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THE RELIGIOUS SPIRITUALITY OF AN INDIANA PUBLIC SCHOOL

LEADER AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

As schools expand secularization and laws limiting religious expression increase, one must not forget the religious spirituality of the individual. Individual religious spirituality is still protected under the United States Constitution. Many researchers feel that this religious spirituality should be nurtured, not discouraged in public schools. Multiple studies seen in the literature review show that spiritual and religious commitment directly leads to increased academic success and decreased risk taking behaviors in students. The school leader has the ability to encourage, foster, and enrich religious spirituality in students while following established law regarding the separation of church and state. All along, he or she must keep in mind that their own religious spirituality and the religious spirituality of the community may affect and, to some degree, direct how these laws are interpreted, implemented, and followed by the school leader. Questions then arise: How do school leaders implement these laws? Do the community's views on religious spirituality direct these decisions? Does current policy direct these decisions? Does the religious spirituality of the school leader play a role in decision making in this arena?

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if it has any influence on the school. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious

expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased? Results were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation of artifacts at a predetermined school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader. The study reviewed current trends and past decisions regarding religious spirituality and education, looked at research related to the benefits of religion and spirituality, examined one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader, and attempted to ascertain whether the religious spirituality of this school leader influences the school.

This research was not meant to delve into the intricacies of the separation of church and state debate, but was intended to merely look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if this has any influence on the school. Observation and interviews with this leader and his staff brought forth a great deal of information, but such a small sample in this qualitative case study could not permit generalizations (Patton, 2002).

However, the study did find that the religious spirituality of the individual does not appear to lay dormant when said individual enters the public school doors, and the literature review showed that religious spirituality in the lives of individuals is inherent, wants to come out, and appears to have a positive impact. This study showed that the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school by allowing for religiously spiritual opportunities and growth. It was determined that this in turn has the possibility of enhancing the lives of students, allowing for opportunities for growth in young people in the area of their own religious spirituality and shows the real impact of how the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

Rationale for the Study

Halford (1998) defines spirituality as an attitude or a way of life that recognizes

something we might call spirit. Spirituality involves a quest for answers to life's most

meaningful questions (Palmer, 1998). Halford (1998) goes on to say, "Religion is a specific way

of exercising that spirituality and usually requires an institutional affiliation" (p. 29). This is

often exercised through a variety of moral codes and values, rules for living, faith in a higher

being, and religious artifacts. Religious spirituality would then be defined generally as an

attitude or way of life in which an individual seeks out a process for finding meaning in life

through a plan or design.

Religion, spirituality, and religious spirituality in the public schools would appear

oxymoronic given the seemingly more secular, current age; it would appear that religion,

spirituality, and religious spirituality have seemingly fallen out of favor in current times.

Secularism basically speaks to the idea that public education should be conducted without the

introduction of a religious element. The combination of religion, spirituality, and religious

spirituality and schools might be considered mutually exclusive entities better left separate. This

research is not meant to delve into the intricacies of the separation of church and state debate, but

is intended to merely look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if

this has any influence on the school.

Most people would agree that the better school leaders are those who hold to a higher moral ground and reflect goodness (Campbell, 1995). Sergiovanni (2005) speaks of virtues like hope, trust, piety, and civility that ought to be encouraged in school leaders. Campbell goes as far as to argue that these virtues can be distinguished and defined "based on the pursuit of objective truth" (p. 97). These virtues like, hope, trust, piety, and civility are often seen to be keystones to many religious faiths.

Lewis (2001) would suggest that all individuals are subject to the laws of right and wrong, whether he or she believes it or not. "Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later" (p. 6). Lewis would suggest that everyone has a moral compass that he or she functions by, whether it is a conscious world view or an ad hoc belief. In any case, it would appear that this world view seemingly drives human decision.

Bird, Ji, and Boyatt (2005) point out that one's religiosity undoubtedly affects leadership and style, but this researcher would like to ascertain how and to what degree. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased?

Religious instruction was an expected constant within public education from it's inception through the first quarter of this last century (Sass, 2007). The argument and discussion regarding whether or not it is the place of public schools to teach children on religious matters

did not really arise until the early part of the last century with landmark cases like *Tennessee vs. John Scopes* in 1925 (Sass, 2007). Puritan religious views were prominent with the earliest settlers in the United States some 400 years ago when this land began to be populated by Europeans (Sass, 2007). Looking at the laws and the classroom texts and materials used prior to the 20th century, it would appear that the lawmakers and primer creators at the time intended to ensure that children were being instructed on matters of religion (Sass, 2007).

Prior to recent times, parents expected the schools to model and reinforce the religious training at school that was present in the home (Sass, 2007). The rise of varying religious views and cultures in the United States over the past 100 years with the influx of a multicultural group of immigrant families and an ever changing view of religion, spirituality and religious spirituality has undoubtedly changed the expectations. As the world becomes increasingly diverse and secular in nature, educators have a dilemma; do they follow the community standard by training children in religious matters encouraged by the community or do they follow the seemingly more secular trend in the law when it comes to education and religion by creating a bit more sterile, secular educational environment where religious matters are locked out of the schoolhouse doors?

In the last 80+ years since *Tennessee vs. John Scopes*, numerous other court cases have been heard and numerous federal, state, and local laws pertaining to religious matters have been enacted. Interpreting what each and every law means and how it should be enforced for each individual community has proven to be quite laborious due largely to the fact that there is more than one way to interpret the Constitution (Seigler, 2003).

Prayer at graduation ceremonies is one of those gray areas where even the courts have mixed interpretations (Robinson, 2003). How does this play out in a community? For instance,

in a small rural evangelical Christian community in the Midwest where literally 100% of the students in attendance at school would adhere to the standard monotheistic Christian approach to who God is, church attendance, and to prayer, it may appear absurd to attempt or require an ecumenical and all encompassing prayer at a graduation ceremony and to ignore the community value regarding prayer. However, in a diverse community where many different religions are represented, the community standard is similarly diverse, and an ecumenical approach would be necessary and appropriate, if to occur at all.

Though the world is ever changing when it comes to matters related to religious spirituality and current laws appear to show the United States moving to a seemingly secular society, one would be negligent to assume that individual and community values could be stripped from schools. Macaulay and Barrs (1978) speak of the idea that spirituality cannot be separated from the individual. Basically, if a person is spiritual, he or she will be spiritual in all that he or she does. Decisions will be made at work or school that will be based on a moral framework. Being in a secular environment will not automatically secularize the spiritual individual. Palmer (1998) makes a similar point and argues for the value of bringing spirituality into teaching and learning. "As long as we take ourselves into the classroom, we take our spirituality with us" (p. 10). Palmer argues that students need to look at spiritual matters just as much as math, science, and reading. "When we bring forth the spirituality of teaching and learning, we help students honor life's most meaningful questions" (p. 6).

Some would argue that not teaching spirituality in schools to be inappropriate and even dangerous. Palmer (1998) states:

I have seen the price we pay for a system of education so fearful of things spiritual that it

fails to address the real issues of our lives – dispensing facts at the expense of meaning,

information at the expense of wisdom. (p. 6)

Palmer goes on to point out that "the price is a school system that alienates and dulls us, that

graduates young people who have had no mentoring in the questions that both enliven and vex

the human spirit" (p. 6). Palmer speaks of the individual human quest for connectedness and

things larger than self, of mystery, and life's purpose and meaning. Learning to engage in deeper

thoughts and conversations and being able to discuss the deep spiritual questions of life

regarding suffering, hope, and death without embarrassment are ideas that can be taught at

school. Palmer claims that if teachers merely focus on dispensing facts and information and

refuse or forgo these deeper spiritual principles, then students lose the opportunity to better learn

the general concept of learning how to think.

One cannot ignore the rich religious history of the United States when discussing matters

of religious spirituality in the current culture. Knowing that many of the earliest European

settlers came to America due to religious persecution and having knowledge of the country's

long history of tolerance and religious freedom, one would be hard pressed to remove religion in

general from public life in the United States. As stated earlier, Macaulay and Barrs (1978) argue

that spirituality cannot be isolated to one's private life; one's spirituality is part of his or her

being and is as present publicly as it is privately.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution points out that Congress will not

make laws regarding the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise of religion

(Mount, 2007). Mount goes on to report that Thomas Jefferson shed more light on this

Establishment Clause in his correspondence with the Danbury Baptists where he referenced the

Establishment Clause as an attempt at building a wall of separation between church and state, protecting each from the other.

This aforementioned wall of separation cannot be ignored, but confusion still abounds when actually applying this concept. As suggested, the spirituality of an individual cannot be separated from his or her public life (Macaulay & Barrs, 1978). Equally, the values of a community will not be stripped away due to federal worries of breaching the Establishment Clause. This wall of separation looks differently from community to community. Seigler (2003) points out that "the Establishment Clause is concerned with the relationship between government and religion and the degree to which the relational dynamics between them are constitutionally permitted or prohibited" (p. 209). Seigler goes on to say:

> Educators and administrators generally presuppose the existence of some kind of wall of separation between church and state but may not always be clear about how high or low the wall should be or what interpretive methods the Court uses to determine its height. (p. 209)

Seigler then posits:

> An understanding, therefore, of the two major interpretive methods used by the Supreme Court to determine the height of the wall could be of significant assistance to educators and administrators in identifying and analyzing the rules and reasoning of laws lodged in federal, especially Supreme Court, opinions pertaining to the Establishment Clause. (p. 209)

Seigler specifically speaks of the two major interpretive methods: original intent, interpretation based on what the Court believes the framers of the Constitution intended, and stare decisis, interpretation based on precedence.

Palmer (1998) would argue that spirituality can be present in the public schools in a benign and inoffensive manner. Palmer states, "I want neither to violate the separation of church and state nor encourage people who would impose their religious beliefs on others…I am equally passionate about not violating the deepest needs of the human soul" (p. 6).

