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## How faith and leadership are connected: a study of Catholic women administrators in a southern public institution of higher education

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HOW FAITH AND LEADERSHIP ARE CONNECTED:  
A STUDY OF CATHOLIC WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS IN A SOUTHERN PUBLIC  
INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agriculture and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

In

The School of Human Resource Education  
and Workforce Development

by  
Mary Blanchard Wallace  
B.S., Northwestern State University, 1992  
M.A., Northwestern State University, 1994  
August 2012

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my beautiful mother, Dolores Ann Adams Blanchard, who exemplified the faithful, graceful, loving, confident and nurturing way women lead. Momma always believed in me, and never let me think that writing this dissertation was insurmountable. I learned how to lead from my mother, who taught me leadership by the way she lived her life: love others, more than you love yourself; know your shortcomings, but don't let them hinder your forward progress; work hard, and when you think the job is done, work harder; relationships matter; don't hold a grudge; life is short, live it to its fullest; let your light shine...the world needs you. There are so many other lessons that are difficult to put into words. You are my Eagle's Wings, Momma. It is only because I knew you believed in me that I was even able to complete this dissertation.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the four most important "little women" in my life, my beautiful daughters, who without a doubt bring joy, blessing, and love into my life. To Elizabeth Ann, Emma Grace, Elani Marie, and Elie Frances – future women leaders of the world! Go out and lead with your faith! The world needs you!

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Without sounding like an actress delivering an Oscar speech, I want to first and foremost legitimately and whole-heartedly give glory and honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the One I kept my eyes on while He worked through me in this piece of research. Faith is the cornerstone of my leadership. I pray that this work illuminates God's role and purpose in our lives and our identity.

Since 2007, I have been a student in the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development. Ever since beginning the program, each faculty member believed in me...without question, without doubt. I have always felt inadequate in the academic world, but the SHREWD faculty showed me I had a place in the academy. I cannot express my gratitude enough to my major professor, Dr. Curtis Friedel. Dr. Friedel has been a motivator in my studies, keeping me focused, and reminding me that the completion of both the degree and the dissertation were not a competition. He never expressed disappointment in the countless times I would miss deadlines, or not finish writing. He only encouraged. Dr. Friedel...thank you from the bottom of my heart for believing in me.

To the faculty member I never want to disappoint...Dr. Loren Marks. Thank you for your unending belief that I could do a qualitative study, even when you warned me not to (Friends don't let friends do qualitative research). Any quality in the methodology of this dissertation I owe to you and your tireless efforts to teach students like me quality qualitative methods.

Other faculty on my committee have inspired me to be a better student, and a better scholar. Thank you Dr. Verma, Dr. Redmann, and Dr. Burnett. Your dedication to the students in SHREWD is impeccable and appreciated. If ever I am able to serve as a faculty member at an institution of higher education, it will be your example I will strive to follow.

My classmates in this process are without a doubt some of the smartest and wittiest I have ever met. First and foremost, to my greatest support during this process...Janina Fuller. Thank you for coming up to me after one of Dr. Verma's classes and saying, "Hey, I was hoping we could get together for coffee. I think we will be researching similar things." That opened a door for a great friendship, several cups of coffee and definitely a great support. Your love, guidance, and support mean more to me than words could ever describe. To Chev, Holly, the nurses, Candace, Ryan, Clay, LaSaundra, Sheetal, Susan, et al. Thanks for the support, the laughs, and encouragement. You guys are the greatest!

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In addition to the women supervisors, I have been surrounded by amazing women leaders in my life who have inspired me to tackle such a dissertation, and have supported me as a friend, and made sure I kept my eyes focused on what was important in this process. To Ann, first and foremost, who befriended me right away as a Christian sister in 2003 when I started my journey at LSU. Ann continues to support me, and even assisted in pushing me to complete this dissertation by her editing and typing. I love you, Ann!

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To my beautiful daughters...you have all taught me something about being a mother. It is through my role as your mother that I strive to have my best leadership moments, even though I know I fail at times. Elizabeth...you've taught me that to lead means if you believe in something, you don't hide from it...you express that belief. You've taught me to do that in ways that are not offensive, but showed conviction. I will never forget those lessons. Emma, you've taught me to accept people where they are at, and to stand up for yourself. You have a strong sense of who you are, and I have learned that I need that same sense of who I am. Thank you for sharing that with me. Elani, you've taught me that sometimes as a leader, you have to be funny, extroverted, and on the edge of greatness! You have kept me laughing through this whole process. Thank you for your humor, most of all. Elie, you have taught that to be a leader, you have to sometimes stand out. You are not afraid of that. You are so unafraid of being yourself, and expressing who you are in your own unique way. Thank you for accepting me for who I am and teaching me to celebrate being unique. I love you all, and I am so blessed to be your mother.

To my husband, Steven Samuel Wallace. When we were married 20 years ago, Steve put his total faith in my academic abilities, even when I did not believe in myself. Steve has encouraged and supported me, tested me, believed in me, and has been an incredible partner on this journey of faith. Our faith is tested in fire, for sure...it was never an easy path. However,

you stuck around, and showed me that true faith in Jesus means having to say you are sorry for as many times as it takes; it means dying to oneself and loving others; it means sacrifice, and forgiveness. It means loving the way Jesus would love the “least of these.” Thank you, Steve, for helping me develop a stronger faith, and for helping me to believe in myself, even when others would believe otherwise. Most of all, thank you for reminding me that God had never left my side. For this, I have no great words...only commitment and love.

Finally, to the women participants themselves. My debt and gratitude are in your hands. I pray that your voice is strong in this work, and that this voice adds to the research on how women lead with their faith. It was my complete joy to work with you, to hear your stories and share your incredible persistence and love working in higher education. Your lives are an example of sacrifice, love, and service. You are the trailblazers, and I hope this work honors your contributions to the field.

#### Proverbs 31: 29-31

Many women have done admirable things, but you surpass them all! Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty; the woman who fears God is the one to praise. Give her a share in what her hands have worked for, and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

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## ABSTRACT

Studies concerning spirituality and higher education, particularly for the college student, are beginning to appear in journals, conference papers, and presentations. However, there is little research conducted with professionals in higher education on the construct of spirituality. Spirituality has so many different definitions in the literature, it is difficult to define, and perhaps even more complex to study academically.

Using a research-based conceptual model for religious faith, developed within the study of family sciences, this study examines the lived experience of how and why Catholic women administrators connect their faith and leadership in a setting of public institutions of higher education. Using a grounded theory qualitative approach to research the how, why and processes of the faith and leadership connection for women administrators, interviews were conducted with ten Catholic women administrators.

Findings include four emergent themes which begin to explain and deepen the understanding of how religious faith and leadership are connected at work. These themes, with subthemes, include: Faith at the Core of Identity, Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management (Management of Self and Management of Supervisees), Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership (Use of Faith in Decision-Making: Prayer; Faith as Action: Service Orientation, Valuing Others, Relationship Building, Doing the Right Thing), and Challenges in Practicing Faith (Public Institution Factors; Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts).

These findings begin the research agenda to study faith and leadership, particularly in settings of public institutions of higher education. One research recommendation from the study was continued qualitative study approaches interviewing a wider sample of women leaders, including those of other faith denominations and geographically diverse regions of the United States. Practical implications for Human Resource offices, as well as Catholic parishes and diocese are included. As the women themselves articulate the connection of faith and leadership as inseparable, with faith as the foundation of their leadership, more is understood about the way women of faith lead in public institutions of higher

education. Universities and the Catholic parishes and diocese are positioned to provide time, space, and training initiatives for leadership development.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Divisions of student affairs at colleges and universities provide out-of-the classroom experiences for college students. Professionals in student affairs typically have masters degrees in college student personnel, with backgrounds in the history of higher education, foundations of student development (how students develop throughout college), budgeting in higher education, and higher education and the law. These professionals are prepared to lead the university in areas such as: student leadership development, diversity and multiculturalism, admissions and enrollment, issues of student conduct, student activities, Greek life, residential life, career services and academic support services. Professionals in student affairs work with academic units to provide co-curricular experiences complimenting the academic experience at the university. These professionals also serve as advisors to student organizations, including student government, activity boards, and residential assistants.

Throughout higher education, workshops and institutes are devoted to the professional development of women leadership in the field. As an example, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) created the Alice Manicur Symposium for women leaders in student affairs aspiring to become senior student affairs leaders (vice chancellors/provosts). Alice Manicur was a pioneer for women in the student affairs profession, achieving leadership success at a time when women were not accepted in the field ([www.naspa.org](http://www.naspa.org)). This symposium focuses on mentoring participants with more experienced women leaders in higher education, networking with peers, and building competencies for higher level leadership. These types of workshops and institutes are needed in the profession in order for women to achieve leadership competence and confidence to be promoted to senior leadership positions in higher education.

From the time of Alice Manicur, through today, more and more women are emerging as leaders in the field of higher education. As more popular non-refereed leadership literature emerges, the research-based literature does not keep up with how and why women lead. These types of studies could provide models and best practices in order for practitioners to help prepare women leaders in the field.

### **Background of the Study**

In public institutions of higher education, women are not represented in top leadership positions in divisions of student affairs compared to male colleagues (Coleman, 2003; Madden, 2005). Additionally, in many public institutions of higher education, faith is a taboo subject (Lindholm, 2007). Both women's ways of leading and expressing faith have positive impact on organizational and individual performance. Women's ways of leading and expressing faith have similar characteristics, including relational characteristics, ethical, value-laden actions and beliefs, and service to others first (Adams & Csiernik, 2002; Coleman, 2003; Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003; Harris et al., 2007; Lewis & Geroy, 2000; Love & Talbot, 1999; Neiman, 1998; Tisdell, 2001; Young, 2004). However, there are currently few studies which show connections between the concepts of leadership and faith. Though the concepts have similar characteristics, are they connected? If so, how? What impact would the connection have on institutions of public higher education, particularly with the leadership career path for women leaders?

Organizational development research may provide research pathways to study the connection between faith and leadership, particularly when examining through the role of gender. Studying the connection between women's leadership and faith may explain some of the complexity of how women lead. Perhaps studying leadership and faith through the lens of

performance management may provide ways to understand the complexity, especially as it relates to women leading at higher levels in institutions of higher education. If one can understand more about women's leadership, perhaps this knowledge will assist in promoting and training more women to senior-level leadership positions.

Differences between men and women's leadership are found in the literature, but the differences have small effect size. Most of these studies are quantitative in nature, and may not explore the depth of information involved in an individual's leadership paradigm. The literature is sparse in reference to faith and leadership connections, identifying instead the over-used term of spirituality, which academically means very little. The literature is also sparse when examining women of faith. If faith is part of the equation of these Catholic women's leadership, then professionals in higher education can utilize this understanding in developing better pathways for women to lead in senior-level positions in higher education, an arena in which they are represented at lower rates than men (Mayer et al., 2008; Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Another parallel that may be applicable in this comparison are flexible work schedules or job shares. These work/life balances allow women (and men, as well) to lead whole lives by allowing for different work situations which affirm an employee's outside interests and personal needs.

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

Several authors have written about and researched spirituality and higher education. Some even characterize the work done in higher education as a calling or vocation, explicitly linking spirituality and work in higher education. For example, Lee (1999) suggested focusing on three conceptual issues in higher education: nourishing the intellect; committing to the sacredness of all life; and fostering spirituality. The author suggested that while focusing on

these aspects, universities become learner-centered. With regard to fostering spirituality, the author suggested that this is an ethic of care. Committing to care was seen as an extension of the call to serve in the academy. Dalton (2001) offered the two dimensions of students in their college years developing spirituality: a) making connection with intimate life purpose, and b) finding an inward home. These two concepts were similar to concepts of student development, including achieving competence, and establishing identity (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Because student development is a foundation in the field of student affairs, Dalton's concepts opened the door for administrators and faculty to pursue their own spiritual pathways at work. However, there is little evidence in the literature that administrators and faculty have walked through this door.

Parks (2008) suggested mentoring as a way for student affairs administrators to connect with students. Parks wrote of mentoring within the realm of spirituality in the academy, connecting mentoring and inspiration. The author stated:

Mentors inspire – inspirit. Sometimes mentors do this by what they embody – the way they live and teach; sometimes by the big questions they ask or by what they point to as an aspiration or affirm as an aspiration in others. This is the spiritual dimension of mentoring (Parks, p. 7).

Work as vocation has a particular resonance for higher education professionals, as they help to shape students' development, many times through activities such as mentoring.

“Vocation” is a word with religious and spiritual connotations. Though models and guidelines exist in the organization development literature illustrating spiritual leaders have less turn-over, higher company loyalty, and decreased absenteeism (Dirks, 2000; Fry 2003), as well as garner higher levels of motivation from employees (Webb, 2007), few rigorous studies have examined the link between women's leadership and women's faith. Studying the connection between women's leadership and faith may point the way to the complexity of women's ways of leading,

and add to the organizational development literature concerning faith and leadership at work, particularly in public institutions of higher education. As the field of higher education adds to the researched understanding, rather than popular guesses of how women use their faith in their leadership, then more can be known about how women professionals in higher education bring their “whole self” to the work world. Being able to work in business settings which support work/life balance issues such as faith in the work place have already been seen to have positive influences on individual and organizational performance. As Lindholm (2007) suggested: Bringing one’s whole self to work is good for higher education.

### **Statement of Purpose and Exploratory Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore how faith informs the leadership of women administrators in higher education using a qualitative research strategy, including grounded theory to examine the participants’ experience of leadership and faith in higher education. The study resulted in emergent themes exploring the possible link of the experience of faith and leadership. Using qualitative methods, including data collection and analysis strategies of grounded theory, the researcher chose depth of information over breadth of data.

Transformational leadership theories, organizational development concepts and women’s faith were used throughout the study to guide the research and writing. Exploratory questions based on the review of literature were needed to guide the research. These questions were:

1. The literature shows women’s ways of leading are different from men’s ways of leading, and transformational leadership styles typically associated with women leadership have similarities with spirituality (Adams & Csiernik, 2002; Coleman, 2003; Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003; Harris et al., 2007; Lewis & Geroy, 2000; Love & Talbot, 1999; Neiman, 1998; Tisdell, 2001; Young, 2004). However, spirituality

is seen to have a true definition to study objectively. Faith may be a better measure to examine, as conceptualized by Marks (2005). How do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership? Why?

2. As the organizational development literature illustrates organizations supporting individual and organizational spirituality have higher organizational and individual performance, including lower turnover rates, decreased absenteeism, and greater company loyalty (Dirks, 2000; Fry, 2003) in public institutions of higher education, the practice of faith at work from faculty and staff is typically discouraged, usually because of issues of separation of church and state. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with the practice of faith in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all?

There was a gap in the research literature that makes an explicit connection between leadership and faith, although there are several studies indicating similar characteristics (Adams & Csiernik, 2002; Coleman, 2003; Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003; Harris et al., 2007; Lewis & Geroy, 2000; Love & Talbot, 1999; Neiman, 1998; Tisdell, 2001; Young, 2004). The researcher used a qualitative approach, including grounded theory data collection and analysis strategies, to study the phenomenon of how faith informs leadership of women leaders in higher education.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework helps to bind a qualitative study. Binding a qualitative study helps the researchers focus and create boundaries about what is to be studied and what is not to be studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman described conceptual frameworks

in the following way: “A conceptual framework explains, either graphically, or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs, or variables – and the presumed relationship among them” (p. 18). The conceptual framework designed for this study involved four main theoretical/conceptual underpinnings: transformational leadership theory, spirituality and faith concepts from higher education, organizational development concepts of work/life balance, and qualitative research strategies, most prevalent, grounded theory. Readers will see the influence of this theoretical approach in Chapter Two of the dissertation, through the review of relevant literature, and in Chapter Three when describing the methodology of the study.

The researcher drew on theories of transformational leadership, and the literature which connects transformational leadership to the way women lead (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 1991; Killen et al., 2006). Spirituality and faith concepts from higher education, especially the work of Alexander and Helen Astin (Astin & Astin, 2000; Astin, 2004), were used to ground the understanding of faith and spirituality in higher education. Organizational development concepts of work/life balance were used to connect concepts of faith and leadership to organizational and individual performance (Dirks, 2000; Fry, 2003). Grounded theory was used within the conceptual framework, as a way to drive the analysis of the data by studying the Catholic woman participants’ experience of leadership and faith in higher education. Each of these theoretical bases were used to study the phenomenon of how faith informs the leadership decisions of women leaders in higher education. The researcher assumed loose relationships among these foundational concepts of the phenomenon, and sought to utilize grounded theory to study the participants’ experience of why women used their faith with their leadership, and further, how they used their faith with their leadership.

The visual representation of the conceptual model showed the four concepts through which the exploratory research questions are being explored. These four concepts included organizational development concepts (performance management strategies), leadership and faith connections (through similar language and studies drawing conclusions about leadership and faith), women's ways of leading (transformational leadership) and faith/higher education connections (challenges and benefits, especially in the public institutions of higher education). These four concepts were shown to interact with the qualitative method of grounded theory, which was used to describe the participants' experience of how women leaders in higher education experience faith in their leadership. The primary end sought of the research was to describe the experience of women leaders in higher education with their faith and leadership. From the literature, these concepts led to understanding the experience of how faith informs the leadership of women leaders in higher education. Information regarding each of these factors is discussed more fully in chapter two. A graphical representation of this conceptual framework is presented below with Figure 1.

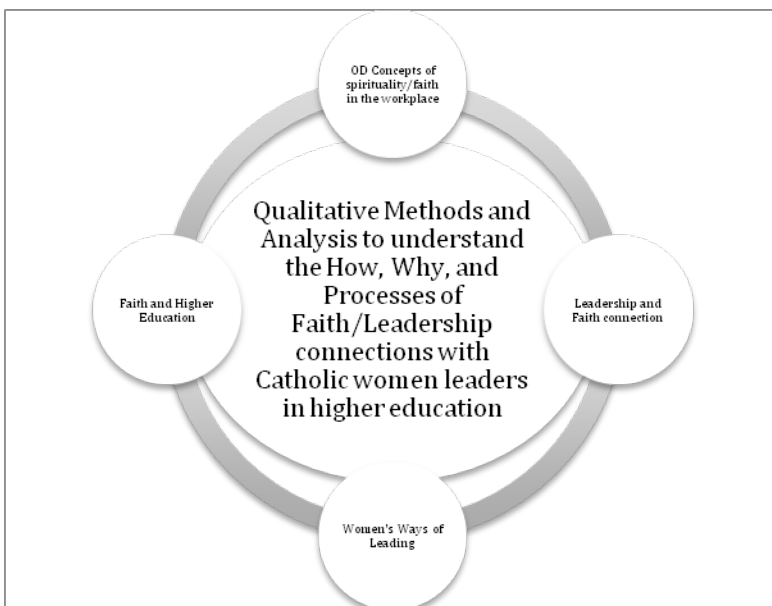


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Study

## Definition of Faith

There were particular reasons to choose faith as the focus of the study, rather than spirituality. Spirituality is a broad concept, leaving researchers with as many different definitions as there are studies about spirituality. There was no one common definition among researchers. Even more, Milacchi (2006), studying individuals in Christian higher education, indicated the word “spirituality” held no specific meaning.

The author stated spirituality meant all things to all people, making it nearly impossible to study the phenomena in ways that produced universal meaning. The term spirituality was too broad for this particular study.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose to study the concept of faith instead of spirituality. Faith had particular meanings. In the academic world, James W. Fowler, Emory University professor, defined faith in his book, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development* (1981). Fowler wrote:

It (faith) is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our life. Faith is a person’s way of seeing him or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose. (Fowler, p. 4)

This definition focused on meaning-making and faith being a part of how an individual or group makes meaning. Fowler (1980) also said,

Faith has to do with the making, maintenance and transformation of human meaning. It is a mode of knowing and being. In faith, we shape our lives in relation to more or less comprehensive convictions or assumptions about reality. Faith composes a felt sense of the world as having character, pattern, and unity. (Fowler, p. 53)

Moreover, to study the concept of faith in the academic arena, one must utilize conceptual models which were researched and utilized to explain different samples.

Marks (2005) provided such a conceptual model. Marks’ research conceptual model

this study, guiding interview questions about the practice of one's faith. The model was developed after in-depth literature reviews, as well as using qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, to research Christian, as well as Muslim, Jewish, and Mormon families (Dollahite, Marks, & Olsen, 1998, 2002; Marks & Dollahite, 2001; Dollahite & Marks, 2004; Marks, 2003, 2004). Although the current study did not involve families, this conceptual model was applied to individuals as well, as researchers continued to understand how individuals experience faith. In the model, Marks presented three different dimensions of faith: spiritual beliefs, religious practices and faith communities. Within the interior of the model, are the three dimensions of health: biological, psychological and social. In regards to the current study, a person's work was largely seen as a part of their social dimension of an individual. Explanation of Marks' (2005) model will be presented in chapter two.

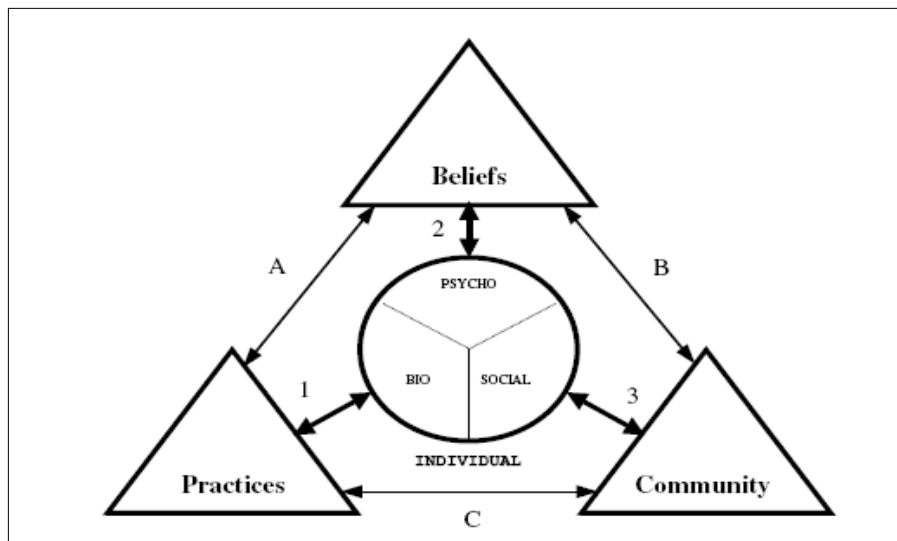


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Research Connection between Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Communities and Individual Biological, Psychological and Social Well Being (Marks, 2005)

In addition to Marks' conceptual model, the current research sought answers from participants in a particular religion: the Roman Catholic Church. In the Catholic tradition, faith had distinct meaning. In paragraph 26 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (United States

Catholic Conference, 2000), the authors suggested the following: “Faith is man’s response to God, who reveals himself and gives himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life” (paragraph 26). In this way, faith was both a gift from God, and an action of the faithful. A Catholic follower with faith responded to God. Later, in paragraph 1814 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the authors wrote that when a man has faith, he serves him completely, stating, “...for this reason the believer seeks to know and do God’s will.” As a Catholic believer, one both accepts the revelation of God, through his will and knowledge of him and through acting on what they (the believer) know. Both of these concepts together were contained in the Catholic definition of faith.

The researcher defined faith in the same way the Catholic Church defines faith, in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In this definition, the researcher recognized both the belief portion of faith (“knowing” God), and the action of faith (“serving Him completely”). Additionally, Marks’ work (2005) guided the comprehensive understanding of faith to include spiritual beliefs (personal, internal beliefs, framings, meanings and perspectives), religious practices (outward, observable expressions of faith such as prayer, scripture study, rituals, traditions, or less overtly sacred practices or abstinence that is religiously grounded), and faith communities (communities of support, involvement, and relationships grounded in one’s congregation or religious group) (pp. 175-176).

### **Definition of Leadership**

The participants of this study were Catholic women leaders in public institutions of higher education. For the purposes of this study, the researcher focused on leadership as it applied to the ways in which women lead. Two types of leadership researched and written about

in the last 20 years are transformational leadership and transactional leadership. In reality, these two different types of leadership were illustrated to be on the same leadership continuum (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Additionally, transformational leadership was connected to women's leadership styles (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Bass et al., 1996; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003).

Avolio (2010) illustrated the leadership continuum from transformational leadership to laissez-faire leadership, with transactional forms of leadership in the middle of the continuum. In his explanation of "full range leadership," the author explained that transformational and transactional leadership were not good or bad. Full range leadership development explored the characteristics and components of these three leadership styles, with the author stating that "it is the combination of the two leadership orientations (transformational and transactional) that optimize the full range of performance and development" (page 51). Laissez-faire was described as the "absence of leadership."

