants who will take part in this study agree to a 60-90 minute recorded interview, consisting of open-ended questions related to the above questions, which will be conducted on [*institution's*] campus in your office or a conference room at the [*name of program*]. Recorded interviews will be transcribed by myself, the researcher. Within four weeks of your participation, you will be sent via email a transcript of your interview to review for accuracy. If you do not respond within one week, the transcript will be assumed to be accurate and no changes are necessary.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

All data obtained in the study will be safeguarded, personally-identifiable information will be removed, and pseudonyms will be used. Interviews will be digitally recorded, stored in a safe location, and destroyed at the conclusion of the project. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you agree to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will have no effect

on your employment at [institution]. You will not be asked to speak about students who are currently enrolled in a course you are teaching, or who are employed by you in a paid capacity.

Risks and Benefits of Participating

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There are no direct benefits to participants from participating. However, your part in exploring the possible influences of spirituality on leadership will help increase understanding of the relationship between these two areas, which can assist educators and students alike.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about this study or for further information, please contact me at (708) 704-9361 or edohert@luc.edu. Dr. Jennifer Haworth serves as my dissertation advisor and can be reached at (312) 915-6937 or jhawort@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS

Greeting and Introduction

1. Thank you for your willingness to participate.
2. Review of the purpose of the study: I am exploring possible connections and influences between spirituality and college student leadership.
3. Review of procedures: I will ask several open-ended questions related to your experience as a student leader and your spiritual beliefs and practices and ask you to answer as fully as you can. I will digitally record the interview; however, if you wish to state something that you do not want recorded, just tell me and I will turn off the recorder for that portion. I will later transcribe the interview, and send you a copy to review for accuracy. All personally-identifiable information will be safeguarded and altered to protect the identity and privacy of all participants.
4. Do you have any questions before we begin? May I clarify anything for you?
5. Review of informed consent, agreement, and signatures.

General

1. What is your current year in school? Age?
2. What is your faith tradition? How long have you practiced it? What do you do to practice it?
3. What types of leadership activities have you been involved in since beginning college?
4. How did you come to be involved with (*institutional program*)? How long have you been involved?

Spirituality

1. What role does spirituality play in your life? Can you offer some practical examples to illustrate your answer?
2. Who is God or the divine for you?
3. When did you develop this understanding of God? How has this understanding changed over time? (from grade school? High school? In college?)
4. What have been some key moments or experiences in your life that have shaped who God is for you and who you are for God? Your understanding of your faith tradition?
5. What specific teachings from scripture, your church, Jesus (or other spiritual leader) motivate you? In what ways are you motivated or inspired?
6. Do you pray? What does prayer look like for you? Do you engage in any other spiritual practices? How has your engagement in various spiritual practices changed over time, and what, if anything, do you believe has informed or shaped these changes?
7. Is God active in your life? How?
8. Are you involved in a community of faith? Have you always been involved in a community of faith? If yes, how does that involvement affect your spiritual life?
9. How does your spirituality or faith affect the way you act? The decisions you make? Your relationships in general? Can you offer some specific examples so that I may better understand your responses?

Leadership

1. What does being a leader mean to you?
2. What do you see as some characteristics of a good leader?
3. Tell me about someone you respect as a leader. What is he/she like as a person? As a leader?

4. What has influenced your decision to engage in the types of leadership activities you have chosen?
5. Tell me about a specific experience you have had as a leader. What was your role? How did you live it out? How did you organize or influence a group? What was the end result?
6. If I asked someone in that group to describe you in that leadership context, what would he/she say?
7. Do you think about your spirituality or faith as being connected to your leadership activities on campus? If yes, in what ways? If not, why not?
8. Would you still be a leader if not for your faith? If no, why not? If yes, would your leadership be different? In what ways?

Program/Institution

1. What made you choose (*name of institution*) for college?
2. Did the faith-based nature of the institution or the religious order that sponsors it influence your decision?
3. Has it influenced you since you have been here? In what ways?
4. How did you come to be involved in (*institutional program*)? What made you choose to be a leader in this program?
5. How has this program affected your faith or spirituality? Your understandings of leadership? How you act as a leader?

Social Justice

1. How do you understand justice? What about social justice?
2. What does it mean to you to be a just person? Can you illustrate your answer with a specific example or experience?
3. Does that understanding relate to how you see yourself as leader?
4. In what ways do your understandings of justice relate to your faith/spirituality? How do they influence your choice of leadership activities? Can you offer a specific experience or example to help explain?

Summary

1. Is there anything you think I should have asked but have not asked you?
2. Is there anything you would like to add to your comments?

Closing

1. Thank you for sharing your time with me. In the coming weeks I will send you a transcript of our conversation and ask you to review it for accuracy.
2. If at any point you have any questions, feel free to contact me.
3. Thank you again for joining me today.

APPENDIX G:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FACULTY/STAFF

Greeting and Introduction

1. Thank you for your willingness to participate.
2. Review of the purpose of the study: I am exploring possible connections and influences between spirituality and college student leadership.
3. Review of procedures: I will ask several open-ended questions related to your experience as a faculty or staff member who has had the opportunity to observe students. I will digitally record the interview; however, if you wish to state something that you do not want recorded, just tell me and I will turn off the recorder for that portion. I will later transcribe the interview, and send you a copy to review for accuracy. All personally-identifiable information will be safeguarded and altered to protect the identity and privacy of all participants.
4. Do you have any questions before we begin? May I clarify anything for you?
5. Review of informed consent, agreement, and signatures.

General

1. What is your role at this institution?
2. How long have you worked here?
3. In what ways do you have the opportunity to observe and get to know students?

Observations of students

1. What kinds of spiritual development do you witness with students with whom you work?
2. In your role, do you see connections between the spiritual beliefs and practices of students and their leadership activities? Can you give me a few examples?
3. Do you actively work to help them make these types of connections? If so, can you share with me some of the intentional practices you use to help students build these connections? What else do you believe affects students' abilities to make these connections?
4. Do you think faith/spirituality primarily influences leadership, or leadership primarily influences spirituality?

Institution/program

1. How would your work be different if it were not a faith-based institution?
2. How does the mission of the institution or this specific program affect student leadership? Student spirituality?

Specific students (ask for each student participant that the faculty/staff participant know well enough to speak of).

1. How long and in what capacity have you known the student?
2. Have you witnessed spiritual growth in the student? Can you give me a few examples?
3. Have you have the opportunity to observe the student in a leadership capacity?
4. How would you describe his/her leadership style/practices? Examples?
5. Do you see connections between faith/spirituality and this student's leadership? Examples?
6. Does the student have an understanding of social justice? What is it for him/her?
7. Does this understanding of social justice influence the student's faith or spirituality? Does it influence the student's leadership?

Summary

1. Is there anything you think I should have asked but have not asked you?
2. Is there anything you would like to add to your comments?

Closing

1. Thank you for your time today. In the coming weeks I will send you a transcript of our conversation and ask you to review it for accuracy.
2. If at any point you have any questions, feel free to contact me.
3. Thank you again for joining me today.

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