Though, the law appears to be moving towards more and more secularization, one would be negligent to forget about the diverse religious leanings in America today. Communities have very deep seeded beliefs on religious spirituality and very clear values as to what is right and what is wrong. It is the intention of this researcher to investigate some of these beliefs and values, specifically in a school leader, and see how they may influence the school.

Statement of the Problem

As schools expand secularization and laws limiting religious expression increase, one must not forget the religious spirituality of the individual. Individual religious spirituality is still protected under the United States Constitution. And, many researchers feel that this religious spirituality should be nurtured, not discouraged in public schools. Some even speak to a spiritual renaissance in America in current times (Adkins, 1989). Multiple studies seen in the literature review show that spiritual and religious commitment directly leads to increased academic success and decreased risk taking behaviors in students. The school leader has the ability to encourage, foster, and enrich religious spirituality in students while following established law regarding the separation of church and state. All along, he or she must keep in mind that their own religious spirituality and the religious spirituality of the community may affect and, to some degree, direct how these laws are interpreted, implemented, and followed by the school leader. Questions then arise: How do school leaders implement these laws? Do the community's views

on religious spirituality direct these decisions? Does current policy direct these decisions? Does the religious spirituality of the school leader play a role in decision making in this arena?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if it had any influence on the school. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs were encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings were allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes were taught, what religious expressions were considered appropriate, how current law was interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased? Results were collected through observations, interviews, documentation of artifacts at a predetermined school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader. The study reviewed current trends and past decisions regarding religious spirituality and education, looked at research related to the benefits of religion and spirituality, examined one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader, and attempted to ascertain whether the religious spirituality of this school leader influenced the school.

Research Questions

This research was not meant to delve into the intricacies of the separation of church and state debate, but intended to merely look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if this had any influence on the school. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs were encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings were allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth

groups, clergy programs), which classes were taught, what religious expressions were considered appropriate, how current law was interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks were purchased? Essentially, does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence the school?

Definition of Terms

"All a person thinks and feels enters into everything he does, and all he does is involved in everything he thinks and feels…spirituality is intrinsic in everything that we do; our acts embody our spirituality" (Block, 2004, p. 287). Halford (1998) defines spirituality as an attitude or a way of life that recognizes something we might call spirit. Spirituality involves a quest for answers to life's most meaningful questions (Palmer, 1998). Halford (1998) goes on to say, "Religion is a specific way of exercising that spirituality and usually requires an institutional affiliation" (p. 29). This is often exercised through a variety of moral codes and values, rules for living, faith in a higher being, and religious artifacts. Religious spirituality would then be defined as an attitude or way of life in which an individual seeks out a process for finding meaning in life through a plan or design. Secular refers to a generally more sterile, non-religious or non-spiritual approach. World view refers to the lens one uses to see the world, make decisions, and the like. The school leader will refer to the building principal in most cases. Religious expression refers to those actions students and personnel participate in that have a religious tone (e.g., wearing of religious artifacts, prayer in school, sharing of religious information and materials). Student morale refers to overall student sense of confidence, usefulness, and cheerfulness. Teacher/student personal relationships refer to overall

relationships held by teachers and students. Moral growth opportunities for students refer to opportunities available for students to grow and learn moral and character development.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations. This study focused on a central phenomenon, a school leader who was known to be religiously spiritual. The scope of this study focused on this religiously spiritual leader and this leader's influence on his school.

Limitations. This study looked at one religiously spiritual school leader and this leader's influence on his school. Observation and interviews with this leader and his staff possibly brought forth a great deal of information specifically related to this case, but such a small sample would not permit generalizations (Patton, 2002). And, it is quite possible that the scope (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age) of the individuals interviewed appeared homogeneous and unbalanced. Each received information regarding interview protocol and their rights as human subjects in research. Lastly, this researcher revealed that he was clearly considered religiously spiritual. Though, this researcher intended to be unbiased and fair, his personal leanings could influence the results.

Summary

This research was not meant to delve into the intricacies of the separation of church and state, but intended to merely look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if this had any influence on the school. The study reviewed current trends and past decisions regarding religious spirituality and education, looked at research related to the benefits of religious spirituality, examined one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader, and attempted to ascertain whether the religious spirituality of a school leader influenced the school.

Macaulay and Barrs (1978) show that the private spirituality of the individual does not lay dormant when said individual enters the public school doors, and many researchers have shown that religious spirituality in the lives of individuals appears to have a positive impact. This study attempted to determine if the religious spirituality of a school leader could impact the school, possibly, according to existing research, enhancing the lives of students. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased? Essentially, does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence the school? Information from this study could lead to a better understanding of how the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school, possibly allowing for opportunities for growth in young people in the area of their own religious spirituality.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

"The field of educational leadership is in crisis" due to various reasons, including "the field's stubborn reliance on a theoretical position that is no longer useful" (Dantley, 2002, p. 334). Dantley argues that the field of education does not respect differences or change. He believes that the whole individual ought to be taught, including the spiritual. Dantley goes as far as to argue that school leaders do a disservice when they deny or disregard the spirituality of those in the public sphere. Kessler (2000) would argue that the adults have decided to exclude the spiritual dimension from education due to an inability of the adults to decide on what or how to teach it; essentially, the children end up being the losers. To deny the spiritual dimension in the public sphere "disregards elemental parts of the human existence and compels us to see ourselves as being compartmentalized, disparate, and disjointed" (Dantley, 2002, p. 350). Kessler goes on to say, "The connection among souls is ultimately what education is about" (p. 159).

A Brief Legal History

As stated earlier, The First Amendment to the United States Constitution points out that Congress will not make laws regarding the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise of religion (Mount, 2007). Mount goes on to report that Thomas Jefferson shed more light on this Establishment Clause in his correspondence with the Danbury Baptists in the early

1800s. On October 7, 1801, Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, and Stephen S. Nelson from the Danbury Baptists Association wrote to Thomas Jefferson discussing their concern with the fact that the Constitution appeared to offer religious freedom as a privilege or favor, as opposed to an immutable or inalienable right (Mount, 2007). Jefferson wrote back on January 1, 1802 and stated that religion was a private matter between man and God (Mount, 2007). Jefferson felt one's religion to be a natural right and referenced the Establishment Clause as an attempt at building a wall of separation between church and state, protecting each from the other (Mount, 2007).

There have been laws in recent history that nominally support religion like the 1990 law in Milwaukee that specified that under specific circumstances, students may attend, at no charge, private sectarian and nonsectarian schools located in Milwaukee or 1982's *Board of Education vs. Pico* decision where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that books (religious or otherwise) could not be removed from a school library because the school administrator deemed the content offensive (Sass, 2007). Robinson (2003) points out that public school staff are disallowed from promoting secularism in general as superior to a religious approach to life, being antagonistic to religion in general or a particular religious belief in particular, and must not inhibit religion.

But, up until the last century, religion was not a major discussion point for the public schools; in fact, during the 1800s, religious conflicts were related more to what version of the Bible (i.e., Catholic versus Protestant) was used in school, as opposed to whether it was Constitutional or not (Robinson, 2003). However, most recent court cases dealing with religious matters since 1925s *Tennessee vs. John Scopes* have seemingly reinforced Jefferson's wall. In 1948, The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against religious instruction in the public schools in

McCollum vs. Board of Education (Robinson, 2003). In 1954, The Supreme Court ruled against

the distribution of Bibles by outside groups like the Gideons (Robinson, 2003).

Related to prayer in schools, in 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state officials

could not compose a state prayer and require it to be recited regularly in the public schools; it

was determined to violate the First Amendment (Sass, 2007). In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court

ruled that passages from the Bible or the Lord's Prayer could not be recited in the public schools,

even when students who opposed were excused (Sass, 2007). And, in 1985, in the case of

Wallace vs. Jaffree, the U.S. Supreme Court found that silent prayer and teacher-led voluntary

prayer in public schools to violate the First Amendment (Sass, 2007). Finally, in 2000, the U.S.

Supreme Court found that a district's policy of allowing student led prayer prior to football

games to violate the Establishment Clause in the case of *Sante Fe School District vs. Doe* (Sass,

2007).

Regarding religion in general in schools, Robinson (2003) points out that "public school

teachers, principals, and boards [must] be religiously neutral" (p. 2). Robinson reports that they

may not promote a particular religion as being superior to any other, may not promote religion in

general as superior to a secular approach to life, may not be antagonistic to secularism, and must

not advance religion. Also, in 1999, the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled a local clergy in

the schools program in Texas to be unconstitutional (Robinson, 2003).

In regards to evolution, in 1968, in the case of *Epperson et al. vs. Arkansas*, the U.S.

Supreme Court found the Arkansas law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in the public

schools and universities unconstitutional (Sass, 2007). And, in 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court

struck down a Louisiana law which stated that creation science be taught along with the theory of

evolution (Sass). In 2005, in the case of *Kitzmiller vs. Dover Area School District*, the U.S.

District Court of Pennsylvania ruled that teaching intelligent design as an alternative to evolution is a violation of the First Amendment (Sass, 2007).

Though, the law appears to be moving towards more and more secularization, one would be negligent to forget about the religious spirituality in America today. Communities have very deep seeded beliefs on religious spirituality and very clear values as to what is right and what is wrong. It is the intention of this researcher to investigate some of these beliefs and values to see if they exist, specifically in a school leader, and how they may influence the school.