Transactional leadership was focused on exchange. Northouse (2010) stated from Kuhnert, 1994 that "...transactional leaders exchange things of value with subordinates to advance their own and their subordinates' agendas" (page 181). For example, a transactional leader may turn to rewards such as pay raises and employee recognition to improve performance of employees. Though this may be in the best interest of both the employer (increased performance based on a reward) and the subordinate (increased pay), the relationship between the leader and follower is not the focus of attention; the focus is on the exchange or negotiated reward.

Transformational leadership was defined by Burns (1978) as: "...when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). This style of leadership was values-laden, and

focused on helping followers develop their full potential (Avolio, 2010). This style of leadership moved beyond self-interest of the leader, to leading for the common good. Followership was a focus of this style of leadership, with the end goal of everyone leading to their fullest potential. It was through the focus on relationship between leader and follower that everyone was raised to higher performance and for “followers to do more than expected” (Northouse, 2010).

Women lead through nurturing relationships, and trying to make a difference through serving others first. As higher education administrators, women provided mentoring relationships to students, already shown from the research to relate to spiritual concepts (Dalton, 2001). Women’s leadership was values-laden, and relates to higher ethical standards. Research supports the idea that women tend towards transformational leadership (Dahlgvig & Longman, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 1991; Killen et al., 2006). For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined leadership by focusing on transformational characteristics of leadership.

### **Overview of Methodology**

A qualitative research design was deemed necessary to better understand the depth of the relationships between women’s leadership and faith because the experiences are so personal. In order to understand how and why women lead with their faith, as well as processes involved in their leadership, a qualitative approach was most appropriate. In-depth semi-structured interviews were designed to address the research questions of the study, including how and why investigation. Grounded theory was an analysis approach which allowed themes to emerge from data, from a rigorous coding, analysis and auditing process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This approach was meant to build theory, not test theory.

The researcher was interested in understanding how faith informed the leadership of women leaders employed in higher education. By individually interviewing the purposefully

selected women leaders in higher education, the researcher was able to ask deep questions about their experience of faith and leadership. Through deep questioning, patterns emerged, pointing to the participants' experience.

### **Organization of the Document**

This document begins with an introduction and rationale to the topic of women's leadership and faith. Several theoretical concepts, such as organizational development, transformational leadership, and the Catholic definition of faith were used to frame and bind the study. The purpose of the study and exploratory questions were introduced. In chapter two of the study, a review of relevant literature was conducted, focused on defining leadership, women's leadership in higher education, defining faith, faith and work, faith in higher education, faith and women leaders in higher education, and the rationale to study faith and leadership through the lens of gender. In chapter three of the study, the qualitative approach of grounded theory was described, and data analysis procedures were explained. The following chapters of the document are focused on data collection, data analysis, and further research implications.

## CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The conceptual framework provided a guide to write a focused review of literature related to the research questions. The exploratory research questions of the study were:

1. How do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership? Why?
2. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with faith in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all?

Several guiding concepts from the literature helped to bind the study, keeping the researcher and reader focused on the exploratory research questions. Since the study was focused on women's leadership, the researcher focused on the ways in which women lead. The concepts of transformational leadership were discussed in order to understand the ways in which women lead. Women's leadership was further discussed in regards to their positions in the workforce. The organizational development field offered a conceptual foundation for faith and work, relying on the concepts of work/life balance issues, linking faith to organizational and individual performance. Faith was then discussed in the realm of higher education and connected to women in higher education. Faith was not discussed or studied from a heavily theological lens. The researcher was not developing a definition of faith; rather the researcher was exploring how and why faith was applied to the leadership of Catholic women administrators in public higher education.

Transformational leadership offered a guiding concept for the ways in which women lead. Within this chapter, transformational leadership was defined, and literature was presented which showed the link between the way women lead and transformational leadership.

Faith and work were discussed, through the lens of the field of organizational development. Studies showed the link between spiritual organizations and job performance. Spirituality was considered a work/life balance issue. However, there was not much literature about the connection between spirituality and job performance, although the studies which exist pointed to higher performance. Literature was sparse examining faith and leadership.

Unknown about faith and leadership was how individuals, particularly women, utilized their faith to inform their leadership. If there was a connection between leadership and faith, the unknown questions were how and why women connect their faith with their leadership. Grounded theory provided a research methodology to study and analyze the data. Of importance in the study was the participant experience. Relying on the concepts of transformational leadership, organizational development practices, and faith and women in higher education, qualitative methods guided data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings.

### **Leadership Defined**

Researchers and authors have defined “leadership” in many different ways. As leadership research and theory moved away from assumptions that individuals either are or are not a born leader, more researchers and practitioners illustrated new leadership models illustrating leadership was both relational and a process. Transformational leadership provided a lens to view leadership as both relational and a process.

### **Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership**

James MacGregor Burns (1978) distinguished two different types of leadership: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Burns (1978) defined transactional leadership as, “...when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things” (p. 19). This type of leadership was focused on operational processes of leadership. Transactional leadership was concerned with exchange.

One gives someone something in return for a resource, a service, or a task. Transactional leadership was seen when one acted from management strategies, such as completing paperwork that connects with processes in the office, working through processes, rather than people, and viewing process and policy as more important than human resources in an organization. Even raises in salary can be seen through the transactional lens: an employee and employer negotiate a higher pay for higher performance.

Burns (1978) contrasts this type of leadership with transformational leadership, which he defined as, "...when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). This style of leadership implied the necessity for developed relationships, leading to the achievement of higher performance or gains in "morality." In this view of leadership, you cannot separate ways of leading from a moral set of beliefs one develops and acts on in their leadership.

Transformational leadership focused on nurturing relationships as a way to practice leadership. An example of transformational leadership was demonstrated when one develops a mentoring relationship with an individual within an organization in order to help this individual learn the job, or to become a contributor to the organization. Though higher performance was the end goal, as in the transactional leadership example, the strategies to the high performance were different.

Bass (1985) further researched transformational and transactional leadership by conducting a factor analysis to assess the construct validity of the model Burns (1978) proposed. Seven factors emerged which Bass labeled as the following: charisma, inspirational, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception, and

laissez-faire leadership. The results provided a foundation to the development of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) which measured individuals in regard to these factors.

Since 1985, the factors of the MLQ were researched and discussed by several authors, including Bass and Avolio (1993). The debates in the research revolved around the definitions of the factors, and perhaps collapsing several of the factors into more distinct categories, commonly completed as researchers continue to develop reliability and validity measures on an instrument. The definitions from the final six factors were the following, taken verbatim from Avolio et al. (1999):

1. Charisma/Inspirational: provide followers with a clear sense of purpose that is energizing, is a role model for ethical conduct and builds identification with the leader and his or her articulated vision;
2. Intellectual stimulation: gets followers to question the tried and true ways of solving problems, and encourages them to question the methods they use to improve upon them;
3. Individualized consideration: focuses on understanding the needs of each follower and works continuously to get them to develop to their full potential;
4. Contingent reward: clarifies what is expected from followers and what they will receive if they meet expected levels of performance;
5. Active Management-by-Exception: focuses on monitoring task execution for any problems that might arise and correcting those problems to maintain current performance levels; and
6. Passive-Avoidant Leadership: tends to react only after problems have become serious to take corrective action, and often avoids making any decisions at all (pp. 444-445).

These factors provided the foundation to view leadership activities on a continuum, which

Avolio and Bass later termed “full range leadership.” Factors 1 through 3 were more effective transformational leadership practices, while factors 4 through 6 were more ineffective transactional leadership practices. Avolio (2010) argued that using a full range of leadership strategies, some of which are transformational and some of which are transactional, are needed to predict high performing organizations. Avolio also stated that transactional leadership strategies are not effective strategies to maintain high performance for long periods of time; transformational leadership strategies were needed to maintain the highest performance in an organization, and over the long run.

In the twenty-fifth anniversary copy of *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* leadership motivated by “that natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 27). This type of leadership was less empirically tested in the literature, but does provide somewhat of a framework to understand why people lead at all. This leadership has an end in mind: the common good, through service.

Kouzes and Posner (2008) provided another model to view leadership in ways of focusing on others through the five practices of exemplary leadership. This researched model was developed after thousands of interviews and case studies, as well as quantitative studies. Data was triangulated with all approaches. The five practices of this model included: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. The model was very “other-centered,” focusing on the followers in relation to the leader. For example, the authors suggested that true leadership involves inspiring a shared vision. In order to inspire a shared vision, the leader must focus on the followers. A leader must engage the followers in helping to create vision for the task, project or organization at hand. The followers

become part of the leadership equation through building a relationship between leader and follower. Kouzes and Posner's research conclusions were taken from a large-scale qualitative study examining the depth of how an individual leads. The five exemplary practices of leadership have been applied in the corporate sector, as well as in higher education.

### **Leadership Definitions from Higher Education**

Higher education professionals also used concepts of transformational leadership to understand how students lead. Some of this has led to off-shoots of the transformational leadership definition. In their work on transformative leadership and higher education, Astin and Astin (2000) wrote of leadership that was a "purposive process which is inherently values-based" (p. 8). The researchers agreed that higher education had the role to educate future leaders who serve as change agents for a variety of societal concerns. This educator role was not only reserved for faculty, but included student affairs professionals as well. Astin and Astin (2000) stated:

If the next generation of citizen leaders is to be engaged and committed to leading for the common good, then the institutions which nurture them must be engaged in the work of the society and the community, modeling effective leadership and problem solving skills, demonstrating how to accomplish change for the common good. (p. 2)

Astin (2004) described leadership in a model with three basic values:

...the need to create a supportive environment where people can grow, thrive, and live in peace with one another; the importance of promoting harmony with nature and thereby provide sustainability for future generations; and the need to create communities of reciprocal care and shared responsibility where every person matters and each person's welfare and dignity is respected and supported. (p. 2)

This definition highlights the concept that leadership was based on relationships, ultimately between a leader and followers. Astin (2004) also illustrated that leadership was "inherently value-based." A values approach to leadership hinted at some connection of leadership and faith, and was similar to the values-laden component of transformational leadership practices.

The assertion of “value-based leadership” was a well-documented concept in leadership research. Parks (2008) described leadership as a way to “practice moral courage.” She also mentioned the idea to give back to the common good, and to make contributions that “have an effect on the world.” She illustrated the idea of leadership as a way to serve others, rather than be served by a position or title. As higher education college administrators, service to others came in varying forms, including mentoring students and younger colleagues, participating in the lives of students, and volunteering for efforts outside of one’s own job responsibilities. Concepts of service and common good were congruent with the writings of other leadership researchers (Komives et al., 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Komives et al. (2007) defined leadership as: “...a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change” (p. 29). Previous authors wrote about and studied these concepts with a focus on college students. Few studies were focused on higher education professionals.

Braskamp (2009) wrote about leadership from a faculty member’s point of view. The author was in the professoriate for over 30 years. He wrote of leadership as, “an interpersonal relationship between leaders and followers.” He wrote of relational leadership, and of viewing the professoriate as a “vocation.” As such, the author suggested, “Leading with vocation requires giving voice to others, building relationships, and recognizing and rewarding the contributions of others” (p. 2). This self-reflection hinted at leadership components already mentioned: relational in nature, service to and for others, and values-laden. However, this reflection was only an attempt to examine one’s own leadership, and offered no real research paradigm in which to study leadership in higher education.

Webb (2007) studied members from the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities to determine what leadership factors most predicted employee motivation at these Christian

universities. Using the MLQ, Webb found that the factors most predictive of employee motivation were charisma, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and contingent reward (p. 67). These findings suggested these Christian universities most use transformational leadership components, and that this impacts motivation toward work place performance. Webb does caution applying results to other university settings of higher education. However, employee motivation to extra effort was seen as an impetus to use transformational leadership strategies in settings of higher education, especially with decreasing staff units and budgets.

Studying leadership through the lens of transformational leadership binds the current study and guides the research and concepts of leadership. Transformational leadership styles are shown in the literature to be the preferred styles of women leaders (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 1991; Killen et al., 2006). Using the definitions of transformational leadership, the practices of transformational leadership, and illustrating the ways in which women lead provided the theoretical basis of the study.

### **Women as Leaders**

The debate about the differences between men and women leadership styles has emerged over the last several decades as more women are becoming leaders in the workforce. As more women came into the workforce, it was important in performance management to study their leadership styles, and provide opportunities for women to develop their leadership in the work world.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of the leadership literature highlighting differences in leadership styles among men and women. The authors concluded women and men differ in leadership approaches. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2003) explained that women exhibit more transformational styles of leadership, while men

exhibit more transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. The results of the study should be examined with caution, however, since the authors reported small differences between men and women. The authors submitted that women were strong in leadership where the research suggested leadership was most effective (transformational leadership) (p. 586). Research literature suggested transformational leadership to be more effective and needed in the global society than transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). Sarros et al. (2008) found that transformational leadership factors of articulating a vision and providing individual support positively related to climate for organizational innovation. The authors defined innovation as bringing new ideas into the organization. Using transformational leadership seemed to have several positive outcomes. As stated earlier, women more than men exhibited transformational leadership characteristics. Bass et al. (1996) conducted three different studies to examine male and female leadership style differences. Extracting samples from different corporate, educational and non-profit arenas, participants were asked to rate male and female managers on the full range leadership continuum (from transactional – transformational). Findings suggested women were rated higher than men on more transformational characteristics, including individual consideration. Individual consideration was when, “leaders work with followers, diagnosing their needs and then elevating them to higher levels” (p. 10). In the literature, this was an ideal leadership style.

The research completed by Bass et al. (1996) was conducted sixteen years ago. However, there was still a gap in high level leadership positions held by men versus by women (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Coleman, 2003; Dhar, 2008; Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). The discrepancy between men and women in occupying top-level leadership holds true across many occupations, including media (Ricchiardi, 2011); medicine and science (Morahan et al., 2011);

faculty/education (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010); and counseling (Heller Levitt, 2010), just to name a few. The fact that women were less represented in higher level leadership positions than men, although entry and mid-level pipelines were saturated with women, provides strong rationale to continue studying how women lead.

Carli and Eagly (2001) presented research over the decades highlighting women's disparities in top-level leadership positions, as compared with men's positions. The authors argued the research compiled proves the theory of the "glass ceiling" (p. 631) as a plausible reason for the discrepancy. The authors argued because the mid-manager positions were filled with women, the "pipeline" (p. 631) should be filled with equally qualified women as men for upper-level management leadership opportunities. Though this was certainly a viable argument for the misrepresentation of women in top level leadership positions, the review of the literature examined the glass ceiling as the only explanation. If this were the case, women themselves would not be selecting upper-level leadership positions, which they clearly were throughout the literature reviewed. Some of the reasons for this phenomenon appeared to be surrounding issues of childbirth and childrearing.

Coleman (2003) suggested women who are considering managerial positions are postponing or abandoning childbirth and childrearing altogether. This was seen at national conferences, as women presented research and anecdotal information about motherhood and the higher education career path (NASPA National Conference, 2010). McCauley and Velsor (2004) indicated that the time for child-rearing and career advancement were approximately the same for women. Even when women emerge in leadership positions, they typically retained the bulk of the child-rearing responsibilities. This sometimes led to women postponing career advancement opportunities, or as Coleman found, postponing childbirth.

McCauley and Velsor (2004) gave several explanations for the reasons women were not promoted into leadership positions over men. These included prejudice, differential opportunities, isolation, comfort dealing with one's own kind, and integrating career and family. More women than men executives were choosing to not have families. The authors suggested this choice was enveloped in the "patriarchal society" (p. 281), and pointed to added pressure of women pursuing leadership opportunities, which did not apply to men. For women, it seemed to be a matter of one choice over the other (motherhood vs. career), whereas this dilemma was not seen as a choice for men: men did not have to choose one over the other. This trend was also seen in the field of higher education.

Eagly and Karau (1991) conducted a meta-analysis of the leadership literature focusing on gender differences. The authors described a situation in which men were more likely to focus on task behavior versus interpersonal behaviors exhibited by women. Companies at the time of the study were looking for leaders with more task-like behaviors to promote to leadership ranks. The authors concluded if women were to switch to a more task-oriented style of leading (i.e. transactional types of leadership), they would diminish the interpersonal behaviors, which was against the nature of women in general. The research examined for this study indicated that a company's focus on "task behavior" was indeed a mistake in leadership, and was not the preferred leadership approach. The preferred leadership was transformational in nature. Dahlgren and Longman (2010) illustrated this transformational leadership approach in their qualitative study of women leaders in Christian higher education. Findings from this study added to the understanding of the transformational leadership styles of women. The lens through which these researchers viewed the participants in their study was by studying "defining moments" in which they made conscious decisions about their leadership. The researchers stated:

One notable finding from this research is the number of gifted women currently in administrative leadership roles who did not aspire to such positions and who, in fact, did not view themselves as having the potential of moving into leadership roles. The importance of encouragement through relationships and individuals who spoke potential into these women's lives was impressive. (p. 255)

Concepts of building relationships, closely related to transformational leadership strategies, indicate a uniqueness in the way women lead. As the literature guides the reader to these findings, studying ways women lead is once again imperative. Although studying ways women lead is the first step, these findings also suggest practical strategies to both encourage and develop leadership potential and motivation of women.

Killen et al. (2006) examined gender differences in aspiring for professional positions to determine if this explained any of the differences of women underrepresented at top-level management positions. Samples were drawn from the United States and Spain, to compare two Western countries on these variables. Significant findings did indicate that men, more than women, showed greater aspiration for managerial roles. Men and women also viewed the role of leadership in different ways. Women, more than men, tended to believe leadership was about "facilitating humanitarian benefits," while men, more than women, tended to believe leadership was about "facilitating close relationships" (p. 316), consistent with literature delineating differences between men and women in leadership styles. These data were consistent with the literature detailing women's leadership. However, it did not take into consideration other variables, such as mentoring opportunities with other professional women (role models for leadership), deferential access to power, and motivation for leadership, postponing leadership opportunities for work-life balance, including to have children or to stay at home to raise children. These variables, though not examined in this study, did emerge in Dhar's (2008) study; even when examining these variables among different cultural populations of women.

To understand the experience of women leaders, it was important to turn to women leaders themselves, and ask critical questions which would lead to a deeper understanding of their experience. Dhar (2008) did just that. Qualitative research methodologies helped to delve deeper into concepts, exploring how, why and process oriented questions. In his study, Dhar used a phenomenological qualitative approach to study the lived experience of women directors in education in India, particularly the unique challenges of women leaders. One of the emergent themes from the data revealed an emphasis “between work and family life” (p. 8). Dhar named this theme, “Balancing the wheel” (p. 8). In balancing the wheel, participants articulated the struggle to balance it all, and pointed to their family as suffering the most from their absence (p. 8). This study illustrated the wide range of challenges women leaders face, and the author begins to point to several variables to study as researchers move forward studying women’s leadership (i.e. work/life balance, unique challenges, internal and external factors). This study also highlighted the need for thorough qualitative approaches to learn more about the lived experiences of women leaders. As researchers dig deeper into the lived experience of women, variables influencing leadership will emerge from the thick description of the phenomenon in the data collected.

Women lead differently than men. Different themes which emerge from the literature include women use work/life balance issues in their leadership equations. Spirituality and faith are also work/life balance issues. Qualitative research designs help to understand the process of “how” women lead, and may point to more variables to study in terms of women’s leadership.

### **Faith Defined**

Defining faith was not an easy task. The body of literature to define spirituality was more abundant than defining faith. Perhaps this was because of the notion mentioned earlier in

chapter one: there are as many definitions of spirituality as there are authors who write about and research spirituality. Having so many definitions of spirituality made it difficult to objectively study it. Therefore, this researcher chose to research faith, which seemed to have a more structured definition, making the concept more objectively identified. Later in this chapter, research about spirituality and work is presented. Some of the language of spirituality and faith were similar, and since few studies use faith as a variable, research on spirituality perhaps opened the door to study faith in connection to work performance, leadership, and work-life balance issues from organizational development.

### **Faith: A Definition of Belief Only**

The Book of Hebrews from the Holy Bible does give the reader a certain definition of faith, and one that is widely accepted in the Christian worldview. Hebrews 11:1 stated: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Viewed this way, faith was a belief, but not necessarily something to be seen. This definition of faith, often quoted, was difficult to objectively examine. Dantley (2005) defined faith in this way. The author stated, “Faith simply is the extension of one’s belief in the existence or the nature of something or someone. It is the suspension of our confidence in the linear, empirical, quantifiable data to confirm the actuality of things” (p. 6). The author’s definition basically said to a researcher: this concept cannot be identified, nor researched. He goes on to state,

Faith is a spiritual behavior that affirms existence without physical validation. The whole notion of faith solicits skepticism and repudiation by empiricists because it cannot be explained through material, measurable means. Faith does not make rational sense because it taps into a part of our selves that does not respond to empirical interpretation. (p. 6)

Therein lies the research challenge in defining and studying faith. Qualitative research, however, gives the researcher hope to understand the experience of faith in a more conceptualized way.

## **Dyess' Attributes of Faith**

Dyess (2011) purported that faith was difficult to define and rarely researched. Dyess, who serves as an Assistant Professor of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University, sought to conceptualize and define faith, especially for the nursing community. Her definition, emerging from her study, was: “an evolving pattern of believing, that grounds and guides authentic living and gives meaning in the present moment of inter-relating” (p. 2728). This definition of faith involved a belief component, just like Dantley (2005); however, the definition went a bit further than mere belief.

Dyess' definition of faith involved how one lived their lives, which was an action part of the faith definition. Additionally, this authentic living led to making meaning, examined later in this chapter. Dyess then offered the attributes of faith, and a conceptual model where belief drove the definition. Inherent in the design of the conceptual model was the understanding, from the data of her study that, “Faith was individually determined and at the same time also appreciated and affirmed by a community with whom the individual interacted” (p. 2727). The four attributes of faith that formed the model were: focusing on beliefs, foundational meaning for life, living authentically in accordance with beliefs, and interrelating with self, others, and/or Divine (p. 2727). Dyess' definition of faith lies in the data of these attributes. Though this definition and model moved the faith conversation beyond that of spirituality, the method was somewhat limited, and seemed not broad enough to determine a definition or a model. By using a qualitative approach, the study did point the reader in the direction of what the faithful experienced faith to be for them.

## **Marks' Model of Research Connections between Religious Beliefs, Practices and Communities**

As with the Catholic definition of faith presented in chapter one, and Dyess' attributes of faith conceptual model (2011), the notion of faith encompassing only belief was simply not a sufficient definition. The Catholic Church had a specific definition of faith, and the definition included belief, responding to and being responded to by God, meaning-making, and action. Paragraph 26 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (United States Catholic Conference, 2000) laid out the Catholic definition of faith:

Faith is man's response to God, who reveals himself and gives himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life...for this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will.

Figure 2 presented in chapter one is the conceptual model of research-based connections between spiritual beliefs, religious practices and faith communities, presented by Marks (2005). This conceptualization of "religious experience" helped to conceptualize what one meant by the term "faith." Though the three dimensional model was first used to conceptualize "religion," the model may also explain three dimensions of faith, particularly religious faith. In addition, the conceptual model was congruent with the Catholic religion's catechetical definition of faith, which encompassed belief, as well as the other concepts articulated through the conceptual model.

The three dimensions presented in the model are a) spiritual beliefs (personal, internal beliefs, framings, meanings, and perspectives); b) religious practices (outward, observable expressions of faith such as prayer, scripture study, rituals, traditions, or less overtly sacred practice or abstinence that is religiously grounded); and c) faith communities (support, involvement and relationships grounded in one's congregation or religious group) (p. 175-176; Marks, 2005). These three components of religious faith provided an excellent definition and

conceptualization of faith for this particular study, since the study was examining a particular kind of faith – one grounded in one’s religious denomination. This conceptualization captured Dantley’s (2005) definition of faith related to belief, as well as the Catholic Church’s definition of faith involving belief and action. In addition, Marks added the dimension of one’s faith community. Each of these dimensions illustrated concrete ways a researcher can examine faith, thereby operationalizing what is to be studied when researching faith. The influence of this definition of religious faith was recognized throughout the study, including in the interview instrument, coding of data, and analyzing the data. Applying this definition of faith made a strong statement of the difference between the purported definitions of spirituality and a solid conceptualization of a phenomenon to be studied.