Measuring Spirituality and Religiosity

Spiritual health and religiosity levels can be measured with success utilizing various valid and tested scales (Fisher, Francis, & Johnson, 2000). Fisher et al. (2000) utilize four domains of wellbeing to assess spiritual health using the *Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index*, also known as the SH4DI: self, community, environment, and God. Gomez and Fisher (2003) argue that their spiritual wellness rating scale, the *Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire*, also known as the SWBQ, supports Fisher's model, shows good reliability and validity, and has an advantage over other existing spiritual well-being measures in that it is based on a broader and more empirically based conceptualization of spiritual well-being. Block (2004) argues that spirituality can be quantified and "can be measured by physical means and evaluated by an absolute standard" (p. 288).

Reiss (2000) quantifies the religiosity of his study participants based on personal rating, high desire scores for honoring family, and low desire scores for vengeance and independence. Davis and Race (2003) allude to the idea that religiosity can be measured based on the hours per week one spends in a religious institution. Francis and Katz (1992) relate religiosity to knowledge and practice of religious concepts and beliefs, such as tithing. Fisher et al. (2002)

equate religiosity with an individual's church attendance and personal prayer. In most of the aforementioned studies, religiosity is based on personal reporting, religious concepts and beliefs held by study participants, and religious practices that study participants participate in, such as personal prayer, tithing, and church attendance.

Halford (1998) argues spirituality to be an attitude or a way of life, but religion to be a specific way of exercising that spirituality, requiring an institutional affiliation. Francis and Katz (1992) similarly argue that one's religiosity is seemingly connected to institutional affiliations, religious observances, and to prayer. Fisher et al. (2002) and Francis and Johnson (1999) associate religiosity with church attendance and personal prayer.

The Positive Effects of Religious Spirituality

"All a person thinks and feels enters into everything he does, and all he does is involved in everything he thinks and feels…spirituality is intrinsic in everything that we do; our acts embody our spirituality" (Block, 2004, p. 287). Block sees the individual leader as a reflection of his or her spirit. The actions of educators will be derived from his or her world view and spiritual responsibilities and commitments (Block, 2004).

Is religious spirituality important, healthy, or positive? Davis and Race (2003) state that spending one or more hours per week in activities in religious institutions can assist children to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Reiss (2000) found that scoring highly on a religiosity scale does not relate to psychological weakness. Francis and Katz (1992) found that scoring highly on a religiosity scale is not associated with neuroticism. Good health has also been shown to correlate with higher levels of religiosity in individuals. Fisher et al. (2002) found that "older teachers who record low scores on the psychoticism scale and who practice religious faith through church attendance and personal prayer" show higher levels of spiritual health (p. 3).

Again, in most of the aforementioned studies, religiosity is based on religious concepts held by study participants and religious practices that study participants participate in, such as personal prayer, tithing, and church attendance.

Stern (2002) argues that there is a link between leadership and spirituality or spiritual development. Bird et al. (2005) discussed "the association between religiosity and student leadership" (p. 227) and found that the religiosity of the leader does indeed affect leadership style, frame, and orientation.

West-Burnham (1997) states, "One of the limitations of competence approaches to management is that they miss the holistic view of the person" (p. 237). A discussion of leadership qualities must include a discussion of one's spirit, often represented by an affiliation with a specific religion (West-Burnham, 1997). West-Burnham goes on to speak of the fact that spiritual principles and fundamental truths that have triumphed over time are necessary for self-understanding and understanding the role of these spiritual principles and fundamental truths better allows the school leader to grow, decide, and fail.

"Leadership is spiritually grounded" (West-Burnham, 1997, p. 238). West-Burnham states that what a school leader believes in and how he or she translates his or her beliefs into action will affect actions and authenticity of those actions in the school setting and further explains that school leaders require moral confidence "to act in a way that is consistent with an ethical system and is consistent over time" (p. 238). This spirituality or moral confidence will lead the school leader to make consistent, moral, and sustainable decisions over time that can be argued, justified, and understood (West-Burnham, 1997). Hence, the religiosity or spiritual world view of the leader seemingly directs decisions.

Thompson (2005) sees the spiritually grounded school leaders as those who stay focused on the higher purpose and eliminating the stress and political turmoil commonly found in the schoolhouse. Thompson sees that spiritual leadership for many school leaders has roots in a specific religious tradition, but there is seen a distinguishing factor between spirituality and institutional religion. Thompson argues that there is a "sharp distinction between sectarian proselytizing and genuine spiritual leadership" which respects "the wall of separation between church and state" (p. 26). Thompson sees the spiritually grounded leaders adhering to mindful practices such as communing with his or her God, praying, using time wisely, reflecting, sacrificing, being persistent, being compassionate, and being humble. "Without some measure of humility, there can be no" spiritual leadership (p. 28).

This humility and spiritual leadership can take many shapes. The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership in Westfield, Indiana promotes a very basic concept often found in most world religions: servitude. This organization exists specifically to encourage and promote Servant Leadership, a phrase coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s (Greenleaf Center, 2008). Greenleaf speaks of the servant-leader as a servant first; Greenleaf would argue that the leader who is first a servant makes sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served, which leads to growth, health, wisdom, freedom, autonomy, humility, trust, and service for all (Greenleaf Center, 2008). The servant-leader is a model for those under his or her charge. The servant-leader serves for the sake of serving, but sees positive outcomes in the staff working under him or her.

Sokolow (2005) argues that spirit is that "inner voice" that gives the school leader a "reason to get up each morning" and is the school leader's "reason for being alive or even for being" (p. 22). Sokolow goes on to suggest that the spirit should be nourished and not starved

due to the fact that the good work done throughout the day is due to spirit, which is the source of joy, passion, and fulfillment for the school leader. The desire to do good works and work for the community is directly related to one's spirit (Sokolow, 2005).

Dantley (2003b) states, "Spirituality is that part of our lives and community through which we make meaning and understanding of our world…[and] informs our personal and professional behavior" (p. 274). West-Burnham (1997) states, "A personal 'world view' is the basis of self-awareness, interpretation and an essential prerequisite to the process of reflection that is the key to personal learning" (p. 238). Worldview, spirituality, religiosity, religious spirituality, and belief in general are considered important ideals that affect all areas of life, personal and professional. Belief systems can be articulated and used "as a benchmark in a variety of personal and professional contexts" (p. 238). Block (2004) argues that spirituality is realized in action, deed, intention, and living. What one believes, his or her world view, will inevitably come out in what he or she does, decisions that are made, and in all areas of one's daily journey.

Dantley (2005) argues that educational leadership is in dire need of change, specifically due to changing demographics in urban schools. Dantley specifically claims that the application of "personal spirituality" and "notions of prophetic pragmatism along with the tenets of African American spirituality" can help "serve as the foundation for…progressive transformation of leadership especially in urban schools" (p. 651). Dantley (2003b) speaks of a purpose driven leadership that is based upon a spiritual dimension. Dantley (2002) goes as far as to suggest that embracing spirituality better enables school leaders to combat and strategize against moral evils such as racism, sexism, and ageism. Dantley (2003a) would agree that the public school administrator is and must see himself or herself as a moral agent, not only because the school

administrator functions within a moral institution, but also due to the fact that the school administrators' decisions have moral consequences. Because children have little control over their educational experience, it is up to the school administrator to facilitate a learning environment to best serve children; essentially, the school administrator functions here as a moral agent (Dantley, 2003a). Dantley (2003a) would also argue that "the addition of African American spirituality, in particular, adds a totally different dimension to the discussion of education leadership" (p. 6). Stewart (1999) argues that this African American spirituality is that spirit of survival or

> a desire to confront and surmount all threats to their being and existence while concurrently creating idioms of life and culture which provide them with adaptive mechanisms that reinforce their sanity, affirm their wholeness, and establish their spiritual and ontological location in American society. (p. 3)

Bridges (2001) suggests that African American spirituality teaches people a resilience to triumph over evil and allows people to transcend limitations placed upon them from racism. All this to suggest that there is a good deal of research arguing that spirituality is positive and beneficial.

The Religiously Spiritual Person in Everyday Life

Macaulay and Barrs (1978) speak of the idea that spirituality cannot be separated from the individual. Basically, if a person is spiritual, he or she will be spiritual in all that he or she does. Decisions will be made at work that will be based on a moral framework. Being in a secular environment will not automatically secularize the spiritual individual. Oladele (1998) speaks of her own spiritual journey that drives her teaching style; she understands that academic pursuits and spiritual growth support one another and need to grow together. Halford (1998) states that spirituality is a very normal part of most lives and ought to be addressed intellectually

and objectively within the school setting. Oladele states, "Spirit is at the heart of meaningful education" (p. 62). Oladele speaks of how she had rich literary opportunities available to her revolving around the Bible, folktales, and poetry, and basically learned to read as her mother afforded her these rich opportunities. And, "everything my mother taught me was sustained by my elementary school" (p. 62). Oladele speaks of how she then brought these same values to her classroom as a new teacher, lifting spirits, self esteem, and expectancy.

McDowell (2008) argues that the teaching community is more fearful than it needs to be when it comes to religious spirituality in schools and that the school leader has a lot of control in how religious laws are interpreted. Similarly, Halford (1998) suggests that educators ought not be afraid to address issues of faith and spirit; they just need to do it in an objective, educational fashion without proselytizing. Adkins (1989) argues that spirituality is a major part of the lives of people in the world today, and education would be smart to be a part of the revival of spirit seen in culture today.

Robinson (2003) argues that school leaders have a bit of leverage when it comes to matters of religious spirituality. School leaders have the legal capacity to deny extracurricular programming before or after school, as long as it denies all extracurricular programming (Robinson, 2003). School leaders have the legal capacity to deny after hours usage of the school building, as long as it denies all organizations (Robinson, 2003). Religion classes are still allowed under current law, as long as equal time is given to all religions, and no one religion is singled out as better than the others (Robinson, 2003). In fact, many school districts in Indiana allot for religious education to occur during the school day with parental permission, as long as the teachings do not happen on school property (McDowell, 2008).

Students also have a bit of leverage when it comes to expressing his or her religious spirituality in the school setting (Robinson, 2003). Students can pray in many settings within the school building, but school leaders, teachers, and coaches are forbidden from leading or directing these prayers (Robinson, 2003). Related to student organizations, "If a school has as few as one extra-curricular student-led and student-organized group, then students have a legal right to organize a Bible or other religious club" (p. 1). Students still have rights when it comes to religious clothing and symbols (Robinson, 2003). Questions then arise: How do school leaders implement these laws? Do community values direct these decisions? Does the religious spirituality of the school leader play a role in decision making in this arena?

Assets

Research has supported the notion that assets in young people, like positive peer influence, time at home, parent involvement, extra-curricular activities, and spirituality, directly relate to academic success and lower levels of risk behavior (Scales, 2000). Abbott-Chapman and Denholm (2001) argue that religious beliefs and commitment inhibit risk taking behavior in young people, like risky sexual behavior, drug and alcohol use, smoking, pornography use, gambling, poor eating choices, hitch hiking, running away from home, shoplifting, risky driving behavior, and general health choices. Oman, Vesely, and Aspy (2005) linked higher assets in children to lower levels of risky sexual behavior. Scales, Benson, Leffert, and Blyth (2000) found a relationship between developmental assets in secondary students and thriving indicators, such as school success, leadership, physical health, helping others, and overcoming adversity. In their study, McMahon, Browning, and Rose-Colley (2001) saw correlations amongst increases in parental involvement and volunteerism and marked decreases in student truancy. Reininger et al. (2005) saw similar correlations between low student risk scores and high numbers of assets. Fry

(2000) found that troubled students need high numbers of assets to thrive. Reininger et al. specifically saw correlations between student assets and student behavior that included smoking, drinking alcohol, and having multiple sex partners. "Self / peer values regarding behaviors was the asset that was most predictive in determining engagement in risky behaviors for adolescent African American and white males and females" (Reininger et al., 2005, p. 158). Essentially, the personal "values (general health values, religious beliefs) a youth possesses predicts his or her engagement in health-compromising behaviors" (p. 158). Schools have the opportunity to build on these values that essentially protect kids. This can be done by providing youth with opportunities to see other students and themselves being reinforced for possessing health-protecting values, creating positive or religious peer groups, and teachers and the school in general showing support towards the youth (Reininger et al., 2005).

Assets Pertaining to Spirituality, Religiosity, and Religious Spirituality

Specifically regarding assets related to spirituality, religion, and religious spirituality, there has been a great deal of research as well. "Religiously committed urban children performed better on most academic measures than their less religious counterparts, even when controlling for SES, race, and gender" (Jeynes, 2003, p. 44). "Religiosity was found to be a strong predictor of women's involvement in HIV-related risky behaviors, with the greatest risk reported by women who were the least religious" (Elifson, Klein, & Sterk, 2003, p. 47). An Australian study by Abbott-Chapman and Denholm (2001) found that people with greater amounts of religious belief and commitment clearly show inhibitions towards risk taking behavior. Lifshitz and Glaubman (2002) found "that religious students are more willing than non-religious students to consider the inclusion of people with four types of disabilities and have a greater sense of efficacy for dealing with all types of disabilities" (p. 405). Dunn (2005) found

a relationship between high levels of religiosity and low levels of poor alcohol drinking habits and smoking.

Suris, Nebot, and Parera (2005) created an assessment tool linking higher levels of religiosity, among other factors, to lower levels of risk taking behavior. Palmer (1998) speaks of program in his area that allows teachers to retreat and reflect on their spirituality and teaching. Teachers who have participated in this program report less burn out and more of a likelihood of flourishing. These same teachers feel that they are better teachers, better citizens, and better able to respond to their students in life-giving ways (Palmer, 1998). Palmer finally posits, "Evoking the spirit in public education is to bring teachers together to talk not about curriculum, technique, budget, or politics, but about the deepest questions of our teaching lives" (p. 11). Baer and Carper (1998) state:

> Given the growing concern about juvenile violence, the awareness that deeply religious people live longer and enjoy better health than do thoroughly secular Americans, and the belief that honest and personal integrity are at low levels in many young people today, we are not surprised that educators are showing a new interest in religion, spirituality, and character development. (p. 33)

Benefits to Promoting Religiously Spiritual Matters Within the School

As stated earlier, Halford (1998) suggests that religion ought to be taught in schools from a historical and sociological mindset. Halford goes on to suggest that students should be taught to think, reason, and work out intellectually what he or she believes and why. This can easily be initiated through the school without fear of proselytizing. It is really a matter of how spirituality is defined (Haynes, 1998). Haynes argues that "how public school educators define spirituality

and in what context they present it to students may determine its acceptance [and its constitutionality] among parents and religious leaders" (p. 24). Kessler (1998) states:

> The First Amendment actually protects students' freedom of expression of religious beliefs…but in our fear and confusion about violating the law, we have actually suppressed students' freedom and the rich exchange that comes from acknowledging and respecting this important part of their lives. (p. 52)

Further, Kessler states, drugs, sex, gang violence, and even suicide may be both a search for connection and meaning and an escape from the pain of not having a genuine source of spiritual fulfillment. Therefore, Kessler encourages spirituality in secular schools.

Kessler (1998) suggests that adolescents are on a quest to find answers to the profound questions in life. It could be argued that these questions can rarely be answered without using philosophical, religious, or spiritual language. Kessler states that open discourse related to this quest regarding the meaning of life should be encouraged and "can be supported by encouraging spirituality in classrooms" (p. 49).

Making spiritual experiences "available to every student could be an effective strategy for preventing violence and other social pathologies" (Kessler, 1998, p. 159). Kessler argues that "such experiences not only nourish students' spiritual development, they also help them transcend prejudice, increase academic motivation, improve focus and cooperation, foster creativity, and keep more kids in school" (p. 159). It might be suggested that the school leader and the specific community standards could have a lot to do with how these aforementioned ideas of spirituality in the classroom come to fruition.

Baer and Carper (1998) discuss how public schools can address spiritual matters in the school setting, at the same time honoring religious freedoms by allowing for released time.

McDowell (2008) reports that many Indiana schools allow for release time with parent permission. Baer and Carper feel that any other approach to be watered down, biased, or favoring the beliefs of the instructor. For instance, Horace Mann argued for nonsectarian schools that just so happened to be "virtually identical with his own Unitarianism" (Baer & Carper, 1998, p. 34). Healey (1962) argues a similar point related to Thomas Jefferson by pointing out that the religious worldview that Jefferson thought appropriate for public schools just happened to correspond exactly to his own. In Scherer's (1998) interview with Rabbi Harold Kushner, she suggests that there is an appropriate way to address spiritual concerns in the school environment. Scherer goes on to say that there are general, core values that can be taught in the classroom that can assist children in growing spiritually.

Suhor (1998) discusses a holistic educational philosophy that brings spirituality, along with all other areas, together to advance dialogue about worthwhile human experiences. "A growing body of empirical research…supports spiritually oriented teaching and learning" (p. 13). Suhor goes on to suggest that teaching religion does not need to be extreme right or left; religion and spirituality are naturally present in many areas of study and can be a rich addition to classroom studies. Scherer (1998) agrees and suggests that schools already emphasize a number of spiritual values: commitment to truth, commitment to accuracy, commitment to responsibility, timeliness, humility, respect, cooperation, helping others, justice, and understanding. Scherer also states that most teachers agree that religion can be successfully taught in schools, but "we cannot advocate one religious view no matter how sincerely we hold it" (p. 19). In essence, teachers need not be afraid to teach religion if the content is pertinent to the subject matter and free of judgment and bias.

Reasons to Study Religious Spirituality Within School Leadership

Why study religious spirituality within school leadership? First, the research suggests that it affects decision making. Thompson (2005) suggests that religiously spiritual qualities, like compassion, persistence, and sacrifice all play a major role in the work of the school leader. Reiss (2000) found that more religious people valued honor more, place a much lower value on vengeance, value raising a family more highly, and place a higher value on order. Osmo and Landau (2003) studied the impact religiosity had on social workers and decisions they made. "The religiosity of religious social workers may influence their ethical decision making in situations with religious connotations" (p. 359). So, a leader's religious leanings affect the decisions made on behalf of the school (Osmo & Landau, 2003). Secondly, spirituality affects why people choose to be teachers, actual teaching strategies, and educational goals (Block, 2004). And, leaders are examples to all students and staff under his or her charge (Sokolow, 2005). Sokolow (2005) goes on to suggest, "As leaders, we are role models for the expansion of goodness in ourselves and in the world" (p. 23). Therefore, school leaders ought to take seriously what example is portrayed and modeled to all of the mindful and watching eyes of the students, parents, and staff. Finally, it appears that one's religious spirituality may affect general health and wellbeing in a positive manner and lessen risky behavior.

Fry (2000) refers to the Search Institute in Minneapolis and how this organization has defined 40 developmental assets that the research has shown that children need for them to flourish, like family support, positive school climate, a sense of feeling safe, involvement in creative activities, conflict resolution skills, caring neighbors, relationships with adults, opportunity to give service to others, a sense of purpose, and a spiritual base. It is clear that the school can quite easily offer many of these developmental assets to children in the school setting,

such as positive school climate, a sense of feeling safe, and involvement in creative activities. However, the school can also fortify less obvious assets like giving students the opportunity to give service to others, offer a sense of purpose, and offering a platform to build a spiritual base. One would be hard pressed to find an educator who is not willing to do everything possible to enrich and enable the lives of students. Fry states that the presence of assets is a critical necessity to the success of children. This concept is based on Search Institute's premise that high numbers of assets occurring in the lives of children will correlate with lower risk taking behaviors like alcohol use, drug use, and risky sexual behavior and higher positive outcomes like academic success (McMahon et al., 2001). "Children are profoundly affected by their experiences…[and] imitate the world around them – including the different ways of being and doing modeled by the important adults in their lives" (Peplau, 2005, p. 14). Peplau goes on to say, "Young people are more apt to develop strong guiding principles that help them make healthy life choices when adults model positive beliefs and actions" (p. 14).