If the reader were to view the model and envision how this applied to an individual, particularly a woman, it perhaps would play out in similar ways to the following scenario. If a woman was acting from her faith in connection with her leadership, one would see certain spiritual beliefs impacting decisions and relationships. For example, as a woman leader connecting faith and leadership, one would have particular beliefs which would cause an action on those beliefs. Perhaps the leader believed one loves others as Jesus loved. Jesus was reportedly crucified for the sins of everyone, indicating extreme sacrifice in love. As a leader, one might forgo certain rewards and incentives during budget cuts, believing sacrifice for the team was more important than individual gain. Religious practices might manifest in the leader’s explicit admission about praying for those making budget cut decisions. The leader might also attend daily Mass, even during the work day to be connected to her faith community, even though at work.

## **Faith and Leadership: Organizational Development and a Common Language**

In order to understand the concepts of faith at work, the field of organizational development provided somewhat of a framework, especially when studying the concept of spirituality through the understanding of performance management and work/life balance issues. Though not prevalent in the field of higher education, organizational development practices are applicable in any career field. Also, the language of faith and leadership in the context of a career had similar language. However, because there was little research focused on faith and leadership, the researcher did examine spirituality literature, especially illustrating the non-objective nature of studying spirituality, strengthening the argument to study faith and leadership.

Spirituality is a growing area of research interest in the business literature. One of the definitions of spirituality was stated: "...includes self-awareness, adherence to values, being ethical, being connected with others, and maintaining a belief system that includes a religious dimension" (Adams & Csiernik, 2002). This explanation of spirituality came closest to understanding it in the same terms as faith defined in this study (Marks, 2005). Some of this definition shared language with the language of transformational leadership. "Being connected with others" alluded to the relational aspects of leadership. "Adherence to values" was a direct connection to a values-laden leadership approach common in transformational leadership.

Spiritually healthy organizations were defined by the "...organization's ability to be responsive to human needs, to engage people in planning and managing their working lives, and to find ways to enhance how employees feel about themselves, their contribution, and their workplace" (Adams & Csiernik, 2002). Several factors related to the definitions of spirituality

included interconnectedness, integrity, and the concept of work as one's calling in life (sometimes referred to as vocation).

Dirks (2000) purported that organizational commitment and loyalty were on a decline. The author writes, "...absenteeism, poor work quality, and lack of commitment...are manifestations of this crisis in work – as a workforce which fails to view work as a vital component of their lives or as the inward expression of their sense of self" (p. 3). Dirks suggested that a person's "right" work becomes a source of enthusiasm and joy. The concept of connecting work to the outward expression of the inward life was supported in the literature on spirituality and work (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burack, 1999; Dehler & Walsh, 1994; Delbecq, 1999). Most of this literature and research was focused on business and the private sector. Little research was focused on institutions of higher education. Even more absent in the literature was research examining faith and public institutions of higher education.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) conceptualized what it means to have spirituality at work through their study with hospital administrators in four different cities. The researchers offered a questionnaire to measure the different variables they believed were involved with spirituality at work. The researchers presented three main factors contributing to spirituality at work: conditions for community, meaning at work, and inner life (p. 139). Though this was a start with conceptualizing spirituality at work, a weakness of this study seemed to be the variables were chosen at random. This could be because this study is one of the initial empirical studies focused on spirituality and the work world. The authors began with their own definition of spirituality at work, which they deciphered from the literature about spirituality at work. That definition was as follows: "...recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (p. 139). Not surprisingly, the results of the study

pointed to this definition as viable. However, this definition of spirituality illustrated that the concept of spirituality had a broad range of meanings and definitions. Most studies about spirituality affirmed there was an understanding of the broadness of the definition of spirituality. Once again, faith, as conceptualized by Marks (2005) perhaps provided researchers a more concise way to study faith. Through the social component of the conceptual model Marks presents, one can understand an individual's faith and interaction with their vocation. This study does move the reader toward an understanding of faith and work.

Dehler and Welsh (1994) connected the concept of transformational leadership with organizational transformation (OT). Organizational transformation raises everyone in the organization to higher levels of performance by making the goals of the organization more important than the individual performance goals. The authors wrote, "This appeals to subordinates' spiritual realm, i.e. based on meaning and purpose rather than promises of rewards and security..." (p. 20). Note that, rewards and security were used in transactional leadership practices to improve performance as indicated by Bass (1985). Dehler and Welsh (1994) purported that this is not what builds a spiritually healthy and high performing organization: transformational leadership practices lend to both the spiritually healthy organization and higher performance. Transformational leadership spoke to the "intrinsic" value of work (p. 20).

Dalton (2001), who researched spirituality in the field of higher education, discussed the inward life of the individual as a way to find ultimate truth and meaning. Truth and meaning may lead one to connect their inward and outward life together through the world of work. Dalton encouraged the reader to view this as a lifelong process, and part of a developmental framework. The author also illustrated the concept that much of the spirituality literature focuses spirituality as an inward pursuit, instead of an outward service. Dalton wrote,

The argument that spirituality is a kind of inner-directed feel-good movement that makes no moral claim on students, nor links them to some sense of the sacred, is an important warning against using spirituality as a kind of ubiquitous self-serving therapy for students. (p. 23)

Dalton made an argument that the definitions of spirituality in the literature may be off-base.

This argument of faith being more “outward” than “inward” moved the reader to understand faith was not belief alone, as presented by Dantley (2005); once again, Marks’ model (2005) may be more appropriately applied at work, as it encompasses spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities.

Tisdell (2001) emphasized the idea of spirituality as a way of “meaning-making,” and claims to be an important aspect of the human experience. If one works, then work was a major part of the human experience. Spirituality should not be discounted in the work world. Mitroff and Denton (1999) emphasized this same point in their perspective paper. The authors stated, “We need to integrate spirituality into management. No organization can survive for long without spirituality and soul” (p. 9). The idea of bringing your whole self to work to serve the organization resonated in this literature. Although this was prevalent in the research cited, there were no clear cut ways of how one brings their spirituality to the work world. Even more difficult to find was how individuals who work in public institutions of higher education brought their faith to work.

Several studies in the literature suggested that the use of spirituality concepts improved absenteeism, turnover, and commitment to the organization (Dirks, 2000; Fry, 2003). Individuals were able to experience an integration of their personal and professional lives, and even as organizations change, individuals are able to weather the “storm.” The concept of “wholeness” was important in the conversation about faith and work. The thought that a person comes to work as a “whole” person continues to be a reason to study the ideas of faith and work.

Work was seen as a vocation, and those who considered themselves spiritual in nature want to bring their “whole self” to work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). At times, this was difficult for the professional in higher education, particularly for professionals in student affairs within the public university for reasons discussed in the next section.

The field of organizational development provided a foundation to study the concept of faith. Faith was seen as work/life balance concepts, and was seen as intervention for performance management. Understanding faith through the organizational development lens grounds the current study in the reason to even choose the concept of faith to research: performance management, training and development, and work/life balance.

### **Faith and Higher Education**

Spirituality was not typically addressed amongst professionals in public institutions of higher education, because of separation of church and state (Lindholm & Astin, 2006), because of the desire not to be seen as preaching (Chickering, 2006), and because of the confusion between religion and spirituality (Estanek, 2006). The dialogue at Christian universities was a bit more accepted, and research about faith and other variables at these institutions was more plentiful than at public universities.

Milacci (2006), in his interviews with eight Christian adult education practitioners (six working at a college or university), indicated the word spirituality held no specific meaning. Spirituality, in this vein, began to mean all things to all people, confirming previously reviewed literature. When viewing spirituality like this, the authors suggested it is nearly impossible to study the phenomena in ways that produced meaning. To speak about spirituality in specific religious ways at a public institution of higher education may tread on established policies and openness to all students at the university. To study spirituality and student affairs professions

was difficult, to say the least. Even the research featuring Christian universities still focused on the relatively meaningless concept of “spirituality.”

As educators, professionals within institutions of higher education recognized that spirituality was a deep inward concern and that it was to be dealt with privately, therefore ignoring the role of faith on learning and development (Dalton, 2001). Other problems included what Manning (2001) referred to as the “underworld” of student affairs. Concepts such as workaholism, codependent relationships, and lack of balanced work and personal lives made it difficult for student affairs professionals to make meaning from their work lives. More of a focus on the “upperworld” (Manning, 2001) included returning to concepts of making a difference, working for justice, transforming lives, and developing meaningful connection with colleagues. These were reasons student affairs professionals chose their work, as illustrated by the author. These concepts alluded to action on the part of the professional, and not just an inner belief system. When returning to this set of philosophical beliefs and actions, student affairs professionals were able to view themselves holistically, thereby adding another dimension to assist the students they serve (Lindholm & Astin, 2006).

In the academy, a compelling reason to focus on the faith development and practice of professional educators, including student life professionals, included the idea that these professionals shape the “structural and cultural characteristics of campus life” (Lindholm, 2007). Lindholm further asserted that these structures that are shaped by those working in colleges and universities substantiate the values and vision created that becomes the university. Faculty and staff then served as influences in the lives of college students. College students do not segment their lives, but rather came to the university with influences of faith and spirituality.

These foundations were not discarded upon entrance to the university. Neither should university administrators be expected to segment their lives in this way.

More professionals in higher education were exploring their spiritual development (Dalton, 2001; Lindholm, 2007; Manning, 2001). Special conferences, papers and scholarly research were conducted to support the spiritual journey of professionals working in higher education. The Fetzer Institute awarded grants for research of this nature ([www.fetzer.org](http://www.fetzer.org)). The Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles has engaged in research since 2003 focused on spirituality in higher education. This national research has mainly focused on the college student, and the spirituality factors which impact them in college. The institute began a study in 2004 which identified attitudes and beliefs about spirituality from faculty. Faculty from 500 colleges and universities participated. The overwhelming result of this study was that many faculty members did not believe it was their job to facilitate students' spiritual development (HERI, 2004-2005).

Contrary to the HERI study, in a study conducted with nurse educators in north Texas at a Christian institution of higher education and at a public institution of higher education, results indicated there are high levels of interest in spiritual development from state school nursing faculty (Gray et al., 2004). As a nurse, professionals dealt with a plethora of issues with their patients, including spiritual concerns. Nursing preparation programs have obligations to prepare students for these situations. As related throughout the literature, the more comfortable one was with their own development, the more inclined they were to assist students (Estanek, 2006; Gray et al., 2004; Lindholm & Astin, 2006).

Gehrke (2008) described different aspects of leadership, including ideas such as transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and ultimately transcendental leadership.

In Gehrke's (2008) examination of leadership through meaning-making, the author found positive correlations between measures of leadership and spirituality with a sample of college students. Gehrke used the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) to study components of leadership. This scale measured the components of the Social Change Model (SCM) (HERI, 1996), which included components such as congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, citizenship and change. This was a widely accepted model of leadership development among college students. The model was based on relationships between leader and follower, and viewed leadership as a process, with the final part of the process being social change. The strongest relationship was found between a spirituality measure of equanimity ("refers to an ability to find meaning in hardships, feeling at peace or centered and experiencing a strong bond to humanity" p. 352) and the components of the SRLS. However, like other studies focused on spirituality and leadership, the focus was on college students and not the professionals charged with supporting college student development. Because university administrators provided support to students as they grow and develop as whole individuals, and spend time with students who deal with hardships, studies about university leaders and faith are needed.

Hansen (2005), in an unpublished dissertation selected a population of higher education professions in the mid-level positions at small church-affiliated colleges. Hansen used a phenomenological qualitative approach to study the "...nature of spirituality as a component of professional responsibility in student affairs work" (pp. 9-10). Hansen developed a model for how the student affairs professionals in the study experience spirituality. The model described the spiritual experiences of the participants in the study, in relation to several research questions guiding the interviews of the participants. Developing a model such as this seemed like a

premature solution to understanding how student affairs professionals experience spirituality. Though this research was focused on the staff of higher education institutions, the participants were selected from small colleges, and the end result was still the question of how does this apply to your students, versus how do you deal with this concept personally. Although the sample was purposefully selected, the sample size of 5 individuals did seem to be rather small for such a study, ending in the development of a model to understand the complex phenomenon of spirituality and student affairs professionals. Additionally, some of the interpretations from the data seemed to confirm conclusions of other studies: spirituality is a relative term, meaning anything to anyone. For example, one of the participants discussed how a thank you note from a student represented the student recognizing the professional's spirituality. Hansen wrote,

The student wrote about how Brandon challenged the way the student thought and the way he did things. He shared how Brandon helped him make different decisions in the past year, and how he was always going to remember that. Finally, he thanked Brandon for making him look at things in a different way, making him take time for himself and helping him to identify what was really important. (p. 152)

In this example, Hansen suggested spirituality was connected to recognition, and spending time with a student. This interpretation reiterated the general difficulty in studying spirituality: there was no common definition of spirituality. As illustrated earlier in this chapter, faith has a particular meaning or concepts associated with its study.

The previous research focused on the faculty indicates that spirituality among professionals in higher education is gaining momentum in the empirical research findings. These findings were still focused on how faculty and staff view their educator role, and not necessarily on how they view themselves as leaders at work utilizing faith in their work, which was the focus of this study.

## **Faith and Women Leaders in Higher Education**

Very few studies tackled the issues of the differences in how women leaders and male leaders in higher education showed differences or similarities in their expression of faith or spirituality. Bryant (2007) addressed this issue through studying gender differences in the developing college student. Bryant used data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshmen Survey from 2000, as well as the College Students' Beliefs and Values (CSBV) Survey from 2003 to review the gender differences on 13 different characteristics. Bryant found differences between males and females in spirituality, on almost all of the spiritual characteristics. If the results were taken as a whole, the data showed that women were more spiritually inclined than men in the college years (p. 843). Bryant also found similarities between men and women as they grow in spirituality, including charitable involvement and discussion of religion/spirituality in class. This study began to point to the empirical differences in men and women in regards to spirituality, but was still focused on the college student, not professionals in the workforce.

In a study of women higher education professionals at Christian universities who participate in a women's leadership institute, Lafreniere and Longman (2008) found that women who participated in the retreat found great comfort and mentoring in the groups formed at the retreat, so much so that the typical participant was able to secure a higher-level leadership position after participating. One of the comments from a participant recorded in the study states, "I learned to appreciate different forms of leadership as well as different expressions of Christianity and saw that the struggles within my own institution were common to many institutions" (p. 399). Though this study did not explicitly show findings about how expressing faith and working in higher education was different for men and women, there did seem to be a

strong affinity to learning about self and others after participating in these women institutes. After participation, the women expressed having more confidence to move to higher leadership levels in the university. This study affirmed both the notion that women were able to move into higher levels of leadership and the notion that faith played some part in the confidence experienced by women, especially by women who participated in workshops which supported their leadership development.

### **Summary**

Through the lens of transformational leadership, organizational development, faith and leadership, and how women lead, this review of literature explored the important aspects of a potential connection between expressing one's faith through one's leadership. However, the explicit explanations of how faith and leadership were connected are missing from the research, indicating a gap in the literature. More quantitative and qualitative research was needed to make connections and confirm results. Qualitative research will assist in exploring these complicated phenomenon in an in depth view of how the participants' experience of faith and leadership come together. Additionally, more research was needed in how women lead. Lafraniere and Longman (2008) illustrated the importance of knowing more, especially in regards to faith and leadership. As more data is gathered and interpreted, training programs and leadership pathways could begin to open up to women in the work force, particularly in higher education.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the rationale of using a qualitative research approach, with initial explanation of the specific qualitative approach. In this study, the qualitative methods, including the data collection and analysis approaches most influenced by grounded theory are presented. The researcher will then discuss qualitative measures of validity and reliability. One concern in examining qualitative reliability and validity is researcher credibility. Since the researcher served as the filter through which qualitative data flowed, the researcher must disclose biases to the reader. This is done through the Researcher Lens, detailed in this chapter. Participant selection is discussed, including the purposeful sampling techniques of qualitative research designs. Data collection is discussed, detailing the interview instrument, the interview protocol, and the data analysis protocols.

### **Qualitative Research Design**

The purpose of this study was to explore how faith informs the leadership of women administrators in higher education, and was developed because of gaps in the research on leadership style and performance management using work/life balance strategies. Although studies existed highlighting the importance of work/life balance strategies (Dirks, 2000; Fry, 2003), and many studies existed regarding transformational leadership and gender (Adams & Csiernik, 2002; Coleman, 2003; Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003; Harris et al., 2007; Lewis & Geroy, 2000; Love & Talbot, 1999; Neiman, 1998; Tisdell, 2001; Young, 2004), there was no research found connecting how women utilized faith in their leadership equation. Studying the connection of faith and leadership in women who met the criteria of using faith and leadership added to the understanding of how women lead.

This study also pointed to critical variables for further quantitative study.

A qualitative research design was appropriate for this study, because the overarching research question of the study, “How do women administrators in higher education use faith to inform their leadership?” lent itself to a qualitative data collection process. It is the participants’ experience which needed to emerge from the data. The exploratory research questions asked in chapter one, which were process oriented questions, coupled with the topic at hand (faith and leadership) were better answered with a qualitative approach. To study the potential connection of leadership and faith among women leaders, a researcher must employ a systematic approach, but one that is context specific with regard to the experiences of the women leaders. Rossman and Rallis (2003) reminded the researcher that “qualitative research focuses on description, analysis and interpretation” (p. 11). Further, Miles and Huberman (1994) wrote about qualitative data as rich in description. The authors suggested, “(Qualitative data) are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (p. 1). Description involved spending a length of time with the participants of the research. This study also had a particular context of women in higher education administrative leadership positions.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the researcher was attempting to describe in detail the experience of women leaders, particularly as it related to their faith. This required the researcher to spend time conducting observations and interviews where the women worked and led to collecting data about the participants. The researcher realized that a survey would not yield the depth of understanding needed to answer the main research question of this study: How do women administrators in higher education use faith to inform their leadership? Choosing a qualitative approach, the researcher was knowingly sacrificing breadth for depth in the data in order to truly understand the participants’ experience. The research questions guiding this study included:

1. How do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership?  
Why?
2. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with faith expression in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith expression connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all?

### **Grounded Theory**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that “the grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that used a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p. 24). Grounded theory methods are accepted in qualitative research designs in a variety of iterations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In grounded theory, a researcher systematically codes data in two different ways (open coding and axial coding), then seeks the patterns and relationships in the data, usually through an initial content analysis (comparative methods; p. 510; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) or counting of the concepts (numeric content analysis; Batson & Marks, 2008). It is typically through these counts where themes emerge from the data. Researchers then seek to establish credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings through different qualitative methods of reliability and validity. Though a primary end sought is to build theory, the methods of grounded theory are acceptable as stand-alone methods in qualitative studies. Detailed methods used in the current study are listed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

### **Quality of the Research: Qualitative Measures of Validity and Reliability**

The vocabulary of the qualitative approach is different than the quantitative approach. In qualitative research, measures of validity and reliability are described in terms of credibility. Qualitative data are not generalizable. However, that is not the goal of qualitative research.

Qualitative data are analytical and context specific. In qualitative research, the researcher is trying to describe phenomena, through the lived experience of the participants.

In qualitative data collection and analysis, researchers are concerned with validity and reliability in different ways from quantitative data collection and analysis. Daly (2007) writes of both validity and reliability being associated with methodological rigor. The author states, "...question design, sample selection, transcription procedures, analysis and interpretation all play a role in shaping the degree to which the results are seen to be sustainable, credible, and grounded in the data" (p. 254). Daly is writing of reliability and validity in qualitative ways, not quantitative. These concepts are most closely associated with the idea of credibility of the researcher, the methods, and the rigor of data collection.

An argument against qualitative methodology has been from the scientific community, citing arguments of rigor and "real science" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In recent years, qualitative research has gained ground, with qualitative researchers using similar validity and reliability language to quantitative methods and analysis. Though there is typically not a way to statistically analyze validity and reliability in qualitative research, understanding the language and rigor of the data collection method and analysis is important for a reader to make determinations of replicability and applicability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a map of the terminology related to validity and reliability. The authors describe internal validity in qualitative terms of credibility. Credibility of the data and the methods is important for the reader to understand. A qualitative researcher must be able to explain how one arrived at the data and interpretation of the data. Strategies such as triangulation and member checks of the data provide credibility to the process. Lincoln and Guba go on to describe external validity in terms of transferability.

Transferability relates to how a reader can apply the data collection methods to similar studies. A qualitative study cannot be completely replicated, but the systematic methodology should provide a road map to employ in similar studies. The authors further describe reliability in terms of dependability, in accurate presentation of results. Objectivity (or controlling for bias) is explained in terms of confirmability. Confirmability relates to how a qualitative researcher uses data to confirm themes and interpretations. Daly (2007) says, “Words are the currency of qualitative research.” If this is true, then a researcher must show the words leading to the interpretations of the data.

The researcher used grounded theory qualitative approaches, widely accepted in qualitative research. The method was rigorous, time consuming, and data-focused. The credibility of the research approach was paramount.

Another way to examine validity and reliability was through the rigor of both the “process and product” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the study. Patton (1990) described the three elements of credibility in qualitative research in the following way:

1. Rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that is carefully analyzed, with attention to issues of validity, reliability, and triangulation;
2. The credibility of the researcher, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status, and presentation of self; and
3. Philosophical belief in the phenomenological paradigm, that is, a fundamental appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, and holistic thinking (p. 461).

In the grounded theory qualitative approach, these elements of credibility were handled in a certain way. Each of these elements are described fully in the sections below.

## **Techniques and Methods**

Grounded theory is a rigorous qualitative approach, with systematic, contextual, and reflective components. The researcher was following the prescribed steps, as stated by Strauss and Corbin (1990), and adapted by other researchers studying faith (Batson & Marks, 2008), to conduct the proposed study, analyze the data, and present the findings. Included in grounded theory analysis is the idea to “maintain an attitude of skepticism” (p. 45; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Patton (1990) described this as looking for “...rival or competing themes and explanations” (p. 462).

Although qualitative research offered a more flexible design in order for themes to emerge, critical in the claims of credibility and dependability is the application of the specific qualitative method. Strauss and Corbin (1990) affirmed this approach for grounded theory. The authors suggested following the prescribed research procedures to arrive at findings. The authors stated:

The data collection and analytic procedures are designed to give rigor to a study. At the same time they help you to break through biases, and lead you to examine at least some of your assumptions that might otherwise affect an unrealistic reading of the data. There is a reason for alternating between collecting and analyzing the data. Not only does this allow sampling on the basis of concepts emerging as relevant to that particular research situation, but it furthers verification of hypotheses while they are being developed. Those found invalid can then be revised to fit the reality of the situation under study...In order for the emerging theory to be grounded, as well as valid and reliable, the procedures must be followed just as carefully as those that govern good quantitative studies. There are no double standards for one form of research over another. The procedures are different but the basic standards remain the same. (p. 45-46)

The first step of grounded theory included collecting data, usually through extended interviews, coding the data beginning immediately with the first transcript. Through open and axial coding, patterns emerge and the researcher begins to find the relationships amid the data, through systematic categorizing of narratives and quotes in each interview individually, as well as collectively throughout the set of interview transcripts. In the current study, the researcher

utilized content analysis to count recurrent patterns which served to identify emergent themes. This was similar to the method employed by Batson and Marks (2008) as they studied faith and families with a qualitative approach.

During data collection, data analysis, and the writing of findings, keeping a field journal assisted the researcher in making meaning of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) described this as “operational notes,” which, “give direction for sampling, things to look for, seek out, ask about in the next interviews and observations” (p. 208). The researcher utilized a field journal throughout the study.

Participants have a vested interest in accurate portrayal of data. It is imperative for credibility, dependability, and confirmability that participants are able to review transcripts for accuracy. Member checks provide the participant with the ability to review, challenge, correct, and accept the transcript in its entirety. The researcher conducted member checks on all interviews immediately after each transcript was complete.

### **Credibility of Researcher**

Because the researcher was the instrument in the qualitative study, researcher bias was inevitable. As in any other research study, a competent researcher reveals bias and limitations of the study. In a qualitative study, the researcher writes a reflective lens, outlining personal experience with the phenomenon, professional expertise and training, and the perspective the researcher brings to the study (Patton, 1990). For example, in this study, the researcher was a Catholic woman, with a strong faith, who led in the field of higher education. All of this information was revealed to the reader so the reader was able to know and understand the perspective from which the researcher approached this study. Patton (1990) wrote, “The principle is to report any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation – either negatively or positively – in the minds of users of

the findings” (p. 472). The researcher lens was explicit and detailed in the current chapter immediately following the discussion of Qualitative Measures of Validity and Reliability.