Scales et al. (2000) show in their work a clear relation between high numbers of developmental assets and high numbers of thriving indicators, while Scales (2000) shows a relation between high numbers of developmental assets and low numbers of high risk behaviors, such as substance abuse, antisocial behavior, violence, school problems, depression, suicide, and risky sexual behaviors. Scales speaks of assets that showed to better promote a range of thriving indicators, such as helping others, overcoming adversity, and maintaining one's physical health. Some of these assets are often more readily found in schools where religious spirituality is encouraged: amount of time a child spends in youth programs, number of other adult relationships a child has, training in resistance skills, and teachings in the areas of integrity, responsibility, caring, and equality (Scales, 2000).

The Constitution does not forbid religious spirituality in the public school setting. It just requires that it be done in a neutral manner that does not involve proselytizing (Halford, 1998).

Summary

This researcher hopes to determine if the religious spirituality of a public school leader has any bearing on the school. The current research essentially suggests that religious spirituality is positive and brings forth constructive attributes in youth (better grades, better overall health), lessens negative attributes in youth (risky sexual behavior, drug and alcohol use, overall risky behavior), correlates to good decision making, and has overall positive side effects. Research also shows that the private religious spirituality of the individual does not lay dormant when said individual enters the public school doors, and the literature review also shows that religious spirituality in the lives of individuals is inherent, wants to come out, and appears to have a positive impact.

This study attempts to determine if the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school, possibly enhancing the lives of students. Information gleaned from this study will lead to a better understanding of how the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school, allow for opportunities for growth in young people in the area of their own religious spirituality, and potentially raise awareness of the potential impact of how the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which

textbooks are purchased? Essentially, does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence the school?

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The review of literature revealed that spirituality is recognized and accepted as an important dimension of life, and is exercised frequently across the American demographic. Macaulay and Barrs (1978) point out clearly that spirituality cannot be separated from the individual. Persons express their spirituality in many settings including the workplace, the Church, and the classroom. In the context of education, religion and spirituality in general and religious spirituality in particular are often instrumental in helping students define themselves both as private and public persons. It has been argued persuasively in the literature, that the best interests of our public school students would be improperly served by neglecting their spirituality.

Current research indicates that the role of the school in supporting the home's religious values has changed (Sass, 2007). However, abandoning religion altogether in the school setting is unnecessary and possibly dangerous (Palmer, 1998). It would be negligent to ignore the rich religious history in America.

Many researchers agree with Scherer (1998) when she suggests that schools already emphasize a number of religiously spiritual values: commitment to truth, commitment to accuracy, commitment to responsibility, timeliness, humility, respect, cooperation, helping others, justice, and understanding. Scherer also states that most teachers agree that religion can

be successfully taught in schools, but "we cannot advocate one religious view no matter how sincerely we hold it" (p. 19). In essence, teachers need not be afraid to teach religion if the content is pertinent to the subject matter and free of judgment and bias. The Constitution does not forbid religious spirituality in the public school setting. It just requires that teaching be done in a neutral manner that does not involve proselytizing (Halford, 1998).

Current research indicates different approaches and responses of school personnel when confronted with a decision regarding religious spirituality in public schools. Campbell (1995) would argue that the better school leaders hold to values that most would consider good. Bird et al. (2005) speaks to the fact that one's religiosity definitely affects leadership style. And, Palmer (1998) points out that spirituality helps kids. Fisher et al. (2002) argue that spirituality lends itself to good health.

This research is not meant to delve into the intricacies of the separation of church and state debate, but is intended to merely look at the religious spirituality within a public school leader and to ascertain if this has any influence on the school. Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased? Essentially, does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence the school?

Information collected related to questions and scenarios created to allow the school leader and his staff to form responses for situations and through observation in the school environment.

To accomplish this data collection, this researcher sought to answer the following question: How does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence the school?

This study is a qualitative study using a case study strategy in order to explore, in depth, a predetermined school where religious spirituality is known to be present in the school leader. The study reviewed current trends and past decisions regarding religious spirituality and education, looked at research related to the benefits of religious spirituality, examined one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader, and attempted to ascertain whether the religious spirituality of a school leader influenced the school.

"A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Merriam points out that this bounded system is, in essence, "a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p. 40). A case study involves the researcher exploring "in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). "The cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (Cresswell, 2003, p. 15). Case studies can be quite descriptive and allow the researcher to get very close to the subject in a natural setting (Merriam, 2009).

In this research, this researcher interviewed the school leader and some of his staff, observed the environment, and documented noticeable artifacts related to religious spirituality. Interviews were tape recorded, observations were well documented, noticeable artifacts were logged, and all this took place on six separate days over a period of approximately three weeks in September of 2009.

Participants

This study looked at one religiously spiritual school leader and this leader's influence on

his school. Observation and interviews with this leader and his staff brought forth a great deal of

information specifically related to this case, but such a small sample would not permit

generalizations (Patton, 2002). The study reviewed current trends and past decisions regarding

religious spirituality and education, looked at research related to the benefits of religious

spirituality, examined one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the

school leader, and attempted to ascertain whether the religious spirituality of a school leader

influenced the school. The researcher interviewed the school leader and some of his staff,

observed the environment, and documented noticeable artifacts related to religious spirituality.

Procedure

The researcher observed in the environment where a central phenomenon was known to

exist, a school leader who was known to be religiously spiritual. The scope of this study focused

on this religiously spiritual leader and this leader's influence on his school. The researcher

observed the environment, interviewed the leader and some of his staff, and documented

noticeable artifacts related to religious spirituality in the school, and all this took place on six

separate days over a period of approximately three weeks in September of 2009.

Instrumentation

The school leader and some of his staff were interviewed in their home school district.

The researcher took arduous notes during the interviews to analyze afterwards. These interviews

were tape recorded for analysis after the interviews took place. The researcher asked questions

and presented scenarios in an attempt to gain information regarding the religious spirituality of

the school leader and its influence on the school. The questions and scenarios were developed

based on information gathered in the literature review. Five overarching themes found in the

recent literature helped to drive the questions and scenarios. First, one's religious spirituality can

be quantified. Secondly, religious spirituality is generally seen as a positive attribute in people.

Thirdly, religiously spiritual people statistically have a better quality of life (e.g., better health,

fewer risk taking behaviors). Next, the school staff have the ability to present religious and/or

spiritual material to students in a non-proselytizing and Constitutional manner. Lastly, school

leaders may have an enormous role in allowing religious spirituality to flourish or not based on

decisions he or she makes for his or her school based on his or her knowledge of policy and law,

personal religious spirituality, and community standards; thus, potentially enhancing the lives of

students. These overarching themes were used as the basis for the development of the interview

questions and scenarios.

Because this study is qualitative in nature, the researcher understood that the categories

listed would not envelop all experiences that school leaders may encounter. However, a case

study approach allowed for a long term study in this specific school where a school leader who

was known to be religiously spiritual was present. Interviews with this leader and some of his

staff, observation, and documentation of noticeable artifacts related to religious spirituality on six

separate days over a period of approximately three weeks in September of 2009.

Data Analysis

The data in this study was qualitatively analyzed which allowed for data collection and

data interpretation to possibly occur simultaneously (Creswell, 2003). Data was coded based on

the categories that emerged as the researcher gathered data. Thematic codes were assigned after

the emergent categories were seen during analysis of data. Using the results of the literature

review, the speculated categories that emerged were: a) school leader's personal religious

spirituality, b) community religious spirituality, c) decision making that the school leader encounters regularly that involves religious spirituality in the school, d) decision making that school leader encounters regularly that involves personal religious spirituality related to curriculum and programming.

Establishing Validity and Reliability

"All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner" (Merriam, 2009, p. 209). Merriam goes on to posit that "being able to trust research results is especially important…because practitioners intervene in people's lives" (p. 209).

"Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality" (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). It was the intent of this researcher to share valid and reliable results in an ethical manner. One way this was accomplished was through rigorous conduction through interviews, observation, and documentation of artifacts in the environment. This triangulation, use of multiple methods in this case, is "the most well known strategy to shore up the internal validity of a study" (p. 215).

"Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated" (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). "Reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static, nor is what many experience necessarily more reliable than what one person experiences" (p. 221). Merriam points out that "the more important question for qualitative research is whether the results are consistent with the data collected. Merriam ponders whether reliability should even be considered in qualitative research. Merriam suggests that "if the findings of a study are consistent with the data presented, the study can be considered dependable" (p. 222).

"External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). Although, this generalization "in the statistical sense…cannot occur in qualitative research, that's not to say that nothing can be learned from a qualitative study" (p. 224). "In qualitative research, a single case…is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (p. 224). Observation, interviews, and documentation of artifacts can possibly bring forth a great deal of information specifically related to this case, but such a small sample will not permit generalizations (Patton, 2002). Merriam also speaks of rich, thick descriptions that purposefully seek "variation or diversity in sample selection to allow for a greater range of application of the findings" (p. 229). This was also be attempted in this case, and can enhance the external validity of the study (Merriam, 2009).

Merriam (2009) puts a larger emphasis on the ethics of the investigator and on his or her professional integrity, intellectual rigor, methodological competence, and presentation of self. "To a large extent, the validity and reliability of a study depend upon the ethics of the investigator" (Merriam, 2009, p. 228).

Merriam (2009) points out other strategies for promoting validity and reliability. She speaks to the idea of adequate engagement in data collection. In this case, interviews were tape recorded, observations were well documented, noticeable artifacts were logged, and all this occurred on six separate days over a period of approximately three weeks in September of 2009.

Secondly, Merriam (2009) speaks of the researcher's position or reflexivity. This involves "critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, worldviews, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation" (p. 229). This researcher pointed out that it was quite possible that the scope (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age)

of the individuals to be interviewed appeared homogeneous and unbalanced. This researcher

spoke to limitations involving the human factor and confidentiality as well. This researcher

revealed that he would clearly be considered religiously spiritual. Though, this researcher

intended to be unbiased and fair, his personal leanings may have influenced the results.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter summarized the methodology that this researcher used to look

at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if this had any influence on

the school. The methodology was qualitative using a case study approach. The researcher

looked for emerging patterns related to decision-making during in person/audio-taped interviews,

observation, and documentation of artifacts in the school environment. Presentation of the

results and analysis of the data appear in Chapter 4, along with demographic information.

Chapter 5 provides discussion on the data analysis of the emergent themes, speculated and

unanticipated. Secondly Chapter 5 details the limitations of this study. Thirdly, Chapter 5

provides implications and outlines ideas for future research, and closes with a conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Results and Data Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative study was to look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if it had any influence on the school. This was attempted by studying at one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader.

In the context of education, religion and spirituality in general and religious spirituality in particular are often instrumental in helping students define themselves both as private and public persons. It has been argued persuasively in the literature, that the best interests of our public school students would be improperly served by neglecting their spirituality.

Chapter 4 presents and analyzes findings from interviews with the school leader, five certified teachers, and five non-certified staff at the school where the study occurred. Chapter 4 also details the demographics of the school and the community that this school resides in and information about the school and the community that this school resides in that was gathered through observation and documentation of artifacts in the school environment and community. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses emergent themes, speculated and unanticipated.

Speculated themes that were anticipated to emerge were: a) school leader's personal religious spirituality, b) community religious spirituality, c) decision making that the school leader encounters regularly that involves religious spirituality in the school, d) decision making that school leader encounters regularly that involves personal religious spirituality related to

curriculum and programming. Unanticipated themes that emerged were: a) school staff's

personal religious spirituality, b) decision making that the school staff encounters regularly that

involves religious spirituality in the school that is allowed to occur due to the school leader

allowing it, c) decision making that the school staff encounters regularly that involves personal

religious spirituality related to curriculum and programming that is allowed to occur due to the

school leader allowing it, d) lack of knowledge of school policy.

Data analysis provided insight into the research question: Does the religious spirituality

of a school leader influence the school?

Participants

The school studied was a rural elementary school in central Indiana, which was

surrounded by a larger rural community. The community reported a population of 859 people in

2005 with an average age of 39.8 years old (IDcide, 2009). Ninety-seven percent of the

population was reported to be Caucasian in 2005 (IDcide). The principal (P) of the elementary

school, the focus of this study, shared that this community was served by a town marshal, a

deputy marshal, and a volunteer fire department.

Observation in the community showed a community with a small downtown with two

churches, two taverns, two banks, a few fast food restaurant options, a grain elevator, a fire

station, a community center, a rock quarry, a generator exchange corporation, an auto repair

shop, a library, a cemetery dating back to the middle of the 19th century, a storage facility, a

realty organization, a hair salon, a bakery shop, and approximately three civic organizations.

The homes were mostly older homes. There were also two apartment complexes, a retirement

home, a nursing home, and a mobile home park. P reported that the community was

predominantly blue collar and agricultural in nature with many locals working at the generator

exchange corporation, in surrounding towns, or in the agricultural industry. P also reported that the community had been getting smaller, losing population over the years.

There was also noticeable information gathered while observing in the greater community. While observing in the greater community, it was noted that there were three religiously themed brochures/handouts in the front office of the district offices. Combined membership at the two local churches showed membership totals at 591 members, approximately 69% of the total population of the town. There were three homes listed for sale and one for rent. It was reported by P that one of the local taverns was known to give discounts to civic organizations after meetings and to the local churches after Sunday services. P reported that the community really valued the local school, and this was brought out by members of the Parent Teacher Organization at a recent meeting. P reported that the superintendent was present and reassured the members that there was no plan to close the school. P reported that fears had abounded about a possible school closure due to a report supplied to the district in recent years showing that the school lacks economic purpose due to low numbers. P reported that the current building had been a school in the community since 1928 and also noted that the first school was erected in this community in 1876.

The elementary school being studied was a kindergarten through sixth grade building and was classified as a one section school, meaning that there was one teacher per grade. The school showed a total enrollment of 173 students in the 2008-2009 school year according to the Indiana Department of Education (2009). Besides having one teacher per grade, P reported that there was also a number of other staff available to students in the building. Special education, art, music, instrumental music, physical education, reading recovery, speech therapy, nursing services, library services, Title I instruction, remediation services, food service, custodial

services, transportation services, psychological services, and counseling services were all available within the school as well according to P. P also reported that there were many volunteers who provided services to students in the school, and there was a very active and helpful PTO. P finally reported on a number of extracurricular opportunities available to students. Students could participate in the Presidential Fitness Program, art contests, track, volleyball, football, basketball, field day, Christmas programming, character building class, after school religious education opportunities, spring musical, multiple spelling bees, Math Bowl, and Battle of the Books.

Most recent testing showed the school being studied to be above the state average (Indiana Department of Education, 2009). The Indiana Department of Education showed that in the previous four years, the school was reported to be exemplary for the 2004-2005 school year, commendable in the 2005-2006 school year, showing academic progress in the 2006-2007 school year, and on academic watch in the 2007-2008 school year; ISTEP scores showed declining scores over the last five years, but scores were always above the state's average. Forty percent of the population was reported to be on free or reduced lunch (Indiana Department of Education, 2009). The Indiana Department of Education reported that the school had 80% of its students pass the math section in the most recently reported ISTEP results. On the language portion, 67% passed. Approximately 15% fewer students on free or reduced lunch passed the language portion, but only 2% fewer students on free or reduced lunch passed the math portion. Forty percent of special education students passed the math, and approximately 13% passed the language. P noted that the school received the School Improvement Award on six different occasions and had received the Four Star School Award five times.

The most recent school improvement plan for this school shares four goals for improvement. The first was regarding increasing reading achievement. The second spoke to increasing math scores. Even thought the Indiana Department of Education showed that the school's attendance had hovered around 97% for the last 10 years, the third school improvement goal involved increasing attendance rates. The fourth laid out a plan to make the school environment more positive. Regarding increasing reading and math, the school improvement plan laid out how the school was going to improve through the use of computer software, goal setting, student research opportunities, and weekly tests. Attendance rate improvement was going to be increased through setting an emergency plan for each student, making parent contact to confirm each absence, and through a reward system for those students showing good or perfect attendance. Positive school environment was going to be improved via consistent running of drills, conflict resolution programming, policy consistency, and family involvement at the school.

The mission listed on the school improvement plan spoke to collaboration and learning in order to assist students to succeed. The vision spoke to the idea that the school must have a clear sense of the goals needed to succeed, must have the characteristics of the school it wants to become, must have strong leadership who supports all and participates in very intentional decisions for the school, must be aware of what contributions are necessary of each stakeholder, must show attention to individual student needs, must be a safe, positive, and healthy environment, and must be aware of and utilize community partners. Teacher qualities that were listed in the school improvement plan as needing to be present were inviting, helpful, collaborative, committed, and positive. It also reported that teachers must incorporate multiple

methods into their teaching, participate in professional development, and involve parents in the educational process.

While observing in the building, there was also noticeable information gathered as well. A schedule of events posted in the hall showed a class for character building for second to fifth graders on Tuesday afternoons. Student displayed work where students were asked to report on their favorite hero, book, and summer activity showed nine responses referring to a Christian writer, Christian book, or Christian activity (i.e., Christian concert, church camp, etc.). It was noted that at least eight of the rooms observed had religious books, sayings, pictures, and figurines displayed.

P's office had a picture of Jesus displayed and two religious/Biblical quotations displayed. Certified Teacher 4 (C4) had a prayer posted in her classroom. Non-Certified Staff 5 (NC5) had a Bible verse displayed and at least 17 books with varying religious themes on the shelves in her area that is utilized by students. There were also Bibles, religiously oriented books, and religious videos displayed that were offered to children to borrow. NC3 had a Bible on her computer in her area and reported that all of the individuals in the school district in her discipline do this because healing is also spiritual; students do report to her area regularly. NC1 had a religious figurine at her work area that was visible to all who entered the front office. C5 had a Christian author's quotation displayed in her classroom. The teacher's workroom had information posted for all staff regarding release time for religious education programs and questions and answers regarding religion in the public school curriculum. The professional development cabinet in the front office had varying materials for teachers to check out or use as resources. Many of those materials were written by Christian authors and covered religious

themes. Overall, the grounds were clean, well kept, and free of graffiti and trash. Over half of the cars in the parking lot had a license plate referencing God.

The participants were the school principal (P), the object of the study, and five of his certified teachers (C1 to C5) and five of his non-certified staff (NC1 to NC5). P, one of the certified teachers, and one of the non-certified staff were male. The remaining eight were female. Six of the participants had worked in the building for 8-13 years, three had been there for 1-3 years, and one had been there for 23 years. P had worked there for 12 years. The participants were interviewed using the questions and scenarios in Appendix D. Knowledge and answers varied to some degree, but common themes emerged.

P reported that he definitely would consider himself a spiritual person. He reported, "This means that I attempt to be obedient to spiritual laws and believe that Christ died for my sins and allows for grace." He wished he were more spiritual and read his Bible more. He also reported that he felt that "life can often feel meaningless." He also stated that there was room to ask questions and that it was important that people understand why they are here. P reported that he attempted to live this out in his personal and professional life. P reported that he attended a local Protestant Wesleyan church approximately once or twice a week. He gave money to this church regularly and prayed continually. His prayers were simple and honest.