Data audits fulfill another technique in qualitative validity and reliability. In the current study, the researcher utilized two data auditors in order to “examine whether conclusions made were supported by the data” (Table 3.1 description of confirmability). The “data auditors” were doctoral students, one studying volunteer leadership, and one studying faith and leadership. The researcher presented the methods used to collect and analyze the data, emergent and salient themes with narratives and quotes supporting the themes, and coded participant interviews to each data auditor. These colleagues were able to confirm or deny that the steps utilized resulting in the final findings of the study were logical, rigorous, and led to the results. Both data auditors confirmed the methodological rigor, and the logic of arriving at the emergent themes.

### **Qualitative Paradigms**

In order to answer the current study’s research question, a rigorous and acceptable qualitative method was needed. Grounded theory is a systematic, analytical, and context-specific approach, which is the approach needed in this study. Grounded theory has specific and systematic processes, which were described earlier in this chapter. This specific and systematic approach added to the validity of the data.

Table 3.1, adapted from the dissertation of Amanda Ruth (2005) of the University of Florida, represented the issues of validity and reliability of this study. Column one of the table is the criterion of the qualitative language; column two is the matching quantitative issue of validity and reliability; column three is a description of the issue; and column four describes the method or strategy the researcher used in the current study to address the issues of validity and reliability. In the current study, each of these qualitative criterion of data quality were important. For example, in order for qualitative interpretations to be seen as more than journalism, a

researcher showed how the method led to the data and the data led to the interpretation, giving voice to the participants who were part of the study. Keeping a field journal helped to detail the method and the thick description of the data, as themes emerged and were confirmed by a community of practice and member checks of the data. This kind of rigor related to the reliability of the data, or in qualitative terms, the dependability of the data. The question answered was, “Are the results of this study accurately represented?”

Table 3.1 Qualitative research evaluation criteria of current study

Criterion	Relates to	Description	Methods Employed
Credibility	Internal Validity	Examines the “truth value” of the study	Triangulation Member checks Data Auditors
Transferability	External Validity	Examines whether the study provides a detailed description of the setting and participants so it can be compared to similar settings and participants	Thick description Detailed account of grounded theory approach employed
Dependability	Reliability	Examines whether the results of the study accurately represent the participants	Field journals Member checks
Confirmability	Objectivity	Examines whether conclusions made were supported by data collected	Triangulation Field journals Member Checks Data Auditors

Note. Adapted from Table 3.2 in Ruth (2005)

### Researcher Lens

With a qualitative approach, the researcher becomes part of the research project. As a Catholic woman leader in higher education, I brought my own perspective to the context being studied. The data collected and analyzed in qualitative research was always filtered through the lens of the researcher.

I am a Catholic woman higher education administrator, in my 18<sup>th</sup> year in the profession. I am also a very faithful woman in my Catholic religion. These two roles in my life define a major part of who I am as a person. In fact, these two aspects of which I am are very connected, since I believe my work is my vocation, or how God is leading me to serve others through my work. In this way, I believe separating these experiences is impossible.

I earned my master's degree in student personnel services in 1994, focusing on both college counseling and student personnel administration. My experience in college student housing was spent developing students as peer leaders, crisis managers, and event planners. Through supervising student leader positions in residential life, I was able to study and teach the concepts of leadership. As I studied leadership, trying to further my knowledge of the subject in order to provide better training and experiences for the student leaders, I learned about my own leadership. As the Associate Dean of Students and Director of Campus Life, I am charged with the responsibility to provide a comprehensive leadership development co-curricular program for all students at the university. In order to prepare for this role, I began reading leadership literature related to Christianity. I learned about myself as both a Christian and a leader, and realized my work was an extension of who I am as a person.

I believe leadership is inherently values-laden, which relates to how I experience my own faith. Values such as credibility, accountability, and service to others are both leadership values and values in my Catholic faith. Acting on these values is important to me, both at work and in my faith. At work, I am credible by telling the truth to my co-workers and students and being reliable by doing what I say I will do. In practicing my faith, I am able to establish credibility in the same way. I try to always do what I say I will do, which is part of the code of ethics of the field of student affairs. I also strive to do no harm to anyone I work with, including co-workers,

students, colleagues, parents/families and guests to the university. This is true in my faith expression, as well, usually relating back to the highest of commandments: Love your neighbor as yourself.

I have also come to believe that my leadership and my faith are intricately connected in ways that I cannot separate. I bring all of myself to work, including my spirit, which I define through my faith. During my career in higher education, there are ways in which my faith has impacted my career. Early in my career, I left a job where I felt compromised in my values as a leader in higher education and as a woman of faith. I have experienced several student crises, including fires, tragic student deaths, hurricane aftermaths, and family crises. Prayer for my students helps me to find perspective and peace through these difficult times in my work life. When I let students know how I am thinking of them during their difficulties, many of them ask me to pray for them because they know one way I practice my faith is through prayer. It is during these times I am reminded of my leadership role to serve these students. Work as a vocation is definitely defined through these experiences. Several students throughout my career have come to me to talk about their own faith and spirituality, including Christians and non-Christians. I have learned about the similarities of faith and religion, and appreciation of differences. To me, these complex conversations are at the root of my vocation as a higher education administrator.

The nature of qualitative data is a deep analysis of a phenomenon. Interviewing is the technique I will use to collect data in this study. Throughout my career, I have conducted employee job interviews, judicial conduct interviews with students, and interviews to select students into leadership positions. I also spent an entire semester completing a needs assessment of a non-profit agency. Interviews were a data collection method utilized during the needs

assessment. I was able to triangulate interview data with observations and archive documents to identify emerging themes in the data. Interviewing is a competency I have developed as a professional in higher education. Most of the times, interviews as described above begin as semi-structured interviews, with probes for further inquiry.

I have participated in a women's leadership institute, preparing women leaders in higher education to become senior student affairs officers. During this institute, I was able to develop competencies in leadership related to being promoted to the next levels in a university. I learned about my strengths in leadership. I was also able to be mentored by several high level national women leaders in our field, who affirmed me as a whole person, including my pursuits in my faith, and in continuing my leadership pursuits. I felt at home during this institute, and for the first time, I felt accepted and affirmed as a woman leader who is faithful in her religion, and supports students in their faith-expression and development.

### **Participant Selection**

Miles and Huberman (1994) wrote about "purposive" sampling procedures. The authors suggested the following steps in qualitative sampling:

First, you need to set boundaries to define aspects of your case(s) that you can study within the limits of your time and means, that connect directly to your research questions and that probably will include examples of what you want to study. Second, at the same time, you need to create a frame to help you uncover, confirm or qualify the basic processes or constructs that undergird your study. (Miles & Huberman, p. 27)

In keeping with the first action suggested by the Miles and Huberman, a criterion sampling strategy was utilized in this study. In criterion sampling, the researcher sets criteria by which a participant or "case" was included in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The criteria related back to the research questions to be answered. To fulfill the second action suggested by

the author, a systematic approach to sampling was employed, in order to create a frame from which to select participants.

Qualitative research is emergent (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). All of the criteria for selection of participants may not be known at the onset of the study. However, as the data emerged, the criteria became clearer as well. The initial criteria utilized for purposeful sampling in this study included:

1. Women professionals in senior level positions (i.e. Director, Dean, Vice Chancellor, Provost, and Vice-Provost) employed in four year public universities or colleges in the state of Louisiana.
2. Catholic women in these institutions who practice their religion on a consistent basis.
3. The women selected showed an interest in the topics of leadership and spirituality/faith, as suggested by Moustakas (1994).

The researcher created a list of all women professionals meeting criteria number one from a staff listing at a large southern public university. The researcher emailed invitations to the women on this list to invite participation in the study. The email outlined detailed criteria in order to ascertain participant criteria numbers two and three. A follow up telephone call to discuss the study was conducted with all respondents who identified themselves as meeting the criteria of the study. A total of 7 women leaders were selected for participation. Snowball sampling occurs when the researcher solicits participants through fellow participants. Snowball sampling techniques were used resulting in participants suggesting women leaders who met all initial criteria except for criteria number one. The researcher included mid-level managers with significant

supervisory experience (greater than 3 supervisees) and/or significant budget experience (greater than \$100,000 annually). This yielded 3 additional participants from the snowball sampling technique. The total number of participants was 10 women leaders.

## **Data Collection**

### **Instrumentation**

Semi-structured extended interviews were used as the data collection technique in this study. The semi-structured interview approach provided a guide for the domains of interest, while allowing for emergent themes to lead to follow up questions (Daly, 2007). The researcher developed questions based on the research question being asked, which was developed from leadership and faith literature.

The interview instrument can be found in Appendix C of this dissertation. The instrument contained seventeen questions to guide the interviews. Questions included demographic questions such as, “How many years have you been in your current position? What does it entail? What are your areas of responsibility? How many years have you been in the field of higher education? How many individuals do you supervise? Budget? Other areas of responsibility?” These demographic questions were included in order to record understanding of who the participants were in their career. The next set of questions related to understanding how the women perceived faith, and how they experienced it at work. These questions included: “How would you define faith? Can you describe a time when your definition of faith played out in action at work? Can you tell me about a situation when you have practiced your religious faith in connection to your leadership? Why did you connect these two things?” The following questions were related to the Marks’ conceptual model (2005), and provided a framework for the rest of the interview. Before each question, each component of the model was defined, and then questioning commenced. These questions included: “What are some of your spiritual beliefs?

Where do these stem from? How do your spiritual beliefs impact your leadership at work? Tell me about a time when that has been true for you at work. What are some of your religious practices you regularly engage in? How do your religious practices impact your leadership at work? How do they impact your followers? Tell me about a time when that has been true for you at work. Do you belong to a faith community? Tell me about your faith community. If so, how does being in a religious community impact your leadership at work? Can you give an example of when being involved in a faith community has impacted your leadership? Tell me about a time when this has impacted your leadership at work.” The next several questions related to understanding how these components of faith developed over time, and how the leader was impacted at work when they connected faith and leadership. These questions included: “Was there a precipitating event that led you to make faith a contributing factor to how you lead? Please describe that event in detail. Has your faith developed over time? How? Compare how you used your faith to inform your leadership at the beginning of your career, as compared to now. Describe how you are impacted as a leader while using your spiritual beliefs, religious practices and faith communities. Tell me about a time when you’ve been most impacted. Describe when the opposite has happened...your leadership has affirmed or impacted your faith. Please describe a situation when that was most impactful. Is it important to you to connect your faith with your leadership? Why? How does this play out for you at work? Could you give an example? Has it been challenging to connect your faith with your leadership at work? How so? Describe a time when this has been most challenging. How are the times when you connect your faith with your leadership different than when you do not connect your faith and leadership? Has there ever been a situation which was misinterpreted or misapplied when you connected your faith with your leadership at work? How did your followers respond? In what ways does

expressing your faith through your spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities influence who you are as a woman leader? How? Can you give an example?”

Interviews took place in settings which the participant was most comfortable, all of which were work offices. This allowed the participant to be comfortable in their surroundings and allowed the researcher to make observations of the environment in which the participants worked. All interviews were tape-recorded in their entirety using a digital voice recorder.

### **Data Collection Timeline**

Interviews took place from April 2011 – September 2011, with member checks of the data immediately after each transcription of the interview was prepared by the researcher. Member checks were completed as a measure of credibility, allowing the participant to affirm or correct the interview transcripts. All interviews were transcribed in their entirety by the researcher. The only notable exception was the transcript for Participant Three. This interview was conducted over two, one and a half to two hour meetings each. The interviews were sufficiently incoherent and unrelated to the research objectives. Extended portions are not transcribed or coded. Only relevant portions were transcribed and coded. Although initial coding occurred after each transcript was complete, full data analysis occurred in the spring 2012 semester (January – March, 2012).

### **Data Analysis**

Grounded theory has a flexible, yet systematic data analysis procedure. Grounded theory is more a method of data analysis, rather than data collection, with each step moving “toward the development, refinement and interrelation of concepts” (p. 510; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The end goal of using grounded theory methods is to explore concepts to “generate theory from the range of participants’ experience” (p. 1373; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Moving toward the development of theory, a researcher interacted with data in consistent and specific ways,

including the following: open coding of data beginning immediately with the collection of data, axial coding which groups like concepts together, categorizing data, and conducting data audits to insure credibility of results. Using these methods honored the foundation of grounded theory, which allowed the design to emerge as the data indicated. This was why coding began immediately in the data collection timeline. Below is a description of how the researcher handled each strategy of a grounded theory approach.

### **Open Coding**

Once interviews were transcribed by the researcher, open coding was completed for each interview transcript. Open coding refers to the initial process of categorizing data. Corbin and Strauss (1990) stated, “During open coding, the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena reflected in the data” (p. 62).

More specifically, open coding in the current study was completed by the researcher. As interviews were open coded, several themes began to emerge from the data. The labeling of the data was left to the researchers’ discretion, as questions were asked about each part of the phenomena, including, “What did this concept illustrate? How was this related to the research questions? How was this concept in this interview similar or different from other interviews?”

Logistically, there were different ways to approach open coding. The researcher in the current study chose to analyze lines of text in data, when appropriate, but mostly coded entire sentences or paragraphs, examining whole narratives and quotes, to derive meaning from identified concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Open coding results with initial counts are presented in Appendix D.

## **Axial Coding**

Following initial coding of data, a process of connecting similar concepts was undertaken. Axial coding is the term given to this process. Axial coding, according to Corbin and Strauss (1990), was defined as the following: “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences” (p. 96). This second step of the analysis process was intended to find the relationships amongst the data.

The researcher approached axial coding in a specific way. In their qualitative study of Catholic families and their faith, Batson and Marks (2008) completed a content analysis of the open coding of each interview. After the initial content analysis was completed, the recurring themes were then highlighted. These themes were then tested under two conditions: “a) content analyses, both within and across interviews and, b) salience. More specifically, each of the themes were coded in most or all of the interviews (often several times per interview); and the participants themselves (both directly and through narratives that described their related experience) attributed importance to the “themes”” (Batson & Marks, 2008 p. 398). In the current study, this process yielded 27 individual themes.

## **Categorizing Data**

These 27 concepts were then reduced to 5 themes, through a process of combining and eliminating concepts. These results are presented in Appendix D. Categorizing concepts happens through a systematic study of the emergent themes and concepts, and relating them to one another, distinguishing them from one another, or eliminating them altogether. Categories, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) are “discovered when concepts are compared against another and appear to pertain to similar phenomenon.” Examining the data again, using a data

audit approach by finding patterns amongst the categories to reduce and connect the concepts together resulted in 4 remaining themes and 14 Subthemes: Faith at Core of Identity (Personal Core and Work Core); Using Faith/Leadership Connection for Performance Management (Management of Self; Management of Supervisees; and Management of Colleagues); Specific Actions of Faith/Leadership (Prayer; Religious Practices; Service Orientation; Valuing Others; Relationship Building; and Doing the Right Thing); and Challenges in Practicing Faith (Public Institution Factors; Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts; and Other). These themes, along with the descriptions are presented in Table 4.2, in chapter four.

### **Data Audit**

One of the unique and rewarding challenges of conducting qualitative research was the constant interaction of the researcher with the data. The researcher returned to the data for several reasons, including honoring the voice of the participant, to continue to reduce data and create categories emerging from the data, and to name those themes emerging from the data (Daly, 2007). The final stage of data analysis conducted by the researcher involved creating files of narratives and quotes to illustrate each theme and subtheme. This process took place in March – April, 2012. Interacting with the data in this way also helped the researcher to continue to refine data and affirm or reject support for emergent themes, serving as a final data audit by the researcher. Only salient themes were included in the final analysis of narratives and quotes.

These files of narratives and quotes were shared with the data auditors discussed in the Qualitative Measures of Validity and Reliability of this chapter. The data auditors, through a systematic process of reviewing the data, the themes, and the codes, affirmed the logic of the methodology leading to the findings of the study.

## **Summary**

Qualitative research design was a flexible design. Grounded theory moved the qualitative design from a constructivist model (subjective) to a more positivist model (objective) through systematic methods of coding, analysis, and data audit. Using qualitative methods and considerations of validity and reliability, the researcher was able to communicate credibility of the data and researcher, dependability of the data, and confirmability of the methods. These methods were not numerical in nature, but provided readers with a sense of validity and reliability. Part of this process included reflexivity statements (“researcher lens”), where the researcher disclosed biases related to the study. Data collection, including the semi-structured interview and the ways transcripts were handled are discussed. Data analysis was handled in a specific way as well. Grounded theory offered specific systematic approaches to data analysis, including coding data (open and axial coding), categorizing the data, and identifying and naming emergent themes from the data. Data audits allowed for narratives and quotes to be examined and affirmed or denied to support the particular theme or subtheme. Additionally, utilizing a community of practice to affirm the process used to move from interview data to emergent themes was used to establish confirmability of methods.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

There was very little research published and/or conducted related to leadership and faith, especially in samples of higher education professionals. The literature was even more sparse when considering public institutions of higher education. Much of the existing literature focused on college student spiritual development, with spirituality having as many different meanings as there are research studies. The purpose of this study was to explore how faith influences the leadership of Catholic women administrators in higher education using a grounded theory approach to examine the lived experience of these women. The focus of the study remained on the three original research questions, which guided the methods and data collection of the study:

1. How do women leaders in higher education use faith to influence their leadership? Why?
2. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with faith expression in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all?

Data was collected using qualitative methods, utilizing a semi-structured interview, all of which were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. Using a conceptual model of connections between spiritual beliefs, religious practices and faith communities (Marks, 2005; Figure 2) to guide the interview questions (Appendix C), emergent themes and subthemes related to how and why Catholic women administrators in higher education connect their leadership and faith. The results of this study begin the research continuum of leadership and faith connections with Catholic women leaders, and point to future research studies with both qualitative and quantitative methods.

This chapter is outlined in the following way: a) a review of participant demographics, including position level, number of years in the field of higher education, budget responsibility, supervisory responsibility, and level of Catholic school attendance (self; self and children; children; none); b) introduction of four emergent themes and subthemes, with descriptions, and summary narratives and quotes to highlight each theme and subtheme; and c) a brief summary of the results.

### **Participant Selection and Demographics**

Interviews were conducted with ten Catholic women administrators in higher education at a large southern public state institution. Participants were chosen using a purposive sampling process, in which established criteria were used to select participants. The initial criteria included Catholic women professionals in senior level positions (Director and above) employed in four-year public universities or colleges in the state of Louisiana who regularly practice their Catholic faith and who show interest in the topics of leadership and spirituality/faith. As data collection commenced, the criteria of adding Associate Directors with broad supervisory and budgetary responsibilities was added. Emails soliciting participation were sent as the researcher identified women who met the criteria. The Participant Solicitation Email is included in Appendix B.

In the sample, all participants selected were female. Senior level administrators included administrators beyond the director level, including those in academic and support divisions at the university. Of the ten participants in the sample, 40% of the participants were at the senior level. Director and above included all directors, with 30% of the participants at the director level. Mid-manager participants included those participants with significant budgetary and supervisory experience at the Associate Director position title, and encompassed 30% of the participants.

Racial demographic information included the following: 1 African-American woman (10% of sample); 1 Hispanic woman (10% of sample); and 8 Caucasian women (80% of sample). The range of number of years in the profession was 10-23 years, with the average number of years in the field of higher education as 15 years. Of the 10 participants, 6 articulated attendance at Catholic primary and secondary schools (60% of sample), with 6 participants also articulating their children's attendance in Catholic primary and secondary schools (60% of sample). Budget and supervisory experience was not determined for every participant. Of the 3 participants who articulated budgetary responsibility (30% of the sample), the range in responsibility is \$500,000 - \$32 million. Of the 8 participants who articulated supervisory responsibility (80% of the sample), the range in responsibility is 3-17 supervisees. Table 4.1 presents all demographic information of the sample, excluding race/ethnicity in order to keep identity anonymous.

### **Exploring Faith Influence and Leadership in Women Administrators in Higher Education**

Using a semi-structured interview protocol, with questions formulated from the purpose of the study and, the guiding research questions, which were grounded in existing literature and models of leadership development and faith formation and from a conceptual model of faith identity (Marks, 2005), participants were asked about various components of their leadership and connections to faith. From these interviews, four major themes emerged from the data analysis, along with eight subthemes. Themes and sub-themes emerged as salient concepts throughout either all ten interviews and participants or in number and substance from the data analysis. Sub-themes were matched to the emergent theme based on the nature of the relationship to the emergent theme. The theme, along with subthemes and descriptions are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4-1 Demographic information of purposive sample

Participant	Position Level	Years in Field	Budget	Supervisees	Catholic
1	Director or above	16	\$1.5 million	17	Self and children
2	Director or above	14	Unknown	7	Self and Children
3	Director or above	17	Unknown	3	Children
4	Senior level	15	\$32 million	5-7	Self and Children
5	Mid-management	12	Unknown	4	Unknown
6	Mid-management	23	Small resp	10-15	Unknown
7	Senior level	14	Unknown	3-4	Children
8	Mid-management	13	\$500,000	5-7	Self and Children
9	Senior level	10	\$3.5 million	8	Self
10	Senior level	15	Unknown	14-15	Self

### **Participants' Definition of Faith**

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to define faith. This question helped focus participants on the topic of faith, and established a baseline understanding of participants' experience of faith. Though definitions varied, all had components of belief and actions taken because of those beliefs, congruent with the Catholic catechetical definition of faith. These definitions also included religious intonations, including beliefs associated with one's religious denomination, connecting with Marks' research-based conceptual model (2005). Some of these religious intonations included Mass attendance, the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes. The conceptual model showing research connections between spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities served as a guide to conceptualize faith in a manner to

Table 4-2 Metatheme/Subtheme with Descriptions

Emergent Theme	Subthemes	Description	Example of Theme
Faith at Core of Identity	1. Personal Core 2. Core in Work Life	Faith/leadership connected at core of identity	"I grew up in the faith, so it's a huge part of my identity, just like I wouldn't be able to separate the fact that I am a woman from what I do."
Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management	1. Management of Self 2. Management of Supervisees	Faith/leadership connection manifested through attitudes, knowledge, and actions of improving individual and organizational performance	"But now that I acknowledge that relationships matter, I realize that productivity goes up when you nurture relationships. And so how do you nurture relationships without those foundational things like compassion, empathetic, just the things that kind of mirror what faith and spirituality are."
Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership	1. Use of Faith in Decision-Making Prayer 2. Faith as Action a. Service Orientaton b. Valuing Others c. Relationship Building d. Doing the Right Thing	Faith/leadership connection leader displays identifiable behaviors that can be observed and named	"I think because of my faith, I was able to engage them in a caring way, in a way that was non-judgmental, which I think is so important when people are for them a crisis situation"
Challenges in Practicing Faith	1. Public Institution Factors 2. Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts	Faith/leadership connection presents challenges for the woman leader	"It's difficult because as a state institution, we careful about how we convey."

be studied. Questions related to participants' experiences with each of these faith components provided the central focus of the semi-structured interviews. This conceptualization of faith resonated with the participants, and they were able to give clear examples of how this definition of faith plays a part in their leadership.

### **Faith at Core of Identity**

Beginning with pilot interviews (Participants One and Two), every participant articulated a connection between their faith and leadership. The data show faith was at the core of the participants' identity. The saliency of this theme was seen by a) presence in every interview, and b) the number of times it was mentioned in each interview, and collectively in all interviews. Returning to the research purpose and questions of the study, this theme begins to answer two research questions: exploratory question number one – How do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership? Why?; and exploratory question number three – In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all? The description of this theme, as seen in Table 4.2 is, "Faith/leadership connected and faith is the baseline of the connection." This description pointed to the inherent nature of the faith and leadership connection, such that the participants do not articulate the conscious decision to connect the concepts. These women were selected based on their desire to discuss a faith and leadership potential connection. Readers will remember that the purposive sample included the criteria that Catholic women would practice their religion on a consistent basis (criterion number two). Readers remember also that 60% of the sample attended Catholic primary and secondary schools, and 60% of the sample enrolled their children in Catholic primary and secondary schools.

The women saw themselves first as women of faith, and then could not dissect that identity from their personal or work life. Participant Ten perhaps illustrated this theme best. When asked if she thought faith and her leadership were connected, and was that important, she responded:

You can't really separate who you are from what you do and how you operate. I definitely think it is important to have that connection because that's why...that's what drives you. I mean, who you are at your core, and for me, faith is a big part of that core. I think that's how, that's what drives you every day. And not just in the decisions you make, but in how you treat everybody else.

In saying, "you can't really separate who you are from what you do," Participant Ten gave voice to faith as identity (who she is), and connected that faith with her leadership (what she does).

The participants spoke of their "core" as their faith throughout the interviews, sometimes alluding to it, and at other times giving explicit examples of how this core informed their actions at work. Participant Ten illustrated this in the last portion of the narrative, when she qualified how her faith "drives her every day." She says, "And not just in the decisions you make, but in how you treat everybody else." The behavior of "how you treat everybody else" illustrated the Catholic Church's catechetical definition of faith to include "action on the part of the faithful." These women demonstrated and articulated their action at work through their treatment of others. To them, acting in this way called to their core of faith in their leadership.

Every participant reiterated faith as identity in a similar way, articulating faith as "who I am," or alluding to faith being a part of everything. Participants saw leadership as "how you operate." Examples are provided below to illustrate further:

Participant One: I don't see how I could function without a strong connection because that would be denying who I am.

Participant Two: I think it is part of who I am, and so I think it's important because it is part of who I am and I wouldn't do it any other way, because then I would be disingenuous. I think it is important because it is who I am, and so I am going to be

honest, I am going to be who I am and if that is not what somebody wants, then I don't need to be their leader. So, yes, I do believe it is important.

Participant Four: As I've evolved as a leader, I guess, I realize you can't separate those things. Or at least I can't. Where I think it comes in is when you are trying to counsel someone to perform better, if you're trying to help them through a hard time, if you're trying to maybe even discipline them for a performance issue when you realize they're bringing their own personal issues to work – that they can't separate it either. That you can't just say this is just business, it's not personal. It is very personal to all of us when we put ourselves into our work. When I came to that realization and understood I couldn't separate the two, that was a real turning point for me.

Participant Five: As I interact with students or staff, I think my principles or guiding forces all have to do with you know, what does God want for me to do? How can I be here to practice what I believe in and to create that kind of world that I think God wants us to create? I think we are the eyes, and the ears, and the hands and the mouth. In doing that, it filters into everything that I do. It is all centered in God.

Participant Six: I do know that some of the Associate Directors do not always agree with how I handle everything, but they will tell you that I have a great team, that my team knows that I am there for them, and my team is there for me. I know that is a direct correlation to how I present myself as a faithful woman, because I am not afraid to let them know who I am. I'm not talking about divulging personal things, but they know me. They know who I am, they know what is important to me.

Participant Seven: I think my faith guides the way in which I lead. I think that others see that, or see the kind of person you are. I think that if you took my faith away, I'm not sure what would lead me because I think faith leads all areas of my life.

Participant Eight: I think that that's what being a Christian and a Catholic is...it being part of everything. Like I said, you have to draw boundaries on some levels, but I think in my mind it can always be a part of it.

Participant Nine: Then I can have that intellectual stimulation related to the faith. I think that it's very, it's all connected. It's very connected because I can bring that knowledge of history....back to the university. So I really do think it is a supportive structure that makes me a better person to make me a better leader.

The women, with a collective voice, stated faith is “who I am.” Easily, these women articulated faith as “who I am,” over leadership, which was identified as “what I do.” In fact, these participants feared removing “who I am” from the equation, and stated that removing it from the equation would leave them “denying who I am.” Participant Two suggested that if she had to

take faith out of her leadership equation, that perhaps she would not be the right leader for her team. In this example, and throughout others, the women illustrated faith and leadership are interwoven and integrated in all they do throughout the work day.

Participants also articulated the difficulty of separating faith from their work life, and from who they are at their core. For these participants, faith was not something which was part of the leadership equation; it was the foundation of their leadership equation. The idea that faith and leadership were inseparable goes back to some of the higher education literature concerning spirituality (Astin & Astin, 2000). Astin and Astin discussed bringing one's whole self to work – making separation of these concepts unnecessary. Mitroff and Denton (1999) identified wholeness at work as well. Some women stated it very concisely, exemplified by the following Participant One example; and some gave more rationale to illustrate the concept:

Participant One: I couldn't separate the two.

Participant Seven: If I didn't have my faith in my life, or didn't have my faith at work, I could never bring it here. And it is something you have to...I don't see how I could not bring my faith to work and use my faith to operate on the job.

Participant Eight: But I think in your mind you can always be thinking in the way that you approach a situation, you can always approach it from a Catholic...because it is who you are...It is who I am...I grew up in the faith....it's a huge part of my identity, just like I wouldn't be able to separate the fact that I am a woman from what I do.

Participant Nine: *When asked, "It's not something you can separate?" the participant responds: I don't think so. I mean, I have a Katherine Drexel (Saint in the Catholic Church) statue right by my computer I look at all the time. I'm like, what would Katherine do right now? She wouldn't send this email. She would not do this. So I really don't think that it can be separated. I mean, especially with trying to walk in her footsteps. I mean, the Patron Saint of social justice and philanthropy (a field the participant expressed passion about in her leadership).*

These narratives not only illustrated the difficulty these women would face separating faith and leadership, they also illustrated the notion that if separated, the participants would not know how or want to lead. Participant Seven illustrated the discontent she would feel if she had to separate

faith and leadership by saying, “I don’t see how I could not bring my faith to work and use my faith to operate on the job.” Moving forward without faith in the work place was unfathomable to these women.

Though at this point in their career, the women connected faith and leadership, several participants mentioned the journey of connecting faith and leadership. This journey for them was gradual, developing over time, and becoming stronger through developing their own leadership. This finding related to Fowler’s (1980) stages of faith development over time. This finding also relates to newer leadership concepts, stating that leadership was not just inherent (born with propensity for leadership), but could be learned and crafted over time (Komives et al., 2007; Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2010). Participants Four and Six both articulated the journey of connecting their faith and leadership:

Participant Four: I’m moving from the disjoint of the faith to connection so I guess it’s only going to be at a point if I go overboard. Because I feel like I’m in this progression of saying...of almost a wow factor by realizing I don’t have to keep it separate, how beneficial it could possibly be and so no I haven’t gotten called on or pushed back on anything I haven’t gone too far on it yet.

Participant Six: It feels like a gradual journey more of a faith journey and as I become more comfortable in my faith in my conversations with God, as I become more confident as a professional, and knowing that I didn’t necessarily have to separate myself to be successful in whatever setting it was then I became very cohesive.

On the journey to connecting faith and leadership, these women reported increased confidence and wholeness, connecting again with spirituality studies of wholeness (Astin & Astin, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). This confidence and wholeness translated into their actions at work. Furthermore, the realization itself of the integration of faith and leadership made the women self-aware, which appeared to lead to the increased confidence. Increased confidence connected back to Webb’s study (2007) of women working at Christian universities. Participant One provides more explanation of the connection, relating the development to the experiences she had in

Catholic school education, first as a student and then as a professional, “priming” her for the leadership role in higher education:

And it might have been largely due to my experience teaching and counseling in the Catholic schools that allowed me to integrate the faith life with the work life and the leadership more than I do...maybe that kind of primed me for higher education in a public institution.

The data showed these women leaders connected faith and leadership at work, with faith at the core of the leadership identity. The participants sometimes mentioned a journey to this understanding, and sometimes it seemed more inherent, especially as participants, such as Participant Two mentioned growing up in the Catholic Church. Either way, arriving at the understanding, the participants embraced faith as the core of their leadership identity.

### **Using Faith/Leadership Connection for Performance Management**

Having established a definition of faith, and examining that women connect faith and leadership by articulating faith is at the core of their identity, data from the study showed how and why women connected the two in public institutions of higher education. Research claims made by several authors about spirituality and organizational performance included claims of lower absenteeism, lower turn-over and increased commitment to the organization (Dirks, 2000; Fry, 2003) when spirituality is added to the work equation. But how does this happen? Since Dirks (2000) and Fry (2003) made claims in reference to spirituality, it was important to understand organizational and individual performance in terms of faith, as defined by this study.

Data suggested there are specific ways to increase performance with the faith/leadership connection. Participants of this study used their faith and leadership connection for performance management in two ways: management of self and management of supervisees. Included in management of self are examples of strategies to manage self-performance in relation to a team or colleagues. This theme related to the research purpose and questions of the study,

specifically: exploratory question number two – What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with the practice of faith in the work place?; and exploratory question number three – In what ways are women’s leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all? The description of this theme, as seen in Table 4.2 was, “Faith/leadership connection manifested through attitudes, knowledge, and actions of improving individual and organizational performance.” The participants used their faith and leadership connection to manage the performance of themselves first, and their supervisees next.

### **Management of Self**

Participants recognized their own performance was enhanced by connecting their faith and leadership. This subtheme was articulated as a benefit in the faith and leadership connection as the women made conscious choices using their spiritual beliefs (Marks, 2005) when approaching situations and people at work. Perhaps Participant Eight illustrated this best, especially when she related incidents of having to confront situations at work. She used her faith to decide how she must act prior to and during her approach to conflict resolution. Her response also illustrated her interior attitude and faith belief, relating to Marks’ (2005) conceptualization of faith to include spiritual beliefs, which assisted with managing her own performance. Her responses are intentionally linked to who she is as a woman of faith.

But I think it’s...my faith and my beliefs directly impact the way that I approach situations as a leader, and particularly personnel. Because that is just a huge part of leadership, and I think again you just have to go back to God says love everyone, no matter how difficult, and no matter how much conflict, you have to keep that in the back of your mind and say, “this is how I need to approach this situation.

Participant Eight relied on her spiritual belief of “loving everyone, no matter how difficult,” in order to proceed with actions at work. In this example, seen in other participant narratives as well, spiritual beliefs, as defined through Marks’ (2005) conceptual model directly impacted how

Participant Eight acted and behaved in her leadership. Participant Ten used faith to manage her performance, and related it to confidence as a leader. She said,

So, I usually feel like if I ask God for that help, and I'm going in with good intentions, I feel like God will help me out there. So it probably does add to some level of confidence as a leader.

When asked directly about her confidence, she connected the confidence she gained from her faith to her success in leadership, "That sort of extra little confidence that you have somebody on your side and just feeling like I am hopefully leading people down the right path." Confidence in leadership related back to several researchers, most notably Webb (2007) in discussing factors of transformational leadership most predictive of employee motivation in Christian universities of higher education.

Participant Six related attributes of her leadership abilities to attributes of her faith. She speaks about her effectiveness as a leader, and credits this effectiveness to who she is as a whole person, including her faith, alluding to the initial theme of faith being at the core. Being "whole" is seen in the literature focusing on work place performance and spirituality (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Participant Six gives voice to what is meant by being whole at work.

Participant Six: I think that (*long pause*) my ability to be a professional is only enhanced by my faith and compassion and what I present to you, what I present to anybody is just my humanity and that makes me the person that I am and that is I can see where someone could see that as a negative. Someone could see me as more the emotional type. You know, if that is how they want to perceive it, that's their opinion. I think that I am very effective when I make that connection with someone and it's – there is no question in my mind that it makes me the leader, and the woman professional, the woman leader that I am today.

Participant Six brought her whole self to work, and illustrated this concept, claiming it as her "humanity." She admitted that others may see this as "emotional" and "negative," but Participant Six embraced her faith and leadership connection and attributed her identity as a leader to this connection. She said, "it makes me the leader, and the woman professional, the

woman leader that I am today.” This finding of using faith and leadership for performance management linked back to faith being at the core of the leadership equation for these women.

This last statement from Participant Six is perhaps justification to focus on women in this study. Women lead differently than men (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). Research showed women more often used transformational leadership behaviors and strategies, focusing on relationships (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). Data from this study illustrated making connections and building relationships was a strength for them as women who lead with their faith. Leadership was described as a relational process (Astin & Astin, 2000; Komives et al., 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2008), as seen also with transformational leadership (Avolio, 2011; Burns, 1978;). Sometimes this leadership was seen as “emotional,” whereas for women, bringing their identity, and using all of themselves to manage their own performance helped them in their leadership efficacy. From this participant’s statement, she was truly confident in who she was as a woman leader of faith, and used all of those attributes in the course of her day to supervise her unit, and be an effective leader, starting with managing her own behavior.

Bringing all attributes to your leadership is only one way performance management manifested in the faith and leadership connection. Participant Four attributed her attendance at Mass, and practicing her faith in more prescribed ways to the management of her own performance at work. Beyond spiritual beliefs, this practice was in the realm of religious practices and faith communities, as seen in Marks’ conceptual research model (2005).

If something prevents me from going to church on Sunday, I have something missing that may impact my mood, it may impact my mental stability, I guess. I feel like when I am practicing my faith consistently that I’m on this even plane of sanity. You know, I’m able to deal with my co-workers here at work better, things like that. That if I have to skip one or two weeks of Sunday Mass, I can tell that my own attitudes, my own perceptions in how I approach people at work, that those things are affected, therefore

affecting my relationships, thereby affecting my productivity. And when I get back on track, I have a sense of relief, and I have a sense my relationships are back on track. I guess it's more of how do I feel about myself, my own self-esteem, my peace...inner peace that if I'm unsettled I'm going to be less settled at work, I'll be unsettled with my boss, I'll be unsettled with my co-workers, and so I find it's a necessary component of – it's a very intermixed part of who I need to be at work.

Evaluating her own performance directly, Participant Four directly linked her performance with religious practices, specifically attending Mass, which is celebrated daily in the Catholic Church, with weekly attendance on Sunday being required of faithful Catholic parishioners. Performance indicators included her attitude (good vs. poor), as well as behaviors of approaching others at work (positive vs. negative). The more consistent she was with Mass attendance, the more “productive” she classified her performance. Participant Four’s narrative related to the Marks’ (2005) conceptual research model through the “faith communities” and through “religious practices” components of faith. Participant Four’s parish community served as a way to anchor her leadership, which has faith at its core.

### **Management of Supervisees**

The faith and leadership connection had benefits to managing supervisees, as well. Dirks (2000) and Fry (2003) reported increases in organizational performance, in relation to spirituality in organizations. However, individual performance was not addressed. These women leaders addressed some of the aspects of individual performance of their subordinates.

Participant Four gave an example of when she had to terminate an employee who had used all of her leave, and had utilized all of her Family Medical Leave. However, the termination decision was not easy to implement, so she prayed for creative solutions to the termination, and realized the employee needed certain financial assurance. She rallied the office together to offer this financial help, and the result was higher morale among team members, and the employee feeling valued, even though the employee was being terminated.

Interviewer: And like you said, it has helped the organization. So you're looking at some bottom line performance indicators?

Participant Four: Yes, things like morale. And so the activities we are doing, the fellowship, the camaraderie, the helping our own, you know, those kinds of things that again I feel are coming from my core of faith and beliefs, and kind of translating and manifesting in workplace things. I think the fact that we've got people talking in the lunch room and sending me notes afterwards saying, "Thank you for doing that. That was awesome." Or you know, "Thanks for even providing that opportunity to even help so and so...we would not have known she was having a problem." And those kinds of things. Then those outcomes or those collateral things that happen as a result...we were doing it to help that employee, but she really ended...what we ended up telling her is that she helped tons of other people because they were able to help someone and that helps someone when they think they were able to help.

When Participant Four spoke about "morale," she was speaking of individual and organizational performance. The feedback from her employees showed her the performance of her individual subordinates increased by connecting her spiritual beliefs of caring for others, with her supervision. The morale in her department as an indication of performance related back to transformational leadership characteristics and definitions (Burns, 1978).

Participant One used her faith and leadership connection in a similar way, with a supervisee experiencing tragedy. She was able to use her faith and leadership connection to empathize with the supervisee, leading the supervisee through her situation, while at the same time working at the institution. She was able to share her faith with her supervisees, who also articulated a strong faith life, as seen in the following two examples:

We have a staff member who lost her husband very tragically, and it is still extremely difficult for her. This happened, it will be 2 years ago this summer. In working with her, trying to get her to perform well in her position, the faith that she and I both share was such a strong point for her understanding even though she was coming back to work, and it was so difficult, that she was going to get through this. Because if I think my role is to be the hands and feet of Jesus as I work with others, it's the same thing for others, especially others, you might not ever had talked about it, you can just tell they have their faith-based. So that happens all the time.

Staff will come to me with some situation they are dealing with; like we have one staff member now who has breast cancer and it's come back and she has had to undergo

treatments; she had a double mastectomy, and she thought she had gotten rid of it forever, yet here it is back again; you know, so that kind of interaction with a staff member is her faith impacts me as a leader to know that I'm supporting her but if she didn't have the strong faith that she has it would be so different in the way that I lead her.

Participant One did not mention specific performance, however she articulated using her faith and leadership connection "supporting" her staff through tragic situations: the loss of a spouse and tragic illness. The use of faith and leadership in this way (supporting individuals during tragic situations) related back to the HERI (1996) study, which showed the component of spirituality of equanimity and some components of the Social Change Model showed strongest relationships. This finding pointed to reasons to continue studying faith and leadership both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Other participants expressed the benefit of increased performance by using their faith and leadership connection at work. In their estimation, having high standards and holding employees accountable was congruent with their practice of leadership, which has faith at its core.

Participant Seven and Participant Eight illustrated these concepts well, as they navigated supervision of supervisees:

Participant Seven: But when I think about it, the way I lead is very – my faith helps me to lead and it helps me to be a better leader, because you know, I feel like I treat people with a lot of respect. Even when they make mistakes, I treat them with respect, and I try to work through those mistakes with them. And I always give people chances to improve and to make better choices.

Participant Seven then gave a specific example of how she does this with a supervisee:

And I have another employee who sometimes gives me a little trouble. And, it's just because she is hotheaded. You know, she's hotheaded, you know she will just spout out, she has a potty mouth. It's just terrible. But you know, I just have to reel her in sometimes. There is no way that I could do that, no way I could do that if I didn't lead with spirituality.

Participant Eight's example was similar:

I just kind of try, particularly when I supervise people, I try to display Christian values. You know, I have to hold them accountable because that's my job for the work that they do. But I also think that by being empathetic toward people, and being caring, and even just verbalizing that you appreciate the situation they are in and the challenges they are facing, I think that then you get better work out of them. And I think that when you can reiterate to someone, "I know you had a challenging morning. It's ok that you showed up 15 minutes late, and just take a few minutes to take a breather, and make sure everything is ok with your children, so then you can focus on the job at hand." I think just showing that support so they don't feel like that conflict between being a working parent.

She continued to tell of a particular staff member:

So, I did have to counsel one of the employees in my department for basically not completing their responsibilities as they were supposed to. I think a lot of it is in delivery, and the words that you choose, and your nonverbal communication that can demonstrate, like I said though you do have to hold them accountable on a professional level, I believe you can still display care and concern and love for them as another person. So just in the...it's one thing to have the list, and these are the things we need to talk about, but then truly being able to say, "I want to be able to help you in this position, and I'm going to do everything I can." And meaning that! Just coming from a place of wanting to help them succeed and not from a place of being punitive. And I think your faith plays a part in that.

Both of these women articulated having high standards, but are able to use their faith and leadership connection to raise supervisees to higher levels of performance. This finding fits with the Burns (1978) definition of transformational leadership: "when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). These examples illustrated the language of faith, which the participants themselves use, and the language of leadership are similar. For example, when the women use language such as "respect," "being empathic," and "wanting to help them succeed," models of leadership mimic similar language and outcomes, especially in transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). However, these women articulated these lessons as stemming from their faith, particularly from spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities (Marks, 2005). These women's own performance increases as they hold others to higher standards and lead through their faith and leadership connection.

### **Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership**

As one operates in her leadership with a connection of faith and leadership, then certain actions are manifested in observable behaviors, that the participants of this study related back to their faith. Though some of these actions may be seen as good management and leadership principles, the participants of this study identified these actions as learned from their faith. These unique findings related to the purpose of the study, and in particular to exploratory question number one: Do women leaders in higher education use faith to influence their leadership? If so, how? The answer to this how question was at the very center of this study, and this emergent theme addressed a very practical question for women in higher education, particularly public institutions of higher education. The description of this theme, as seen in Table 4.2 is, “Faith/leadership connection – leader displays identifiable behaviors that can be observed and named.” This theme was also unique in that though the metatheme was “Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership,” along with two subthemes (Use of Faith in Decision-Making and Faith as Action), these subthemes had specified observable behaviors, emerging from the participants’ experience of the faith and leadership connection. This was the only emergent theme of the study organized in this specific manner. In the subtheme of “Use of Faith in Decision-Making,” the specific behavior evident in the data was Prayer. In the subtheme of “Faith as Action,” the four specific behaviors evident in the data were Service Orientation, Valuing Others, Relationship Building, and Doing the Right Thing. These behaviors were presented in order by the number of times appearing in the data (most mentioned to least mentioned).

#### **Use of Faith in Decision-Making: Prayer**

Data suggested participants utilized the practice of prayer in specific ways. The first way the women used prayer was during difficult situations, complex situations, or prior to making

decisions. In these situations, before making a decision, the participants prayed, asking for guidance and wisdom, assurance, and the ability to follow the will of God. Participant Four gave an example related to the budget cut scenarios at the university. She credited prayer with “guiding” her thoughts and decisions in a difficult situation.

Interviewer: So those are the things you brought to prayer? What am I going to do? What can I do?

Participant Four: Lord, give me strength. Lord give me answers. You know, help me have clarity on this. I mean, when it looks like there is only that one solution when the administration is saying we need a plan of how you are going to save this dollar amount and we have no other areas to save in except personnel, then that was it. That is all I had to deal with. But prayer and thoughtful consideration and discussions with other people and discussions with people about can you do without a little of this in order to accommodate something else, we came out with some really creative solutions and so my answer is yes, I do feel like the prayer, and consideration and contemplative thought is really what guided that.

Participant Four illustrated this concept, speaking about complex budget reduction strategies at work. She credited her religious practice of prayer with assisting in creative solutions and in slowing down the decision-making process to make clear decisions with the budget.

Participant Six articulated the decision to use prayer in difficult situations, and illustrated the use of prayer when confronting a staff member.

When I have a presentation or when I have a difficult situation, that is something I would pray about for guidance. And I try to be extremely forthcoming in situations. For example, if I am talking to a staff person, I oftentimes will tell them, you know this is very important to me. Now, I know that most of my staff is religious, so I know I can have this conversation. So I can say I’ve prayed that I would have the right words to help explain this situation.

Participant Six felt comfortable with her staff members, as she mentioned to them she “prayed” for the “right words.” Praying for the right words in a difficult situation, connected to work, was a way for the women to use faith with leadership, through a religious practice of prayer.

Prayer was also used throughout the day, and seemed to be spontaneous for these women leaders. Participant Seven illustrated this concept, and included the use of her Rosary as a way to quickly pray:

I think there have been times when I don't know what decision to make, or I'm not sure what to do, and you know, I've prayed about it. I keep a Rosary in my desk. I think my faith guides the way in which I lead. And I think that others you know see that, you know or see the kind of person you are. I think that if you took my faith away, I'm not sure what would lead me because I think faith leads all the areas of my life.

Participant Seven admitted there are times when she does not have all of the answers, and it was during this time she turned to prayer. The Rosary was another way this participant prayed throughout the day. The Rosary is a set of prayer beads, which mark a repetitive and meditative prayer, meant to bring calm and peace to the individual praying. When Participant Seven prayed, she connected this religious practice to her leadership when she said, "...faith guides the way in which I lead." Further, she spoke of faith, after speaking of an action of faith (prayer), as "leading" everything in her life. She was voicing that faith was at the core of her identity, and that prayer was one way that manifested for her throughout her day.

This example of using a religious practice to inform action also related to the Catholic Church's catechetical definition of faith, and extension of "...for this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will" (United States Catholic Conference, 1994). The participants articulated using the religious practice of prayer, but instead of a static use of prayer where the faithful individual was sending one way messages, these women sought answers from God and listened for his answers. Further, these women connected their prayer to the ultimate decisions, crediting answers and creative solutions to their use of the religious practice of prayer.

Another comfort for these women was accepting the prayers of others. Participant Nine readily accepted the prayers of others, especially from her faith community, and believed these

prayers sustained her as a leader. The narrative that follows illustrated this, during a most difficult time at work for Participant Nine.

So really and truly it was utilizing all the people who came all out of the wood works who really were my friends and to be frank, I got a lot of notes from people that talked about “I am praying for you. You are on my prayer list. You’re the only person on my prayer list right now.” So I was able to really think about my own spirituality because people at a state agency sent me notes saying, “I know that this is a difficult time for you, and I’m going to do my part to be spiritual and be thoughtful that you get out of this with the least amount of confusion and chaos.”

Again, this narrative showed prayer in difficult times. This time, however, the narrative illustrated accepting prayers during difficult times. Participant Ten used this prayer to reflect on her own “spirituality,” and reiterated the number of individuals from her faith community who were praying for her.