C1 was a male certified teacher who had been teaching at the school for eight years. He considered himself a spiritual person, referencing his belief that his "sins are paid for by Christ dying on the cross." He believed that "God spoke to His people directly in the Old Testament and through Christ in the New Testament." He tried to focus on being compassionate, loving, and relational. He attended a local Protestant Quaker church approximately once or twice a week. He gave money to this church regularly and prayed often.

C2 was a female certified teacher who had been teaching at the school for one year. She considered herself to be a spiritual person, meaning, "I speak to God regularly, realize that what I do affects others, and want to do things that are pleasing to God." She attended a local Protestant Christian Church approximately once or twice a week. She gave money to this church regularly and prayed regularly/daily.

C3 was a female certified teacher who had been teaching at the school for 10 years. She considered herself to be a spiritual person. This meant to her simply that she had a "personal relationship with Jesus." She attended a local Protestant Church of Christ approximately once or twice a week. She prayed approximately 30 times weekly and gave money to her local church regularly.

C4 was a female certified teacher who had been teaching at the school for 12 years. She considered herself a spiritual person, meaning, "I believe in God and believe that it is important that I set a Christian example." She attended a local Protestant Christian Church approximately once or twice weekly. She prayed as much as she could (e.g., on the way to work, evenings, before meals, whenever she has a free moment). She gave money to her church regularly.

C5 was a female certified teacher who had been teaching at the school for 13 years. She considered herself a spiritual person due to her "relationship with Jesus Christ" and her "decision to do His will and show others love." She prayed several times a day, some days more often than others. She attended a local Protestant Quaker Church approximately once or twice a week. She gave money to her church on a regular basis.

NC1 was a female staff member who worked primarily in the front office area. She had been employed by the school for three years. She attended a local Protestant Quaker Congregation and considered herself a spiritual person based on her "relationship with Christ."

She attended church approximately twice weekly, gave money to her church regularly, and prayed continually (e.g., meals, bedtime, as led).

NC2 was a female staff member who worked in a classroom. She was a certified teacher, but functioned in a non-certified support role in the school. She pulled students out to work with them in small groups. She had been employed by the school for one year. She attended a local Protestant Brethren Church and considered herself a spiritual person. She stated, "Spirituality to me means that I seek out a greater good, unity, and people of similar yolk." She attended her church approximately twice or thrice weekly, prayed daily, and gave money regularly to her church body.

NC3 was a female staff member who primarily worked in the front office area. She saw students regularly in her position. She had been employed by this school for 11 years and attended a local Protestant Quaker Congregation. She considered herself a spiritual person based on her decision to follow Christ daily. She stated, "Christ is the light of my life." She attended church approximately once or twice weekly, prayed often, and gave money regularly to her church.

NC4 was a male staff member who worked throughout the building on a daily basis. He had been employed by the school for nine years. He did not attend a local church due to his belief that "church does not save you." He reported, "A person can be spiritual without belonging to a church." He considered himself a spiritual person, meaning, "I read my Bible regularly, believe that Jesus was the only perfect man, and pray." He reported that he prayed in an ongoing fashion regularly. He reported that he did go to church at one time, but had a bad experience with the Christian Pastor. He did not give money to a local church organization regularly due to the fact that he did not attend a church.

NC5 was a female staff member who worked in her own classroom and had been employed at the school for 23 years. She saw small groups to entire classrooms of children on a regular basis throughout the school day. She attended a local Protestant Wesleyan Church and considered herself a spiritual person because she believed "in Christ, the Trinity, and Heaven." She attended her church once or twice a week, prayed continually, and gave money to her local church regularly. Table 1 provides condensed demographic information on the participants.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Years	Church	Prayer	Giving	Spiritual
P	Male	12	Wesleyan (1-2)	Continual	Yes	Yes
C1	Male	8	Quaker (1-2)	Good Amount	Yes	Yes
C2	Female	1	Christian (1-2)	Daily	Yes	Yes
C3	Female	10	Church of Christ (1-2)	Often	Yes	Yes
C4	Female	12	Christian (1-2)	Daily	Yes	Yes
C5	Female	13	Quaker (1-2)	Daily	Yes	Yes
NC1	Female	3	Quaker (1-2)	Continual	Yes	Yes
NC2	Female	1	Brethren (2-3)	Daily	Yes	Yes
NC3	Female	11	Quaker (1-2)	All the time	Yes	Yes
NC4	Male	9	None	Ongoing	No	Yes
NC5	Female	23	Wesleyan (1-2)	Continual	Yes	Yes

All but one of the interviewees noted that they regularly attended and donated financially to a Protestant Christian Church, and all but one referenced Jesus Christ or God in reference to

their answer regarding why they deemed themselves spiritual people. All of the participants

reported praying regularly (i.e., continually, ongoing, all the time, daily, often, good amount).

Themes

After reviewing the field notes and transcripts of the participant interviews, five themes

emerged: a) The school leader's personal religious spirituality is evident and invoked daily in his

everyday professional tasks (e.g., vocabulary, managing style), b) The school leader's personal

religious spirituality guides decisions making in the school environment in multiple areas (e.g.,

curriculum, programming, employee hiring), c) The community has given the school leader de

facto permission to let his personal religious spirituality be invoked in everyday tasks and used

as a guide in daily decision making in the school, d) The school leader has an intentional

ignorance of the law and policy that appears to be encouraged by his superiors, and e) The

religious spirituality of the staff is evident and invoked daily in his or her everyday professional

tasks (e.g., vocabulary, managing style) and encouraged by their leader.

Theme 1 (The school leader's personal religious spirituality is evident and invoked daily

in his everyday professional tasks) from the previous paragraph interrelates with speculated

theme one that was anticipated to emerge (school leader's personal religious spirituality). Theme

2 (The school leader's personal religious spirituality guides decisions making in the school

environment in multiple areas) from above interrelates with speculated themes three and four

(decision making that the school leader encounters regularly that involves religious spirituality in

the school and decision making that school leader encounters regularly that involves personal

religious spirituality related to curriculum and programming). Theme 3 (The community has

given the school leader de facto permission to let his personal religious spirituality be invoked in

everyday tasks and used as a guide in daily decision making in the school) from above

interrelates with speculated theme two (community religious spirituality). Theme 4 (The school

leader has an intentional ignorance of the law and policy that appears to be encouraged by his

superiors) from above interrelates with unanticipated theme four (lack of knowledge of school

policy). Theme 5 (The religious spirituality of the staff is evident and invoked daily in his or her

everyday professional tasks and encouraged by their leader) from above interrelates with

unanticipated themes one, two, and three (school staff's personal religious spirituality, decision

making that the school staff encounters regularly that involves religious spirituality in the school

that is allowed to occur due to the school leader allowing it, and decision making that the school

staff encounters regularly that involves personal religious spirituality related to curriculum and

programming that is allowed to occur due to the school leader allowing it).

Personal religious spirituality invoked daily in the school leader's everyday tasks.

The personal religious spirituality of the school leader is evident and invoked daily in the school

leader's everyday tasks. P stated, "The staff often prays together as a team." Staff had been

known to pray with students at organized prayer events before or after school and during times of

tragedy. P also specifically stated that he reminds students that they "are allowed to pray during

the regularly occurring moment of silence that happens daily".

P also stated, "One of my major roles in the school is to encourage strong student/teacher

relationships, due to the fact that a teacher's job has eternal impact and research supports the

need for strong student/teacher relationships." Teachers are encouraged by P to meet with

parents regularly to help facilitate strong relationships with the students and the families. As a

result, P stated, "It is very clear that student/teacher relationships are strong in this school."

Every one of the teachers and staff interviewed agreed that student/teacher relationships are

good. C1 implied that the teachers at this school excel in that area. C2, C5, and NC1 pointed out that these strong relationships are even more evident due to the close-knit, small community.

Student morale was perceived as good by P and a bulk of his teachers and staff that were interviewed. However, C2 and C5 reported that some of the home lives were not that great (e.g., jailed parents, abuse, unhealthy families). C3 stated that "morale in the lower grades was much higher than the higher grades, due to school being more standards driven, less fun, and pressure filled in the higher grades." However, P stated that "overall morale is good; the school is seen as a safe place to be encouraged."

P allows for clergy to come meet with students regularly in the lunchroom during school hours and would be open to allowing Bible studies to occur before or after school hours. P reported, "There used to be Bible studies in the past, but not currently."

P shared with this researcher a packet including his most recent teacher newsletters. These were newsletters that he prepared for his staff. There were Bible verses listed to encourage staff and multiple quotations from Christian authors meant to build staff up.   C3 stated, "I share my personal religious beliefs in class in a covert manner." And, NC5 stated, "There are a lot of Christian overtones in the building." However C5 stated, "There used to be a lot more religiously oriented options for kids at school, but not as much anymore." Though, P encourages his staff to be open with their faith, C4 surmised, "Staff is afraid to be as open with their own personal religious spirituality as of late for fear of getting in trouble with the community or the law."

School leader's personal religious spirituality guides decisions making. P stated, "I was very open about my Christian faith during my interview for this job." P felt that this was seen positively by the interview committee. He reported, "Most staff is Christian or at least

Christian friendly in the building." P felt very strongly that his faith was in line with that of the spoken and unspoken district standard. P also stated, "I would definitely be more inclined to hire a staff member if they professed a Christian belief."

P's personal religious spirituality guided decision making in the school environment in multiple areas. P stated, "I encourage teachers to use the chalk boards to communicate moral wisdom and scripture when appropriate." P reported, "Teachers are welcomed to have Biblically themed quotes, papers, wall hangings, calendars, and figurines in their rooms."