Participants used prayer drawing direct links of their chosen “vocation” to their work lives. Breskamp (2009) provided a faculty members’ perspective of work in higher education as “vocation” or “calling.” These participants did not speak of vocation as a far-off concept, but acted on it, through their prayers in this subtheme. Participants Five, Six and Ten demonstrated connecting prayer to the work they do:

Participant Five: How can I be here to practice what I believe in and to create that kind of world that I think God wants us to create. I think we are the eyes, and the ears, and the hands and the mouth. So, in doing that, it filters into everything that I do. It is all centered in God. I participated in spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola about 5 or 6 years ago. It was so in sync with who I was already and brought it out even more in me. But, you’re stopping in the course of your day and seeing God’s work happening through your work.

Participant Six: My prayer every day is that God will place me where I am supposed to do the best work. Where I am to do his work. Kind of one of things I say to myself sometimes is “Lord, be my breath.” In those times when I can’t find words, I pause, and I just say that to myself, and that helps to center me. I have a firm belief that God is with me, I feel He is hugging me at times.

Participant Ten: If we are going to embark on some big campaign, you know that we are going to put money and time into, I’ll give another little prayer for that: “Let us be taking

this in the right direction. We want the university to succeed from this and not be wasting their money.” So, I do feel, like I’m sure most leaders do that responsibility to the university, and to the tax payers and to the students and everybody – the alumni. So being able to have that kind of aside from, because you know we’ve all been educated and trained and we’ve got experience, but I feel like having that Divine help is one more little something on your side. So, if you can have that and it makes you feel better about the direction you are going, or and sometimes I’ve had instances, and again I’m going to be hard pressed to think of a specific...but I’ll pray about something and I’ll get a weird something in my head, well maybe that’s not the way to go, you know? And I’ll listen to that.

Both Participant Five and Six illustrated the idea that their calling was to do what God was calling them to do at work: to be “the eyes and the ears and the hands and mouth” of God. In order to do this, these women focused their prayer on God, sometimes imploring Him, sometimes listening for Him, and at other times just feeling his presence near them. For these women, prayer affirmed who they were as leaders by pointing them back to their vocation of leadership in higher education.

Participant Ten also used prayer as a way to lead her team in the right way. Her belief that this religious practice of prayer helped her to be successful as a leader was a leadership development strategy, and alluded yet again to the ways women lead, especially connecting back to the definition of transformational leadership by Burns (1978).

I’m trying to think of another way...because I keep coming back...as soon as you said, and I came back to that feeling like I always want to do the right thing for my team or for the university...so that...that sort of praying that, “Keep me on the right track, let me lead these people the right way...”

Data suggested the participants used prayer during difficult times or complex decision-making, accepting prayer from others, and praying specifically for their own work vocation. These actions of faith added to the understanding of how women used their faith and leadership connection at work.

## **Faith as Action: Service Orientation**

Service orientation encapsulated how women used spiritual beliefs (Marks, 2005) to demonstrate the faith and leadership connection. The subtheme, “service orientation” also has roots in leadership models that have developed over time, including Greenleaf’s Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), Astin and Astin’s (2000) earlier work promoting the understanding of transformative leadership in higher education, and the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives et al., 2007). These leadership models posed the silent question, “Leadership for what purpose?” The answer to that question was a resounding, “To make a positive change or difference,” and linked these actions to the “greater good.” Data suggested the “greater good” propelling the service orientation stemmed from these women leaders’ faith and leadership connection.

For these women leaders in the current study, the core belief and subsequent action of service, was born from their spiritual belief of service. Several of these women connected service, stemming from their faith to claiming their jobs as vocations or the service they are called to by God himself. Participant Two related this in a passionate narrative where she displayed her love of what she does (her work), connecting it to who she is (a faithful woman), and tied it to the emergent subtheme of service orientation.

What we do here is serving others and it is a ministry, I mean it kind of –I would never say that to anybody else, but really it is its own ministry. I could stay at home if I wanted to, or, do I have to work this many hours – no. I could probably do something different. But it is the service aspect and the fact that we make a big difference in students’ lives and we are – this is a ministry. It is serving others through helping them – helping them see their potential because many of them come in and they have the potential, and they’ve just lost their way to that potential. They have had hardship, or they have had a failed grade because they don’t know how to study properly. So part of we do, we teach them the learning strategies – yes. But the other part is building them back up and trying to get them to see their potential again. And that is what runs this whole office, it is the service part, and everyone here is dedicated to that, and I am too.

Participant Two was saying her job is not just a job: her job was a vocation. When these women approached their jobs as vocations, a natural outpouring from that was service. Participant Two called it “ministry.” Vocation called these participants to serve in their leadership. Instead of just completing the tasks of the job (teaching learning skills), Participant Six was able to serve students at deeper developmental concerns (building their potential again). Connecting faith and leadership provided an avenue to view their work as vocation through serving others.

Several participants viewed service in a similar way: their work was service, and their commitment to service stemmed from their faith and the belief they were doing the work of God.

Participant Five: I do that on an everyday basis. I kind of, you know, again it’s the request to God make me an instrument of His peace and love and whatever He needs. I am hope I am able to deliver that through my hands and voice.

Participant Six: What I do in life has to have meaning and what I do I feel for me, my satisfaction is contributing to a greater good. I am one small piece in the cog where people come to college and their dreams come true and they are getting their education. That is important to me. I have to feel like my life has meaning and what I do has meaning on a daily basis. Even though shuffling papers is a lot of what I do, shuffling those papers gets kids into the University, and their education, which then improves their life.

Participant Seven: I feel like whenever you are a member of your church, you’re helping other people...there’s no way you’re not going to feel that inward glow and that other people that surround you are going to feel that and you are going to bring that to the other people in your community whether it’s something...you’re going to bring that to other people in your community and at work because maybe it’s something you heard during the Homily that the priest said and you just snap on to that. You listen to the Gospel and the scripture, and it just hits you. And there is so much of that. I mean, I know if you read some of the scripture, Jesus was a fisherman and a carpenter and all that, so he was working. A lot of the Bible-based stories in the Gospel, just all the scripture, it’s related to work. I feel like a lot of times you can grab something from there. You bring that to work and you start to practice that.

Participant Eight: And then also I do think there is that whole sense of community and I think that’s a huge piece of what you work for in higher education is working for the greater good...doing service for others. And so a lot of those same concepts, although in the university setting, they may not be faith based, it is the same idea that you are engaging in the university, you are working for the greater good.

Participant Nine: I think the service component is very very much a part of my rituals of being a Catholic. The components of service. I'm in this two major service oriented organizations that give me an opportunity to serve and volunteer outside of the job community outreach. I'm doing it over and above that's my role on campus. I am philanthropic for Catholic Charities, so I have donated money specifically to build the Katherine Drexel chapel at Xavier. The ritual of giving and the ritual of being philanthropic for the sake of a church related entity.

For these women, service was an outpouring of a lived faith. When they mentioned things such as "it's the request to God make me an instrument of His peace," "my satisfaction is contributing to the greater good," "doing service for others," and "I think the service component is very much a part of my Catholic ritual," these women voiced their understanding that their work transcends the task of any given job. As Participant Six said, "Even though shuffling papers is a lot of what I do, shuffling those papers gets kids into the University, and their education, which then improves their lives." The mundane tasks were seen as service and participation in the "Catholic rituals."

The service orientation these women incorporated into their leadership actions seemed to be the basis of doing good for others at work. This related back to the concept of the "common good," which was prevalent in transformational leadership research (Burns, 1978; Astin & Astin, 2000) and in studies of leadership in higher education (Parks, 2008). Participant Four shared a beautiful story of raising money for an employee, shared earlier in the managing supervisees subtheme to show how she uses the faith and leadership connection with performance management. The narrative below detailed how that story played out for the office, as a way to serve others in the office:

Participant Four: I'm thinking of a separate example of where it's more in the Beatitudes, where we serve other people. We had an employee who was ill, ran out of leave, was on FMLA, ran out of that amount of time, and really it was time for us to just terminate employment. That's the reality of the laws that exist to protect that employee. And while it's my job to have carried that out, what we choose to do was figure out how we could help that employee. We had an auction where we raised \$5,000 for this

employee and it paid 3 more months of her house note that she could pay her house note before she got on disability. It was such fellowship and camaraderie among our staff that they rallied around this person. I mean, it just lasted for months after that... the feel good nature, the fact that we all did something in service for one of...we called it helping one of our own, I really think that, if I didn't have that belief that you help other people when they need, then I would probably just have processed the paperwork because that's just my job...just process the paperwork. But we all took it that extra step. And I think that my idea for doing that stems from the service nature that comes from the Beatitudes and the Catholic faith.

Once again, the reader sees that this action of faith – serving others – also connects with the beliefs of faith – the Beatitudes (Appendix F). Her work transcended her duty to “process the paperwork,” which was all that was expected. Her service orientation which stemmed from her faith, propelled her to assist in any way possible to the benefit of the employee.

Others illustrated this concept beautifully, as well:

Participant Six: We had 2 employees who had a cousin in common who was tragically killed. This person didn't have insurance, it was a very tragic situation, she had 3 small children. When this came up, Jennifer was trying to raise money for funeral expenses and she asked me if I do a dinner, could we sell it here in the office. I said absolutely. Then, as time as she was preparing all of this and trying to get this taken care of, she was trying to cook all of these meals, they had to raise \$5,000.00. I let her have time off, and the other staff members knew I was letting her have time off for this. Then on the day that she was selling the meals, 3 of us went over there to help out after work. While it was not necessarily an overt example of utilizing my faith, there was no question that what was motivating me was my faith. This was something that I had to do and this was something I was supporting my staff in doing. It was kind of the way that it evolved was very faith-based. It was not an overt situation, but it the staff knew we were all pitching in, it was the right thing to do, that we were helping our friend. We were doing what God would want us to do.

Participant Seven: Let me start with this story, because I think this is good. Ok...during the Gustav, their home was wrecked. Trashed. And, you know, even though I wasn't here, I still felt that pain and so we called and checked on them, you know, their children don't live here. They were...and this house crashed open, you know, half of the house is gone. And we had all of this damage in our town, and we drive over there, my husband and I to see about them. So, does that make sense? You know...think about it...you drive and check on someone you work for. So we drove over there. And my husband and my supervisor got together and they boarded up half the house and they didn't have any electricity, and then we went the next day and brought them food. We did that out of our faith. That was the driving force behind that because we cared deeply for them.

In these two narratives, the participants showed how in their work setting, they were able to serve others, including supervisors, as well as colleagues and subordinates. When someone was in need, service became the most important way for these women to lead. Participant Six stated she was “supporting her staff,” and Participant Seven stated, “We did that out of our faith,” connecting faith and leadership through her service orientation.

The data showed another way in which the participants displayed service orientation actions – using your job skills to impact the community outside of work. Participant One related a story of how her involvement in her faith community led to using her career skills to impact others in the community who could use the skills she brings to work. Her action of service impacted the larger community, for the greater good:

Interviewer: And if so, how does being in a religious community impact your leadership?

Participant One: I think that it has a very strong effect on my leadership because as part of that faith community I’m involved in several different capacities that could be looked at as leadership. The social justice committee is a very strong group of men and women at St. Joseph’s Cathedral who do different things that impact serving the socially...serving the needy in the community. The Cathedral is in an area of town that is in a lot of need in that downtown area. I’ve taken leadership on several of those different projects, I guess you call them, and then that in turn has impacted the work that I do here. For instance, I was on the board at the Christian Outreach Center downtown which is made up of 5 churches downtown, and the career outreach center is run out of there. They refer a lot of their clients to the one-stops lead by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. I’ve worked with some of those clients on their resumes and cover letters – kind of job search elements. I am able to bring that back, share it with the staff, and then our staff, I think this is because I am so supportive of faith-based communities, and of us being leaders because we are at the university, in the community. Shiloh Baptist Church asked us to do a series of job search workshops for them and several of our staff and me participated in those.

The narrative showed these participants connect faith and leadership at work, and extended that service orientation to the community at large. Participant One was able to take her skills and abilities from work, apply them in the community, and was hopeful that bringing that

experience back to the office encouraged her staff to provide outreach as well. Service seemed to be a core value of her faith and leadership, and related back to Greenleaf's servant leadership (1977) and Astin and Astin's understanding of spirituality and leaders in higher education (2000).

Other participants extended their faith and leadership connection to the community in which they served outside of work. This was not necessarily related to their work skill, but showed a willingness to serve beyond the paid work they performed. In their work, these women were answering the "leadership for what purpose" question, by helping to create social change (Komives et al., 2007). However, once again, these women related this to their faith, and not necessarily to their leadership.

Participant Four: ...My kids go to Catholic school. They have various activities and Masses at school that I try to attend. We try to do service, and they are required to do service hours at school. But we try to do service – do more than that. And we try to always share and give and realize that if it is Christmas time or a birthday, that maybe ask for – one year, it wasn't actually giving to people, but one of my daughters asked that all of her gifts be donated to the Humane Society for the dogs and cats there things like that. So, my beliefs I try to translate into how I am raising my children, and try to pass that on that strong.

Participant Five: I have reached out since last January and done some volunteer work at St. James place with the elderly people over there in the assisted living center. That's been a kind of piece of what I was looking for or what I enjoyed having in my faith community. It's kind of being filled by that. Many of those mostly women that I talk with, they are on that faith kind of journey and it's been exciting for me because they are at a time in their lives when they are completing their journey. And so it's very rewarding for me to be able to engage in conversation with them about what is it that keeps them still focused and positive, and what are they living for at this point. That's what we're here for, that's what we're called to. Being here for others, giving to others. When you are at that age, what is it that you can give?

The service orientation was present at work by serving colleagues and subordinates, in the community by using work skills and abilities, and in the community using personal interests. The last two narratives illustrated personal interests in service, relating back to their faith.

Participant Ten brought a bit of clarity to the action of service, recalling examples of service from high school, and how that formed who she is as a leader who leads with faith.

And I don't know if this is useful or not, but in high school I was in key club which did a lot of service work, and we visited the sick, and visiting the elderly who were shut ins. Those things, I felt like, and even though I don't think, I know a lot of people in key club come from a religious background, but I don't know that is a requirement to be in that organization, but I felt like for people who are in a religious community, that organization was a good match. It was things you read about in the Bible...you know, take care of the sick and the elderly and all these things that you hear are important values, so I think that club helped to shape that in me as well.

Participant Ten articulated her call to service from high school. She showed that her faith community, from earlier in her life helped to form her service orientation. She was now able to use this earlier formation to impact her leadership at work.

Data showed participants' Faith as Action manifested by their service orientation. This subtheme was seen inside and outside of the work they performed in public institutions of higher education. Although details of how they use service orientation was seen in leadership development models, data showed these women credited their faith teachings as to why and how they served.

### **Faith as Action: Valuing Others**

Another action of the faith and leadership connection was both an interior attitude stemming from spiritual beliefs, as well as observed actions stemming from these beliefs.

Valuing others was a specific way the participants of the study displayed their faith and leadership connection. Going back to the work of Helen Astin (2004), a values-based leadership equation was suggested. Astin stated:

...the leadership model outlined here is predicted on three basic values: the need to create a supportive environment where people can grow, thrive and live in peace with one another; the importance of promoting harmony with nature and thereby provide sustainability for future generations; and the need to create communities of reciprocal care and shared responsibility where every person matters and each person's welfare and dignity is respected and supported. (p. 2)

The concepts of “dignity” and “respect” highlight just a few of the values these women leaders articulated in the theme of Faith as Action: Valuing Others.

Several of the participants related this concept to the tenets of the “Golden Rule” (treat others as you would want to be treated).

Interviewer: So the 10 Commandments as a basis for your spiritual beliefs...

Participant Four: And the Golden Rule. I often tell people treat others as you would want to be treated and that things work themselves out.

Participant Ten: And in terms of other beliefs, I do believe in the Golden Rule. I believe you should treat other people the way you wanted to be treated.

Participant Five voiced similar sentiments related to the Golden Rule commitments of valuing others. She linked the life of Jesus to the subtheme of valuing others, and described the core of that sentiment as love.

I think that we have a set of commandments that mean less to me than following the life of Jesus. And I have come to that because of the commandments are so shallow compared to a look at the life of Jesus. I think when you see his life of love on earth and the ultimate sacrifice he gave for us, I think that I would say is that my response in kind is my whole life has to be dedicated to being fair being kind and reflecting God’s love to other people. So, those are my ultimate beliefs.

Perhaps Participant Ten expressed it best, articulating treating others with love, and relating the treatment of others to the Prayer of Saint Francis, which she beautifully expressed in the following narrative:

I was at home and I was thinking about it, and had prayed about it. And I had picked up a book that was just at the bottom of a stack of books for something. I’ve been meaning to read that a while back, and I had just started read a couple of years ago. And when I popped it open, the thing that was marking the page where I had just left off was this little prayer card that I don’t even remember where I got it, and it was the prayer of St. Francis...Make me an instrument of your peace...where there is hatred, let me sow love, where there is injury, pardon...and I was like, Oh my gosh. It was so poignant for the moment of what I was dealing with and the part about let me not so much seek to be consoled as to console, and there are people who are having a hard time with stuff. And to not seek to be understood, but to understand.

In this passage, Participant Ten was adopting a prayer from a leader in the Catholic Church (Saint Francis), asking God to allow her to treat others in a certain way. She wanted to console and to seek understanding. Furthermore, Participant Ten asked God to help her repair damages through an act of valuing others. The full Prayer of Saint Francis is in Appendix E.

Participant Ten was praying for both an attitude as well as the action to value others.

Participant Eight illustrated how having the interior belief of valuing others can potentially turn into action:

I think they are connected to faith, because I think it is just like anything else, you just take a deep breath, and you say, “I can either approach this from my basic instincts or I can approach this from a person of faith, that believes we need to be sympathetic, we need to be caring, and we need to keep our eye on the goal of helping the student.” Which is, in my mind connected to faith. When it’s my child, I want someone to be caring and to be...So I would like to say it is just because I am an enlightened Christian and that’s part of it, but part of it, too, is just that there have been times when I try the other way, and realized there really is something to approaching this from a different way and approaching this from a perspective of being a supportive person, as opposed to not. And so, again it is a continual process, just like you are always growing in your faith. And I think now I can come to that place a little bit faster than I could maybe 5 years ago.

Participant Eight expressed how the ethic of care comes from being “a person of faith.”

Furthermore, as a mother, she related her valuing of others to how she wants her children treated as well. She gave an example of how she did this in the following passages. In the first narrative, she described the relationship with a colleague, and in the second narrative, she described how she tries to resolve conflict with the colleague using the approach of valuing others:

Passage One: Yes, there is another person in the building. Not a person in my area, but a colleague in the building. Just generally, for whatever the reason is, I find extremely difficult to work with. And I think that happens in every organization. And so I think that just trying to appreciate her experience.

Passage Two: But I think just stepping back and saying, “OK, this is what happened, I’m not sure why, but your staff can bring so much to the table that my staff can’t, so I think it’s really important for them to be there. Would it be helpful if I sent you or your staff

these dates and times and kind of emphasize that they need to be there early so that we can have everything set up and ready to go?” is a different way, but I think a more productive way. I think it is like re-emphasizing their important role, and providing them with resources, again, to help them be successful as opposed to saying, “This is completely unacceptable. I don’t believe as professionals they don’t know to show up on time, and it’s not ok.” Then I think I would have just faced more resistance. It would have just circled the drain, as opposed to just, “Your staff can offer something unique that my staff can’t and please, can I give you the dates? Would that be helpful for you?”

Participant Eight recognized she could choose how to approach her colleagues, and she opted for approaching by valuing what the other brings to the table. She was pleased with these results, and later in the interview, credits her faith with how she approached others in the work place.

Participant Six provided an example of how these individual actions of valuing others were translated to her team, encouraging them to value others as well:

And I said I am very concerned about folks taking advantage of other folks, and you have to when you are not here, there are other folks who have to take up the slack, and that’s not fair. Because you are not doing your job, but somebody else is doing your job. And I said, and I said, this is a case where we really have to be considerate of each other. And I did say, I said that, I appealed to the faith-based part of the group, do unto others as you would have done unto you. So, I thought that was a good lesson of a time when I used that.

Participant Six articulated the Golden Rule to her staff as a way to illustrate valuing others. She was urging them to use this spiritual belief to value others on the team.

Participant Nine detailed what happened to her leadership when she values others:

Well, I think pride is the wrong word because you’re not supposed to be prideful. I just I feel that I am a better person, therefore I am a better leader. I am more sensitive to the needs of others. I am more willing to even though my style is more egalitarian, I am more willing to hear varying perspectives than being decisive without input. I think that I am quick to praise and slow to anger at others. I share the spotlight. My, I mean, that’s part of who I am, but I think when I am even more connected, I am willing to share the spotlight, and say, “You know, that wasn’t me, that was the team.”

This related back to performance management as well. When Participant Nine spoke of “sharing the spotlight,” or giving credit to the team, she was valuing what others bring to the table, rather than only her own leadership.

Data showed participants used valuing others in their faith and leadership connection. Participants articulated certain beliefs, such as treating others as you would be treated, the Beatitudes and focusing on others (i.e. Prayer of St. Francis) to develop attitudes and behaviors of valuing others.

### **Faith as Action: Relationship Building**

Leadership is a relational process involving at its core – people (Komives et al., 2007). Relationship building was of great value and concern to these women participants who connected their faith and leadership. Burns' (1978) definition of transformational leadership created a vision for the data of this subtheme.

Relationship building was important in the faith and leadership connection, and participants expressed that the relationship building of which they spoke of comes from their faith. Whereas the ideas and expression of relationship building are found in leadership models and theories, these women clearly articulated this process for them comes from their faith. For example, Participant Six clearly articulated this concept:

Christ was a perfect example of unconditional love, forgiveness. He would get angry when he needed to, and I think that is very important. There is that one incident in the Bible, or maybe two when he shows anger, but there is nothing wrong with that, that has to be. The way that he led the apostles, his relationship with his mother, his relationship with his friends. I would love to be able to be able to love my friends like that and I try. So those and all of my spiritual beliefs are all patterned on the life of Christ.

Participant Six related this to her spiritual beliefs. However, beyond beliefs, she wanted to act on those beliefs, and build relationships, in the way that Christ did. She gave an example of how she consciously did this in an incident with her new supervisor. She was eager to build a relationship, even though there was initially a misunderstanding.

When my unit was first merged, and we were placed under another supervisor, I was having issues with her style because it was much rougher and very brusque and we were getting these e-mails that were just brutal. "What are you thinking? Or what..." I'm not a knee jerk person. I said, "Let me sleep on this and see if I feel the same way on the

next day.” My first instinct was just to say, “That raving bitch.” “How dare she?” Then I thought about, and I said, let me just take a step back. I went to her and said, “OK, I’m getting these emails and this is how they are making me feel. Do you really mean them like that?” What came out of that conversation was a mutual respect and I knew she was grateful that I didn’t just judge her and put her in a box, and I was grateful that she allowed me to go up to her and say, “You’re my boss, but I have a question about this.” I thought, what would Jesus do? Well, Jesus would go ask my new supervisor, what’s up with these emails. That was a turning point in our relationship. I’m forever grateful. I was scared because I didn’t know what kind of response I was going to get.

Not only did her spiritual belief about relationship building create the impetus for her to confront her supervisor appropriately, her action then led to a feeling of “gratefulness.” She credited this for the “turning point” in her relationship with her supervisor.

Participant Five provided another glimpse into how relationship building was an action of her faith and leadership connection.

You know it’s interesting because people will say, “Why are you smiling all the time?” There is a housekeeping woman from facility services who will come. She stuck her head in one morning and said, “I just have to tell you you have the warmest consistent smile I’ve ever seen.” She said, “You’re like that all the time. Where does that come from?” And so we’ve had a conversation here and there about faith and God and she is very spiritual, so I think she was more perceptive of that than your average person. But people will see me across campus and approach me, because generally I will go across the campus smiling at people that I don’t know, or saying a word or two in passing just because I’m trying to be God’s reassurance that the world is a good place and we are here for one another.

What began as a simple gesture (smiling while walking across campus), led into connecting with those across campus, including individuals who are sometimes ignored (custodians). Again, Participant Five connected this to the actions of her faith and leadership connection: “trying to be God’s reassurance that the world is a good place and we are here for one another.” This statement reiterated both Participant Five and Six’s notion that these actions made things better in some way – either in the relationship itself, or within the work environment.

Participant Nine spoke about a relationship she built outside of work that helped her to focus on her faith and leadership connection at work. This connection with someone from her faith community kept her accountable in her work community:

I think definitely my relationship with Fr. Michael is a way to build my leadership development because I can talk through and get varying perspectives on whether or not I'm being resistance, I'm being defensive, all of the things you shouldn't be when you're trying to be courageous and authentic.

For this participant, being courageous and authentic related to her faith and leadership connection. She built a relationship with a friend, who was part of her faith community, and she utilized this relationship to grow her leadership. For example, when she said, "I can talk through and get varying perspectives....," she was then able to take the lessons back to work. Being authentic in leadership was a values-laden approach to leadership, as seen in transformational leadership (Burns, 1978).

It was these relationships themselves that seemed to sustain the faith and leadership connection. As seen in Participant Nine's simple acknowledgement that her priest was a help, Participant Two gave an even more in-depth example of her family, and how those relationships supported, nurtured, and helped her to develop her faith/leadership connection:

I grew up in a very Catholic family, and had lots of influences in that – the growth of my faith and mainly my parents who are very devout Catholic, and my family has always been very Catholic. I have several aunts and uncles who are nuns and priests, and so I think they have had a lot of influence of me and my thoughts about faith and ideas. And, I think growing up in a family with nuns and priests, then being around them I think that also shapes your faith a little bit by watching them live very self-less existences. My uncle was a missionary in a lot of South American countries and just watching the way they live their lives that helped me to find my faith, and you know...My faith is something that is very important, it is something that I you know I deemed a very important part of my life.

Participant Two was mentored by family who passed on spiritual beliefs, religious practices and being in a faith community. She was able to incorporate the lessons from building these

relationships into her entire life, state, “My faith is something that is very important, it is something that I, you know, I deemed a very important part of my life.” This stemmed from the relationships in her family.

Participant Five offered a counter-example from her current institution of higher education. After articulating the value of relationship building, Participant Five spoke about the disappointment she feels at her current institution to know that relationships were not always important to everyone at the institution, and truly identified that within the culture of the institution.

And, so, I always feel like my leadership in the past when I was able to make that necessary nexus, you know, in past positions, I was able to see my work gets to be so enhanced by those relationships and connect the dots, and therefore together we are doing much more than we individually across campus ever could have done. At this university, I don’t find it is going there. There is not that willingness to entertain on the deeper level, that willingness to dig in and really significantly creating those things we could be creating for students, so that they can really – I call it find your bliss. Find what really is uniquely your gift, and how best to use that and do it in a way that is respectful of each other. We are not having as many conversations on this university’s campus about the whole person, the call to something deeper.

This disappointment in the relationship building actions at the current institution seemed to hinder organizational performance. Participant Five saw it as a barrier to collaboration, moving things forward, and a tendency to stay on the surface by the unwillingness “to entertain on the deeper level.” Lower organizational performance appeared to be a part of the collateral damage of transacting rather than transforming the campus.

In contrast to Participant Five’s disappointment, Participant Six indicated that when the relationships were properly grounded, and there was a wholeness at work, then the team moved forward as a family. Again, relationship building was related to the faith and leadership connection, which seemed to bring a perceived increased performance, and a more satisfying work environment:

I will use this example...I feel like my faith community is my family. And I feel that same way here. I don't just consider this work. This is my family as well, and I think that's a direct correlation to that. You know, what I do in life has to have meaning and what I do I feel for me, my satisfaction is contributing to a greater good.

Participant Six's narrative connected relationship building with service as well, saying, "My satisfaction is contributing to the greater good." This greater good was connected to her team – the relationships that were built.

Data showed relationship building as an action of faith manifested in specific ways at work, including appropriate confrontation, approaching others with love, and engaging with others. Again, although relationship building was seen as a strategy in leadership development, these women connected this action as observed and learned from their faith.

### **Faith as Action: Doing the Right Thing**

The last subtheme of Faith as Action was Doing the Right Thing. Initially, this was coded on transcripts in open coding as, "What Would Jesus Do?" echoing exact words of the participants. As the subtheme continued to emerge, several participants spoke of "doing the right thing," or "doing what Jesus would want them to do." Doing the right thing was related to choosing the right actions, as well as molding the right interior attitude. Doing the right thing was also situation specific, but it always related to the faith and leadership connection.

In the example provided from Participant Six about fundraising for the colleague's cousin's funeral, Participant Six recognized this action as not just service, but Doing the Right Thing. She said:

Like I said, it was not an overt situation, but it the staff knew we were all pitching in, it was the right thing to do, that we were helping our friend. We were doing what God would want us to do.

She related the act of service, which was both a mind-set (service orientation) from these women's faith, and an action (performing the service itself), back to the concept of "what would

Jesus do?” In other words, this act of service was completed because the participant and her colleagues consciously decided this is what God or Jesus would have them do.

Participant Five echoed the idea that these were conscious decisions. She also articulated the idea that Doing the Right Thing was a very practical way to engage with faith and leadership connection.

I think you would see things that are based on much more practical understanding so where my life is if I were not centered on God. I think that you would have a more surface sense of the work that you do. You would probably come in, do your job according to your job description and go home. And I think what’s different for me is that I’m always measuring against “Is this right? Is this what we’re called to?”

As Participant Five said, “I’m always measuring it against, “Is this right? Is this what we’re called to?”,” the reader heard the consciousness of this action. For these women, the faith and leadership connection, along with the how and why this happened was integral to the work they did, and how they drew value from what they do.

Participant Four displayed this in a narrative revolving around a situation at work, where numbers and rank order could be the final decision made, but she was able to slow the decision-making process down by consciously thinking through how the decision was being made, and if it was the right thing to do. She articulated trying to strike the balance between going by the numbers, the pure facts, and making sure people were put into the equation. She connected this back to the uniqueness she brought to the leadership table by being someone who connects faith and leadership.

I think I can in the fact of when I think about how it plays out as a practical matter to produce some reports, then it’s just numbers, but then we’ve got to look at, “OK, what does this mean?” I don’t do any of this alone, I’m in a room with other leaders in this organization and the one I told you about that held the Bible study, he would have saved the employee at all costs. That’s one end of the continuum, and he would butt heads with someone who is saying, “We’ve got to run a business here.” Then I was the buffer in the middle that tried to find the solution there. My faith does inform decisions that I make, I also have to realize that I am being paid to do a job to sustain an organization that are in

the best interest of both the organization and the employee. The employees are hired to do a job, and if we don't need that job anymore, we don't necessarily owe the person that job. We did have some people, some push-back from our staff that said, "You should save jobs at all costs." It's that balance. I think I was in the middle on the continuum on the whole, "We have to do whatever it takes. We cannot let people go." To "No the numbers say we need to let people go." So I think my value lies in the middle somewhere and I do think my faith informs that.

Participant Four's focus on balance in this situation was her attempt to "do the right thing."

Complex budget situations as the one described above in the narrative were not solved in one meeting. Participant Four was showing restraint, yet served as a mediator between those who would cut at any cost, and those who would save all jobs at any cost. This mediation role stemmed from her duty as a woman of faith to do the right thing. She connected it directly back to her faith when she said, "So I think my value lies in the middle somewhere and I do think my faith informs that." Once again, this seemed to be conscious choices and decisions in very difficult situations to connect faith and leadership through Doing the Right Thing.

Participant Ten reiterated this concept as she provided a narrative about how she was raised in her faith to always do the right thing. She says the way she led was directly connected back to the concepts of character, and doing the right thing.

One of the things I think is most important in a leader is to be fair and honest and have some integrity and not just do what you think is going to benefit you, but what really is the right thing to do. That totally came from my childhood and growing up in the Catholic Church. My mom is a religion teacher in a Catholic school, I would get the same lessons at home that I was getting at school, about the right way to be, and the doctrine, and go to Mass. I definitely think that stuff I learned early on about the right way to live and the right thing to do. My mom used to give me little Jesus is watching you, and He sees what you do...I might not see it, but He sees it. My dad used to say, "Character is how you behave when no one is looking." My mom would say, "But Jesus is looking...don't forget!" I really do try to be fair and do the right thing, even though it may not benefit me personally. It's like what's right is right. I try to apply that in my job here, and that totally comes from that.

The first thing Participant Ten said in this narrative told the reader that she is making direct connections of doing the right thing in her leadership with her upbringing in the Catholic Church.

When she said, “actually, one of the things I think is most important in a leader is to be fair and honest and have some integrity and not just do what you think is going to benefit you, but what really is the right thing to do. And that totally came from my childhood and growing up in the Catholic Church,” she voiced the direct connection and comfort that brings her, claiming doing the right thing (which she terms as “fair,” “honest,” “integrity”) is what she admires most in leaders. She tried to emulate the same thing in her own leadership. She remembered the lessons from both her mother and father, and devoted herself to doing the right thing on the job.

Data suggested Doing the Right Thing was integral to the faith and leadership connection. These participants consciously thought of doing the right thing, articulating doing what Jesus would do. Though this subtheme was not seen in every interview, the strength and number of times it was mentioned provided saliency to include the subtheme. The subtheme itself of “Doing the Right Thing” related back to concepts in leadership of the common good (Parks, 2008).

### **Challenges in Practicing Faith**

Every participant in the study was able to provide examples of how it was challenging to connect faith and leadership in the work place, particularly in the setting of a public institution of higher education. Data suggested that this theme presented itself in two very strong ways: Public Institution Factors and Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts. Returning to the research purpose and questions of the study, this theme related to exploratory question number two: What are the challenges and benefits that women associate with faith expression in the work place? The description of this theme, as seen in Table 4.2 was, “Faith/leadership connection presents challenges for the woman leader.” This emergent theme was what is most written about in the current literature on spirituality in higher education (Chickering, 2006; Estanek, 2006; Lincoln &

Astin, 2006). Readers remember that this sample included associate director and above (all the way through senior level administrators) at public institutions of higher education, where separation of church and state was often used as a reason to leave religion and faith outside of the academy. Although this emerged as a theme, the women themselves did not see this as a reason to remove the faith and leadership connection.

### **Public Institution Factors**

Public institution factors was the subtheme most written about in the literature concerning reasons to keep faith personal and private when working at a public institution of higher education (Lindholm & Astin, 2006). Public institution factors included challenges related to working at a public institution of higher education, and the idea that separation of church and state precluded one from speaking of such things as faith and religion at these institutions. The subtheme also included how to handle such things as using the word Christmas rather than holiday or winter break, being inclusive of all religions, including non-Christian denominations, and staying quiet about certain beliefs widely held by Christians.

Being politically correct in these instances was something these women saw as a challenge in public institutions of higher education. Several mentioned the Christmas language, especially as example of being politically correct.

Participant Four: And so, things like at holiday time when we've got people not wanting to call it Christmas party, you know, so in the role that I'm in, I often find myself always trying to be politically correct. And I think that is...then I have some guilt feelings for not being true to myself for that. So I think it's a balance about realizing the role that I'm in in this public organization and not over extending my own beliefs onto other people.

Participant Five: Certainly here, at the university, I feel it's really interesting that we do Christmas. I mean granted, we call it holiday, and things like that, but we do Christmas. I mean, we do Christmas carols, we have a Christmas tree. Yes, we've struggled on whether it's going to be called the holiday tree, and no we decided it was a Christmas tree. And yet, we're a state institution. And I think this is interesting because when I was at another institution (private), we were not allowed to have anything that represented Christmas, per se. We could do candy canes, we could do things that kind of represented

Christmas, but we could not have anything that said Christmas per se. We could do packages because hey, they could be Hanukah packages. And things like that. But I think here I think it is more obvious it is Christmas, and I enjoy that. And we decorate. And things like that.

Participant Six: I think one of the issues that is probably another study, is that I think there is so much stereotyping, and you know, this removal of church and state, and all of these other things that you know, you don't necessarily have to take God out of everything in order to separate.

Participant Ten: And I think that everything, and especially in my job, everything has to be PC. And so, everything has become really politically correct, and you don't tell people, you're not supposed to tell me that's wrong, or what you're doing is not right.

Participant Six simply acknowledged the challenge of working in a public institution of higher education by saying, "it's difficult because as employees in a state institution, we have to be very careful about how we convey..." She did not finish the thought. Quite succinctly, she reiterated the challenge that it was a public institution and that in and of itself made it a challenge. These women were also saying this is a disappointment for them. When Participant says, "you don't necessarily have to take God out of everything in order to separate," she expressed confusion and frustration of being so "politically correct," as intoned by Participant Ten. Most of the examples the participants gave revolved around holiday time at the public institution.

Participant Four spoke about providing faith and religious support at work in a common area of their building. However, in doing this to support the staff, Participant Four struggled internally, believing that being at a public institution of higher education might present problems to the community they want to support. However, she reconciled this interiorly by being open to all faith expressions, including non-Christian.

Well, as you were saying that I had not mentioned that every Tuesday we have Bible study here. And it's at lunch time, so we bring bag lunch and anybody is invited to go and it is more of a non-denominational Bible study, but I just think that it is good...it is good that we offer that here. And it was a little touchy at first on whether or not we should, as a work place, allow the use of our conference room for that kind of activity. But we decided that if someone who was practicing Wiccan or there was something else,

they would also be allowed to do this. So we have not had any interest from Wiccan or anything else...but right now...and this has lasted for a couple of years now, so it is a strong group that meets regularly.

Participant Four was trying to find ways to make it work. She wanted to make sure that others, like her, were able to connect faith and leadership at work through very overt ways, but in order to do that, she was willing to open it to all faiths and beliefs. She worked around the challenge through creative solution and through the laws that were in place, but did so in a way where she continued to pursue pathways for those who wanted to continue Bible studies.

Again, although working at a public institution of higher education presented challenges, the women did find ways to work through the challenges, including celebrating holidays, and providing community support for those who wanted to practice their faith at work.

### **Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts**

Perhaps related to the concept of working at a public institution of higher education was the concept of how implicit or explicit one's actions and thoughts could be about their faith in a work place. When struggling with how implicit or explicit to be with students or staff, these participants were tentative on how to initially approach the situation. However, once comfortable in the situation, once again, they found solutions to this challenge.

Participant Six: And I always am very respectful of boundaries. However, and I speak as long as I know the person I am talking to is comfortable in the conversation, I will say, and I do this many times with students, when something is not quite working out the way they wanted it to, I'll tell them, "I don't know what your faith is. However, I am confident that if this opportunity is not working itself for you that other opportunities will be made available to you." And I just feel very strongly, and it doesn't really matter to me necessarily what their faith is, I just...it's important for me to convey that to them.

Participant Four: I do still struggle with not being explicit part of my job because I do acknowledge that there are co-workers here who don't believe in anything at all, and so that has been a challenge, and I still have not mastered that part of it yet. But, uh, if they – by having it pepper into any kind of conversation or anything like that, it gets awkward when dealing with someone without any kind of faith at all. And how do you work through and navigate those situations

Participant Four did seem to struggle more with the challenges, perhaps because she was also the participant who believed her journey of connecting faith and leadership had just been realized.

She described the battle she sometimes has with whether to be implicit about her faith or explicit about her faith.

I think it's more explicit – it is implicit in everything I do, but I find I have to (*long pause*) soften it or use more secular terminology for the same concept that is driven by my faith. Using words like having to have compassion and when someone comes in with a problem they are upset about, I may know in my mind that I'm going to pray for that person, but I don't always tell them that, not knowing where they are coming from, not know how comfortable they're going to be with that...not knowing if they think that the position I'm in is going to impact their work situation, and you know that's just something I hope to get better at mastering at knowing in this type of organization how much is ok, and you know that...letting them know you're going to be in my thoughts, or I'm sending you good vibes your way.

She was still testing the comfort boundaries for herself in terms of how much of her faith should be implicit and how comfortable was she with explicit connections of faith and leadership.

However, she was committed to continuing the journey and figuring out where the boundaries were for her as someone who connects faith and leadership.

Data suggested Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts seemed to be an area where the participants kept an interior dialogue about how open they will be about their faith. Not wanting to offend others seemed to be at least one reason this challenge was often faced by participants.

### **Summary**

After conducting and coding ten interviews with Catholic women administrators who work at public institutions of higher education, four emergent themes revealed how and why these women connect their faith and leadership at work. The four themes, including subthemes were: Faith at Core of Identity; Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management (Management of Self and Management of Supervisees); Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership (Use of Faith in Decision-Making: Prayer; Faith as Action: Service Orientation,

Valuing Others, Relationship Building, and Doing the Right Thing); and Challenges in Practicing Faith (Public Institution Factors and Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts). These emergent themes provided some level of evidence and answers, for the three exploratory questions of the study:

1. How do women leaders in higher education use faith to influence their leadership?  
Why?
2. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with faith expression in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all?

The data also related to the purpose of the study, which was to explore how faith informs the leadership of women administrators in higher education using a qualitative research strategy, including grounded theory to examine the participants' experience of leadership and faith in higher education. Overall, findings provided answers to general questions of "how" and "why" women connected faith and leadership at work. The findings of the study did indicate a values-based approach to leadership, as outlined by Astin and Astin (2000). For these women, the values-based approach has at its core spiritual beliefs and religious practices. In other words, faith was connected with leadership.

Perhaps the most significant finding from the study is that one does not influence or inform the other; faith and leadership are connected for these women in ways they cannot separate, nor do they want to separate the two. This finding has implications for future research, as well as for the practice of leadership in public institutions of higher education.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore how faith informed the leadership of women administrators in higher education using a qualitative research strategy, including grounded theory, to examine the participants' experiences of leadership and faith in higher education. There were three exploratory questions used by the researcher, guided by the literature review and current research in the field of both higher education and organizational development. The answers to these questions were sought through the entire study, including selecting the purposive sample, interviewing, transcribing, coding, and writing the findings of the study. These questions included:

1. How do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership?  
Why?
2. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with the practice of faith in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all?

In using a qualitative approach, the researcher intentionally sacrificed breadth of data for depth in order to examine processes, and the how/why questions to arrive at an understanding of the participants' experiences. The researcher interviewed ten women leaders who met the following criteria:

1. Women professionals in senior level positions (i.e. Director, Dean, Vice Chancellor, Provost, Vice-Provost) employed in four-year public universities or colleges in the state of Louisiana;

2. Catholic women in these institutions who practice their religion on a consistent basis; and
3. The women selected showed an interest in the topics of leadership and spirituality/faith.

The researcher included three associate directors with significant budget and/or supervisory responsibility. Transcripts were coded, and data revealed four emergent themes of the study.

These four emergent themes are as follows (included with subthemes in parentheses):

Faith at the Core of Identity; Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management (Management of Self and Management of Supervisees); Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership (Use of Faith in Decision-Making: Prayer; Faith as Action: Service Orientation, Valuing Others, Relationship Building and Doing the Right Thing); and Challenges in Practicing Faith (Public Institution Factors and Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts). Data indicated the saliency of these themes, either through the number of interviewees who mentioned the concept, or the number of times it was mentioned collectively. Data evidence of each theme and subtheme are provided in Chapter Four of this dissertation, but represented only a portion of the amount of narratives and quotes present in the data as evidence.

Some of the findings of this study affirmed findings about women and transformational leadership, as found in the literature. However, some of the findings were unique findings that could inform future research, as well as future practice. This chapter presents and discusses the key findings of the study related to the purpose and exploratory questions of the study, describes practical considerations for use in the work place, details the limitations of the study, suggests a potential research agenda to continue to study the topic of women's faith and leadership, and finally summarizes the entirety of the study and results.

## **Key Findings and Implications of the Study**

The women of this study associated the uniqueness of their leadership not with any particular leadership style, but with their faith. Throughout the emergent themes, the participants helped to paint a picture of how important faith was in the leadership equation, why faith was used in the leadership equation, and presented potential results of connecting faith and leadership at work.

Though the ultimate goal of grounded theory qualitative approaches is the creation of a theory, this study did not come close to providing the evidence to present or produce a theory. However, the findings did suggest further research, as well as the need for additional participants using rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis. The current findings outlined how and why these participants connect their faith and leadership. Findings and discussion are presented by exploratory research questions of the study.

### **Exploratory Question One and Exploratory Question Three**

The first exploratory question of the study is: How do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership? Why? Exploratory question three is similar to question one: In what ways are women's leadership and faith connected at work in a setting of higher education, if connected at all? The data showed women leaders in the current study do indeed connect their faith and leadership. Faith does not simply "inform" the leadership – faith created the foundation of their leadership.

Data supporting theme one (Faith at Core of Identity) and theme three (Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership) related to findings related to exploratory question one. To some extent, data supporting theme two (Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management) also supported the answer to exploratory question one, but helps to answer

exploratory question two best. Therefore, those key findings will be discussed later in this chapter.

The experiences of these women indicated faith and leadership became interwoven or integrated in how these women approach their work. For example, when the women talked about not being able to “separate who you are from what you do and how you operate,” or when they said, “I realize you can’t separate those things,” these women were identifying key components of who they are at their core. This they related to their faith, which they described through their spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities (Marks, 2005). This was an important finding in this study, and gave a little insight into how these women lead. This finding connected to some of the anecdotal essays and papers which gave voice to the idea of “wholeness” at work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Although these women spoke of being whole at work, unlike the Mitroff & Denton (1999) study, these women leaders articulated faith, related to specific researched criteria (Marks, 2005), through spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities.

Women in this study did not want to leave their core at the front door of the work place, as if faith did not exist for them. As Participant One says, “I don’t see how I could function without a strong connection because that would be denying who I am.” If one must deny their very core in order to be successful at work, then perhaps qualified women college administrators will make alternate choices, such as choosing to step out of higher level leadership positions all together.

Put simply, these women did not want to separate their faith from their leadership. In fact, the participants saw faith and leadership as one and the same. Even when participants were hesitant in the past and tried to separate the two, somewhere along their leadership journey, they

realized ways to honor their faith and leadership style, and then articulated confidence to keep faith as the basis of their leadership equation. This was seen in several participants, but most notably in Participant Four, Participant Six, and Participant Eight. Connecting faith and leadership increased these women leaders' confidence in their positions at public institutions of higher education. Dahlvig and Longman (2010) presented findings from women in Christian institutions of higher education suggesting "encouragement" of women leaders help the women to articulate who they are as leaders. Lafreniere and Longman's (2008) research with women leaders at Christian higher education affirmed similar findings. The authors suggested findings show the more women were encouraged and affirmed, the more they opened themselves to higher level leadership. The same seemed to be true in this study. This finding had both practical and research implications, discussed later in this chapter.

Participants in the current study articulated particular actions of their faith to answer the how question of connecting faith and leadership. These findings of particular actions appear to be unique to this study. Though these actions were seen as strategic in best practice models of leadership, participants of this study connected these actions to their faith. This begins to connect the similar language of leadership and faith.

Actions of service related to models of leadership in which the "common good" is an end product (Astin & Astin, 2000; Greenleaf, 2002; Komives et al., 2007). Valuing others was seen in Kouzes and Posner (2008) five exemplary practices, maybe most notably in the practices of inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Relationship building was at the heart of Burns' (1978) definition of transformational leadership, as he illustrated the relationship between leader and follower, by stating: "when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of

motivation and morality” (p. 20). The word “engage” suggested relationship, and the interaction of the leader and follower by “raising” one another suggests a relational process. Doing the right thing rang true of ethics in leadership seen in all recent leadership models, including transformational leadership strategies (Burns, 1978), the five exemplary practices of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2008), and the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives et al., 2007).

Perhaps the most unique finding of this study was the way these women of faith use prayer at work as an action of their faith and leadership connection. This finding was not surprising, given the purposive sampling techniques used in the study. The participants were chosen based on a criterion that included practicing their religion on a consistent basis. These women were not Sunday only Catholic women. Prayer as an interior action was used by the participants prior to making decisions, or in difficult situations, accepting prayers from others, and praying for their own work vocations.

The prayers of these women were not actions considered proselytizing, nor were the prayers passive, interior-only attitudes. The participants certainly believed that the Lord answered prayers, and articulated a sense of confidence in their leadership when prayers were used. Participant Ten suggested that when she prays, asking the Lord to “keep me on the right track, let me lead these people the right way,” that she was able to focus. This sort of religious practice gave Participant Ten confidence to lead. Confidence in leadership was addressed in Webb’s (2007) study determining which factors of transformational leadership predicted employee motivation. Webb (2007) stated: “...workers are motivated toward extra effort when leaders model self-confidence, high energy, personal conviction, power and assertiveness”

(p. 65). This confidence was something seen throughout the literature as a piece that was missing for women leaders to move into senior level leadership positions (Lanfreniere & Longman, 2008; Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Once again, this finding has practical and research implications, discussed later in this chapter.

### **Exploratory Question Two:**

The second exploratory question of the study was: What are the challenges and benefits that women associate with the practice of faith in the work place? Benefits were discussed first, followed by challenges.

Data supporting theme two (Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management: Management of Self and Management of Supervisees) was perhaps the strongest benefit experienced by these women in their faith and leadership connection at work. Organizational development and transformation (OD and OT) provided a lens to view this data. OD and OT are fields focused on performance management of individuals and of organizations. The participants of this study used the faith and leadership connection to impact performance of first themselves, and then of their supervisees. Dirks (2000) and Fry (2003) reported increased organizational performance, such as lower absenteeism, lower turn-over, and increased commitment to the organization. However, the participants of this study used faith and leadership connection to first enhance their individual performance. Conflict resolution was first and foremost in this subtheme of performance management. The women connected their spiritual beliefs of love, or things like religious practices of attending Mass to keep some sort of peace before, during and after times of conflict with colleagues. This was a very conscious faith and leadership connection, as the women thought of this before entering a conversation.

Others, like Participant Ten again, connected performance management with confidence. Similar to using prayer to gain confidence, using faith and leadership for performance

management did give participants a level of confidence. Again, Lanfraniere and Longman (2008) and Dahlvig and Longman (2010) provided a level of evidence that encouragement in leadership helps women leaders to move to senior level leadership positions. Webb (2007) demonstrated it is good for performance management. These participants used their attitudes, knowledge, and actions to improve performance. This was seen when using faith and leadership to manage the performance of supervisees. Using this connection in daily mundane ways, such as having a performance conversation with a staff member where the supervisor was treating the employee with high regard even in a conversation which was difficult, or using faith/leadership with supervisees who were dealing with tragic situations, led to what the participants believed to be improved performance. The women attributed both the use and formation of these attitudes, knowledge, and actions to their faith/leadership connection, and not merely their leadership. Participant Eight illustrated this when she spoke of holding an employee accountable, by using nonverbal communication, delivery of the message, and the accountability itself. She said, “Just coming from a place of wanting to help them succeed and not from a place of being punitive. And I think your faith plays a part in that.” This related back to the transformational leadership component of raising others to higher levels (Burns, 1978).

These participants also experienced challenges with their faith/leadership connection in public institutions of higher education. These women confirmed some of the reasons researchers in higher education have given about why individuals avoid bringing faith into the work equation, including decisions of whether to make faith implicit or explicit, which Dalton (2001) views as inward spirituality as, rather than outward concern and Chickering (2006) suggested as not “preaching”; separation of church and state, by the very nature of working in a public institution of higher education (Lindholm & Astin, 2006); and once again, the understanding that

there was confusion to the definition of both spirituality and religion (Estanek, 2006). Even with these challenges, the participants were not willing to separate faith and leadership, continuing to view them as interwoven and integrated with faith at the core of their identity. Perhaps this provided another reason to study “faith” versus “spirituality.”

### **Practical Considerations**

The data and findings presented in this dissertation have relevance for practitioners in the field of higher education, particularly for those employed in public institutions of higher education.

First of all, the faith and leadership connection described in the current study did not seem to pose a risk to some of the concerns raised in the literature concerning bringing faith to work, such as separation of church and state (Lindholm & Astin, 2006), the desire to not be preachy (Chickering, 2006), and because of the confusion between religion and spirituality (Estanek, 2006). Therefore, it is advantageous to support and promote women who use these effective leadership strategies and that gives them confidence, which they associated with their faith formation. As presented in Lanfreniere and Longman’s (2008) study of women from Christian universities, developing workshops and retreats to support women’s leadership, the same types of workshops and mentoring relationships should be developed for women leaders from public institutions of higher education. Even current workshops and institutes for women leaders in higher education, like the Alice Manicur Symposium from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, could be informed of how and why women who have faith connect faith and leadership in the field of higher education in order to inform curriculum of the institute. These steps only strengthen current curriculums, and encourage women of faith to continue their leadership in higher education.

After each interview in this study, participants asked the researcher to begin a group for Catholic women who lead with their faith, in order for support structures to be in place at the university. This is another practical way to use the faith and leadership connection – by allowing women of faith to gather on campus to celebrate and encourage one another in their faith and leadership. Participant Four’s example of providing space and time at work for Bible studies was an example of how this can happen in public institutions of higher education.

For a more global support of networking for women who connect faith and leadership, or who are interested in how to do so, human resource offices are uniquely positioned to support women in their pursuit of “wholeness” at work. From allowing space and time for women to meet, and advertising these opportunities, human resource offices could support women of faith, and women of faith can continue to grow in their faith and leadership, and being whole at work.

While human resource offices can assist in legitimizing the voice of women connecting faith and leadership, it is the women themselves who would most benefit from understanding and applying the everyday ways women can connect faith and leadership. Mentoring from more senior level women leaders, such as the participants of this study, serve as role models to more entry level women professionals who may be beginning their understanding of faith and leadership at work. Concepts such as performance management and faith as action, manifested through prayer, service orientation, valuing others, relationship building, and doing the right thing, were seen as every day ways to connect faith and leadership at work. These concepts can be taught, mentored, and encouraged. Encouragement leads to confidence in leadership, as illustrated by Webb (2007), and confidence could potentially lead to more women rising to senior levels of leadership in higher education.

Finally, these findings present an opportunity for Catholic parishes and diocese to support women who work. Parishes and diocese are also uniquely positioned to support women who connect faith and leadership. While human resource offices have ability to support these women at work, parishes and diocese are the flip side of the coin: support of women leaders in their faith communities. Opportunities exist within churches to teach, mentor, support and acknowledge how and why Catholic women connect faith and leadership. Adult catechesis and adult formation workshops and classes can be utilized to present information and teaching on how and why women connect faith and leadership.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Qualitative research strategies, though thick and rich in description of lived experience of the participant, have limitations. The study has several limitations the reader should know and understand.

Conducting an exploratory study is a first attempt at collecting data about a phenomenon to be studied. This study does not answer all questions about faith and leadership with women. Findings from this study provide only a glimpse of the experience of women connecting faith and leadership in one particular setting – public institutions of higher education.

Secondly, the nature of this sample, being both purposely selected and subjectively interviewed, provide reason that the results of the study are not able to be generalized to other groups or other settings. The sample included only Catholic women, and did not consider women of other faiths or denominations. The data was analytical in nature with intent to understand the intricate relationships of the experience, and therefore variables were not controlled or isolated for the purposes of making generalizable claims.

## **Research Agenda**

The findings of this study provide the beginning of a research pathway to study faith and leadership with professionals in higher education, particularly those who work in public institutions of higher education. Studying the faith and leadership connection provides understanding of the leadership equation, most particularly for women.

Perhaps Marks' conceptual research model (2005) presented the best research approach in order to study faith: a truer definition of faith, including belief, action, and community. These words give a truer voice to what these women leaders were experiencing. This certainly came closer to the Catholic catechetical definition, which was the faith these women profess and follow on a daily basis. For them, faith was not a nebulous inner-journey. Faith included a set of beliefs to be acted upon (no matter where), and grounded in their own faith community (the Catholic Church). Marks' (2005) research-based conceptual model showed how individuals experience faith, through spiritual beliefs, religious practices, and faith communities. These components then interacted with the biological, psychological, and social nature of individuals. Work fell into the social nature of individuals, and the findings of this study have particular value to expand the conceptual model, and perhaps move towards theory of faith and leadership.

One first step to do this would be to expand the data set of this current study to continue conducting research with Catholic women, using a qualitative approach (grounded theory) at a wide geographical range of public institutions of higher education. Since the sample size of this study was relatively small and drawn from one university (large southern public university), having more women in the study from a variety of public institutions assists in moving the qualitative study using grounded theory approaches to the creation of a theory or conceptual model on how women connect faith and leadership. Team approaches with such research is

recommended, whereby inter-rater reliability quotients can be calculated by the counts of themes.

Findings from the study about performance management provide another place to begin inquiry into the relationship between faith and leadership, using quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. Using the conceptual research model of Marks (2005), researchers have a solid operational definition of faith. This has been a criticism of research in “spirituality” – no true definition, without variables identified to objectively study. While there are some studies examining the relationship between spirituality and leadership with college students (Gerhke, 2008), no studies were found examining the relationship between faith and leadership with professionals in higher education. A next step in the research agenda would be to create an instrument to measure faith dimensions, related to the Marks’ research-based conceptual model (2005). Further, once the instrument is created, it can be used to research the relationship between faith and leadership, using the MLQ to measure leadership with women leaders in higher education. This type of research continues to add to the understanding of the way women lead, and the relationships which exist between faith and leadership.

The findings in studies with women who work in Christian universities and participate in leadership institutes and workshops (Lanfaniere & Longman, 2008; Dahlvig & Longman, 2010), along with findings from this study about faith and leadership connection and confidence lead a researcher to another set of variables to study, either qualitatively or quantitatively. The women leaders themselves articulate increased levels of confidence in their leadership with the encouragement and relationships built at these institutes and workshops. Increased confidence is seen to impact employee motivation of effort (Webb, 2007). Studying variables which impact

performance with women who connect faith and leadership would help to determine the actual impact of women who lead with their faith at their work.

### **Summary**

Studying women leaders in public institutions of higher education with a qualitative research approach revealed four emergent themes with eight subthemes, which illustrate how and why women connect faith and leadership at work. These four themes emerge from data rich and thick in description from the participants themselves.

By utilizing Marks' conceptual research model (2005) to define and guide understandings about faith, and definitions of transformational leadership styles and practices (Burns, 1978), the researcher attempted to study faith and leadership connections with Catholic women administrators at public institutions of higher education. The four themes emerging from the data include: Faith at Core of Identity (Personal Core and Core in Work Life); Using Faith and Leadership Connection for Performance Management (Management of Self and Management of Supervisees); Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership (Use of Faith in Decision-Making: Prayer; Faith as Action: Service Orientation, Valuing Others, Relationship Building, and Doing the Right Thing); and Challenges in Practicing Faith (Public Institution Factors and Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts). These salient themes are reinforced with narratives and quotes from the transcripts of the participant interviews.

This study illuminates how and why Catholic women leaders in public institutions of higher education connect faith and leadership. The findings suggest faith is at the core of their leadership identity. This finding provides practical approaches in supporting women in leadership development and promotion.

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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION

### **Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight**

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/ projects using living humans as subjects, or samples, or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

-- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at <http://www.lsu.edu/screeningmembers.shtml>

-- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:

- (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of part B thru E.
- (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1&2)
- (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.  
\*If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
- (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
- (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB. Training link: (<http://phrp.nihtaining.com/users/login.php>.)
- (F) IRB Security of Data Agreement: (<http://www.lsu.edu/irb/IRB%20Security%20of%20Data.pdf>)



Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair  
131 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.6792  
[irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu)  
[lsu.edu/irb](http://lsu.edu/irb)

1) Principal Investigator:  Rank:   
Dept:  Ph:  E-mail:

2) Co Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each

Dr. Curtis Friedel  
Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech, Department of Agricultural Education and Extension Education  
540-231-8177  
[cfriedel@vt.edu](mailto:cfriedel@vt.edu)

IRB# <u>65409</u>	LSU Proposal # _____
<input type="radio"/>	Complete Application
<input type="radio"/>	Human Subjects Training

3) Project Title:

**Study Exempted By:**  
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman  
Institutional Review Board  
Louisiana State University  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
225-578-8692 | [www.lsu.edu/irb](http://www.lsu.edu/irb)  
Exemption Expires: 3-23-2014

4) Proposal? (yes or no)  If Yes, LSU Proposal Number

Also, if YES, either ☐ This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant  
OR ☐ More IRB Applications will be filed later

5) Subject pool (e.g. Psychology students)

\*Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the ages, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI Signature  Date  (no per signatures)

\*\* I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changes, I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Screening Committee Action: Exempted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Exempted <input type="checkbox"/>	Category/Paragraph <u>2</u>
Reviewer <u>Mathews</u>	Signature <u>Robert Mathews</u>	Date <u>3/24/11</u>

## CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN STUDY

- Study Title:** How Faith Informs Leadership of Women Administrators in Higher Education
- Performance Site:** Louisiana State University and various locations of women administrators in the study
- Investigators:** The following investigators are available for questions about this study:  
M-F; 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Mary Wallace, LSU PhD Candidate  
225-578-5036; mwallace@lsu.edu  
Dr. Curtis Friedel  
Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech  
540-231-8177; cfriedel@vt.edu
- Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore how faith informs the leadership of women administrators in higher education, examining the lived experience of Catholic women leaders in higher education.
- Subject Inclusion:** Women professionals in public institutions of higher education; Catholic women in these institutions who practice their religion on a consistent basis.
- Number of Subjects:** 20
- Study Procedures:** The researcher will conduct 20 semi-structured interviews to collect data. The interview is expected to last approximately 1 ½ hours. The interview questions are focused on the connection of leadership and faith in institutions of higher education.
- Benefits:** This study may point to different ways in which women lead.
- Risks:** There are no known risks in this study. All identifying information will be kept confidential. All data will be kept in a locked cabinet, to which only the investigator has access.
- Right to Refuse:** Participants in the study may choose to not participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Participant identification will remain confidential, unless disclosure is required by law.

Signatures:

This study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, 225-578-8692, [irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu), [www.lsu.edu/irb](http://www.lsu.edu/irb). I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPATION SOLICITATION EMAIL

Dear :

I am currently looking for interview participants for my dissertation research, and someone mentioned you yesterday, and I don't know why I didn't think of you before! I would love to interview you for my research. Here is the criteria for my sample:

1. Women professionals in senior level positions (i.e. Director, Dean, Vice Chancellor, Provost, and Vice-Provost) employed in four year public universities or colleges in the state of Louisiana.
2. Catholic women in these institutions who practice their religion on a consistent basis.
3. The women selected will show interest in the topics of leadership and spirituality/faith.

The title of my dissertation is "How Women Administrators Use Faith to Inform their Leadership." I am scheduling 1 ½ hour interviews for my participants, and meeting them in their offices, at their convenience. If you would be interested, I would love to schedule an interview with you.

Mary Wallace

Associate Dean of Students and Director of Campus Life

Louisiana State University

3rd Floor, LSU Student Union

Baton Rouge, LA 70803

225-578-5160 (office)

225-578-9441 (fax)

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

### I. Greeting

- A. Thank you for agreeing to participate
- B. Purpose: The purpose of our meeting today is to find out more about who you are as a Catholic woman leader in a public university. I am interested in your experience of leadership and faith, especially in the workplace. I want to know how you define faith, and how you define leadership.
- C. Procedures: In many ways, this interview is to understand more about who you are as a leader, and a woman of faith, and to understand how you experience this in your work life. As we discussed before, I need to tape-record this interview to make sure I get your ideas and perspectives correct. I may also take a few notes during our interview in case I have any malfunctions with the audio-voice recorder. The transcripts I produce from this interview will be coded and altered to remove any of your personal and institutional identifying information. All of my data will be securely stored so only I have electronic access to the data.
- D. Do you have any questions before we begin?
- E. Informed Consent
- F. Tape Recorder on...ready to record interview
- G. Begin Interview

### II. Interview Structure

- 1. How many years have you been in your current position? What does it entail? What are your area(s) of responsibility?
- 2. How many years have you been in the field of higher education?
- 3. How many individuals do you supervise? Budget? Other areas of responsibility?
- 4. How would you define faith? Can you describe a time when your definition of faith played out in action at work?
- 5. Can you tell me about a situation when you have practiced your religious faith in connection to your leadership? Why did you connect these two things? (Can you tell me more? Do you have an example from work when this has been true?)
- 6. Spiritual beliefs can be defined as personal, internal beliefs, framings, meanings, and perspectives.
  - a. What are some of your spiritual beliefs? Where do these stem from?
  - b. How do your spiritual beliefs impact your leadership at work?
  - c. Tell me about a time when that has been true for you at work.

7. Religious practices are outward, observable expressions of faith such as prayer, scripture study, rituals, traditions, or less overtly sacred practice or abstinence that is religiously grounded.
  - a. What are some of your religious practices you regularly engage in?
  - b. How do your religious practices impact your leadership at work?
  - c. How do they impact your followers?
  - d. Tell me about a time when that has been true for you at work?
8. Faith communities are communities of support, involvement, and relationships grounded in one's congregation or religious group.
  - a. Do you belong to a faith community? Tell me about your faith community.
  - b. If so, how does being in a religious community impact your leadership at work?
  - c. Can you give an example of when being involved in a faith community has impacted your leadership? Tell me about a time when this has impacted your leadership at work.
9. Was there a precipitating event that led you to make faith a contributing factor to how you lead? Please describe that event in detail. (may want to go back to previously stated examples).
10. Has your faith developed over time? How? Compare how you used your faith to inform your leadership at the beginning of your career, as compared to now.
11. A. Describe how you are impacted as a leader while using your spiritual beliefs, religious practices, or influences from your religious communities. Tell me about a time when you've been most impacted.  
  
B. Describe when the opposite has happened...your leadership has affirmed or impacted your faith. Please describe a situation when that was most impactful.
12. Is it important to you to connect your faith with your leadership? Why? How does this play out for you at work? Could you give an example?
13. Has it been challenging to connect your faith with our leadership at work? How so? Describe a time when this has been most challenging.
14. How are the times when you connect your faith with your leadership different than when you do not connect your faith and leadership? Give an example.
15. Has there ever been a situation which was misinterpreted or misapplied when you connected your faith with your leadership at work? How did your followers respond? Please tell me about that situation.

16. In what ways does expressing your faith through your spiritual beliefs, faith practices, and faith communities influence who you are as a woman leader? How? Can you give an example?
17. Are there any questions I did not ask that you anticipated? What else would help me to understand you as a woman leader who connects faith with her leadership?

## APPENDIX D: THEME SHEET

### **Initial Codes and Clusters with Identified Themes**

**February 27, 2012**

**Combination/Elimination Method: February 28, 2012**

#### **Theme: Faith as the core of Identity**

Faith/Identity – 41  
Faith/Leadership Connected – 30  
Faith integrated/Interwoven – 32  
Job as vocation – 20

Core of Self; Core of Work Life

#### **Theme: Using Faith/Leadership Connection for Performance Management**

Performance Management – 63; Add pg 25, pg 32 Part 7 – Faith/Motivation; Move Peace from pg 19/20 Part 6; Pg 12, Part 8 – Move greater good to performance management; Move Confidence to performance management Part 10; Pg 24, Part 8 – Consequences of not using faith to performance management; Pg 6 Part 7 – Move no one perfect to performance management; Pg 13 Part 7 – Move no one perfect to performance management; Pg 17 Part 8 – Move consequences of not using faith to performance management; Pg 18 Part 8 – Move Consequences of not using faith to performance management

Value of what one brings to the table – 4  
Transformational vs. Transactional – 18  
Collaborative Leadership – 9  
Teamwork – 3  
Refocusing/gaining perspective – 7

#### **Theme: A Focus on Others (using faith/leadership connection)**

Serving Others – 82  
Sacrifice – 4  
Faith/Social Justice – 3  
Valuing Others – 60 <This one could also fit under Performance Management>  
Relationships – 29 Move influence from others to this category – Part 2  
Knowing Others – 2  
Family – 16

#### **Theme: Specific Actions of Faith and Leadership**

Prayer – 65  
Religious Practices at work – 1

Decision-making – 30 Faith/Motivation – pg 4 Part 7  
Faith as action – 8 Faith/motivation – pg 31 Part 7  
Doing the right thing – 4  
Rituals as faith in action – 6

**Theme: Faith Difficulties**

Implicit/Explicit – 37  
Balance – 3  
Faith disguised – 1  
General Faith/Leadership Difficulties – 47

**Other codes:**

Spirituality/Faith Continuum – 12  
Faith/Motivation – 5 <May be moved to performance management theme>  
Close knit community – 4  
Influence from others – 4 <May be moved to A focus on others>  
Comfort – 3  
No one perfect – 3  
Greater good – 3  
Consequences without faith – 3  
Confidence – 3  
Observing others – 3 <May be moved to A focus on others>  
Non-dogmatic – 2  
Peace – 2

**New Themes with Subthemes after Combination/Elimination Method**  
**February 28, 2012**

**Theme One:** Faith at Core of Identity

**Subthemes:**

Personal Core  
Work Life Core

**Theme Two:** Using Faith/Leadership Connection for Performance Management

**Subthemes:**

Management of Self  
Management of Supervisees  
Management of Team

**Theme Three:** Specific Actions of Faith/Leadership

**Subthemes:**

Use of Faith in Decision-making at work  
Prayer  
Religious Practices at Work  
Faith as Action  
Faith/Motivation  
Doing the Right Thing  
Rituals

**Theme Four:** A Focus on Others

**Subthemes:**

Service Orientation  
Relationship Building  
Valuing Others

**Theme Five:** Difficulties in Practicing Faith

**Subthemes:**

Public Institution Factors  
Implicit/Explicit Actions/Thoughts  
Other

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore how faith informs the leadership of Catholic women administrators in higher education using a grounded theory approach to examine the lived experience of these women.

**Exploratory Questions:**

1. Do women leaders in higher education use faith to inform their leadership? If so, how? Why?
2. What are the challenges and the benefits that women associate with faith expression in the work place?
3. In what ways are women's leadership and faith at work in a setting of higher education connected, if at all?

## APPENDIX E: METHODS SHEET FOR DATA AUDITOR

### Methods of Study

1. Semi-structured interviews lasting between 38 minutes, 32 seconds – 1 hour and 22 minutes. Interviews were conducted April 2011 – September 2011.
2. All interviews were transcribed in their entirety, with the exception of Participant #3, interview #2.
3. Participants were given the transcript of their interview, and were asked to affirm the transcript, or offer corrections.
4. Interviews #1 and #2 were considered pilot interviews. These interviews were used to adjust interviewing protocol. After interviews #1 and #2, the following was adjusted to the interviews:
  - a. A beginning which included the collection of demographic information (job responsibilities, length of time in field, budget and supervisory responsibility)
  - b. Addition of question concerning faith developing over time (suggested by participant 1)
  - c. Structure to questions regarding beliefs, practices, and communities.
    - i. See attached interview document
5. Data from pilot interviews was considered in the study.
6. Researcher kept a field journal, making observations during interviews, and making field memos after each interview. The research journal was also used to write thoughts about themes and findings throughout the study.
7. Transcripts were coded in the following way:
  - a. Open Coding: Line by line, or passage (depending on the coherence of the passage); words were assigned to the coding, based on several questions, including “What does this concept illustrate? How is this related to the research questions? How is the concept in this interview similar or different from other interviews?”
  - b. Axial Coding: Axial coding was done through a numeric content analysis of the data, grouping like-concepts together. NCA’s were placed by each interview on post-it notes. Once all transcripts were coded, NCA’s were placed on one sheet of paper, and compared and counted by theme/concept.
8. Reduction/Elimination Methods employed. This resulted in 5 initial themes.
9. Final 4 themes established through confirming and challenging the themes and connecting to the research questions.
10. A final step was to return back to the narratives/quotes to create a file of themes across interviews. This further refined themes and naming/describing them more fully.

Questions for Auditor:

1. Do my steps make logical sense...which lead to...
2. The results of my study?

Can you trace my steps?

Can you understand the logic I used to get to the metathemes and subthemes?

## APPENDIX F: BEATITUDES

### **The Beatitudes**

#### **Matthew 5:3-10**

Retrieved on June 1, 2012 from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02371a.htm>

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (*Verse 3*)

Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. (*Verse 4*)

Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted. (*Verse 5*)

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. (*Verse 6*)

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (*Verse 7*)

Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. (*Verse 8*)

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (*Verse 9*)

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (*Verse 10*)

## APPENDIX G: THE PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Retrieved from <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/patriarcha/peace.html> on May 14, 2012

The Peace Prayer of St. Francis  
by an anonymous Norman c. 1915 A.D. Peace Prayer

Lord make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred,  
Let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, Joy.

O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled  
As to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

## VITA

The researcher, Mary Blanchard Wallace, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts from the Louisiana Scholars' College at Northwestern State University in 1992. She continued at Northwestern State University, receiving a Master of Arts degree in 1994, where she focused on student personnel services, concentrating in both counseling and higher education administration.

Mary began her career in college student housing at the University of Arkansas – Monticello. She then spent a fourteen year career in college student housing, progressing from residence life coordinator at the University of Arkansas – Monticello, University of Tulsa, and Texas Woman's University, where she began her work in the upper-level administration as the Assistant Director of Operations. She continued in the operations aspect of college student housing at Louisiana State University, and ultimately as the Associate Director of Residence Education in the Department of Residential Life at LSU. In 2008, Mary made a career move within higher education to become the Associate Dean of Students and Director of Campus Life, where she is now responsible for the overall vision and supervision of campus-wide activities and events, student leadership development, volunteerism and service, student involvement and student organizations. Mary has also taught several courses throughout her career in higher education, including first year seminars, resident assistant leader courses, and senior level leadership development courses in the leadership minor at LSU.