Regarding curriculum, P reported that he encouraged that creation be taught alongside evolution. He stated, "Back when I was curriculum director for the district, I purchased creation curriculum and shared that information with the science teachers to utilize in class."

When asked about moral growth opportunities for students, P reported that he allowed a local religious organization to come into the school weekly to teach character building to the children in second through fifth grades. This was done throughout the district. P stated that "this character building is essentially religious education." P stated, "The students are exposed to the Bible, the teachings of Jesus, and to character qualities that Jesus endorsed in the Bible." P also stated, "Students are required to get a permission slip signed, and approximately 99% of students get the permission slip signed to participate in character building class, which occurs in the classroom during the school day." P stated that "students who do not participate are sent to the hall to work on homework and such, while character building class occurs in the classroom." P reported, "When students do not get the permission slip signed, it is largely due to the fact that the parents hold to even more conservative standards than those conservative standards being taught in the character building class." On a few occasions, students do not get the permission

signed due to parents having a personality problem with the character building teacher or forgetfulness according to P.

Character building had been occurring in this school since 1945. According to the written guidelines presented to parents, the main objective was to teach moral and ethical values that were based upon Biblical principles like kindness, honesty, compassion, leadership, and forgiveness. While this researcher observed character building classes, it was noted that the character building teacher referred to her Bible on numerous occasions and informed the students that they would be getting their own Bibles from which to work. It was pointed out that God created the world, and the miracles of Jesus were discussed.

Other moral growth opportunities that were reported by teachers and staff: The Kick Program and other Quaker Programming. The Kick Program is a program for afterschool care that was put on by a local church. The church distributed permission slips in the school, and parents had the option of sending their children to this church after school for programming. NC3 noted that "the Quaker Church also had numerous outings geared specifically for the elementary students, and brochures about those events are distributed at school."

Scenario 5 asked how P would handle a critical thinking course that would encourage students to critique world religions where the teacher would function only as facilitator. This bothered him; he felt that "this could be very controversial, especially if a person that was too liberal taught the class." P reported, "If this class were to occur in the building, I would be observing that class a lot."

De facto permission given to the school leader to let religious spirituality guide. P stated, "The community is 100% behind the religious opportunities offered to students in the school environment." The religious opportunities P spoke of were character building classes,

religious after school materials being distributed and advocated for, lunch room clergy visits, religiously oriented Christmas programs, prayer in school, religiously themed materials in the classrooms and offices, religious literature and videos available for students to borrow, and creation curriculum supplements in the classroom. P's contention was summed up when he reported that "the community knows exactly what goes on in the school related to religious and spiritual matters and the community is okay with it." No complaints have been made according to P.

C2, NC1, NC3, NC4, and NC5 agreed with P and felt that the community was 100% behind the religious opportunities offered to students in the school environment. C2 stated, "The school has been given permission to continue as is by the community, and the school needs to back off only when complaints are raised." NC1 stated "Religion is very important to the people in the community, and the community is aware and supportive of the religious things occurring within the school walls." NC3 reported, "Families know that they can trust the school and do not worry what goes on at the school regarding spiritual matters." NC3 went on to state, "Most parents are very involved in the lives of their children and support the school completely, and the parents who are less involved seem to support the school."

C1 was surprised that no one in the community had complained; C1 commented that "this may be due to the fact that community members may not know their rights, may not realize that they can speak up, or may not have the intelligence to do so." C3 and C5 also saw that the community appeared to endorse what goes on, but insinuated that this might be in large part due to indifference, as opposed to a true endorsement. C4 and NC2 reported that they were not sure that the community actually knew exactly what went on in the school.

School leader has an intentional ignorance of the law and policy. When asked about specific board policies related to equal access, prayer, science curriculum, Christmas programming, and other similar items related to religiously spiritual matters, P reported, "I intentionally do not make myself aware of policies related to these matters." P also reported, "The school board feels the same way, does not ask questions, and looks the other way when it comes to religiously themed matters in the school building."

Teachers and staff had similar responses. All 10 of the teachers and staff interviewed reported that they were not sure of the actual policies related to equal access, prayer, science curriculum, Christmas programming, and other similar items related to religiously spiritual matters. All teachers and staff interviewed also reported that they were aware of religiously spiritual happenings in the building, stated that they were okay with it, and supported P in his support of such matters.

C1 stated, "I may be the only Bible that some of the students are ever going to read." He felt compelled to promote his Christianity without being too pushy. C2 stated, "I would be willing to lose my job for sharing my faith with students if need be." C4 reported, "I share my faith, minister, and evangelize in the classroom with students when the opportunity arises." She also reported that P was a Christian and tended to hire Christians. NC1 reported that she loved the fact that the bulk of the staff in the building was Christian and felt very lucky. NC1 had a daughter attending kindergarten in the school. NC1 went on to report that "Christians definitely have the advantage when interviewing for jobs at the school." She stated, "This is the only nonreligious school that I would feel comfortable sending my daughter to." NC2 reported that she would not specifically talk religion with students, but reported that her "personal religious views surely come out in her classroom." NC3 reported that she promoted church events at the

school, but tried to be careful due to her fear of stirring the pot. NC3 stated, "I will pass out

brochures and invite students to youth events at my church." NC5 reported that there were

clearly Christian overtones in her classroom, but also stated that she "does not push too hard for

fear of creating problems."

P reported that he was open to letting any organization utilize the facilities after hours,

but stated that the issue had not come up much. He stated, "A few religious and civic

organizations have asked, filled out paperwork, and been allowed to use the facilities before or

after school hours in the past."

Regarding prayer, P reported that, prayer is encouraged during the daily moment of

silence, prayer occurs with students and staff at the flagpole praying time that occurs regularly,

prayer occurs amongst the staff at staff gatherings, and prayer occurs with students and staff

during crisis situations. C1 reported that "a prayer was used to open the school year at the first

all district staff meeting with the superintendent at the beginning of the school year."

In regards to curriculum, P reported that he had held the position of curriculum director

for the district in the past. P bought creation curriculum to distribute to science teachers in the

district to use as supplemental material in the classroom. Similar supplementary curriculum was

available for other disciplines to use as resource material. As curriculum director, he would push

curriculum that presented his religiously spiritual ideas in a positive light and would shy away

from material that cast his religious spirituality in a negative light. He argued, "My personal

views on religious matters are the same or similar to those in the community and the other staff."

Christmas programming was reported to vary between Christian programming (e.g.,

nativity, focus on the birth of Jesus, religiously themed Christmas music), secular programming

(e.g., focus on Santa Claus, Frosty the Snowman, winter weather), and a mix of the two over the

years. P reported, "The art teacher has the students do religiously themed Easter projects that are sent home annually with no complaints."

When asked what he would do about a parent complaint related to a staff member's religious garb, language, and wall hanging, P reported, "I would bring the parent and staff member together to work out a compromise and would attempt to appease the parent for fear of further problems." He even implied that he might inquire into school and legal policy on the matter if need be. P's litmus test for change in the area of religiously spiritual matters that occurred in the school was to consider change when a parent or community member spoke up or made a fuss. Knowing that many of the religiously focused things that occurred in the school (e.g., character building class, religious after school materials being distributed and advocated for, lunch room clergy visits, religiously oriented Christmas programs, prayer in school, religiously themed materials in the classrooms and offices, religious literature and videos available for students to borrow, creation curriculum supplements in the classroom) would likely not be supported if litigated, P reported that he would likely "change what is done if challenged." But, for now, P holds to the philosophy that all things are legal until challenged. To date, P has not been challenged to change. P also rests in the fact that he feels that he has the full support of his superiors.

However, a few years back, the secondary school coaches were instructed to not pray with students before games due to a challenge from a parent. So, P thought that "the written rule is now that prayers involving student athletes should be student-led and directed, aligning with current law." Though, P was not sure this was still the case. P reported that "once the challenging parent and student were no longer involved in the school that it may have gone back to the way that it was, even though the written rule may have stayed the same."

Staff religious spirituality is evident, invoked daily, and encouraged by their leader.
P reported, "I try to encourage strong relationships between teachers and families due to the fact
that he feels that these relationships have an eternal impact." P encouraged and promoted many
spiritually religious activities in the building (e.g., character building class, religious after school
materials being distributed and advocated for, lunch room clergy visits, religiously oriented
Christmas programs, prayer in school, religiously themed materials in the classrooms and
offices, religious literature and videos available for students to borrow, creation curriculum
supplements in the classroom). School staff was encouraged to follow P's lead on this.
Essentially, the staff was given the liberty to promote spiritually religious activities and ideas in
the school environment by P. P was very deliberate in continuing to push these religiously
spiritual ideals. He was quite aware that what was occurring would not hold up if litigated and
attempted to push as much as he could without pushing too hard. The staff appeared to do the
same.

C1 tried to focus on being compassionate, loving, and relational due to the fact that he
felt that he might be the only Bible that some students read. C2 realized that what she did affects
others, and wanted "to do things that are pleasing to God." She was willing to lose her job for
sharing her faith with students if need be as was stated earlier. C3 noted that she shared her
personal religious beliefs in class in a covert manner. C4 had a prayer posted in her room and
stated again that she "believes that it is important to set a Christian example, share her faith,
minister, and evangelize in her classroom with students when the opportunity arises." But, she
also reported that staff was afraid to be as open with their own personal religious spirituality as
of late for fear of getting in trouble with the community or the law. C5 had a Christian author's
quotation displayed in her classroom and reported that her relationship with Jesus Christ and her

decision to do His will lent itself to showing love to her students and treating them well. C5 also

stated disappointment in the fact that religiously spiritual opportunities available to students had

lessened over the years. NC1 had a religious figurine at her work area that was visible to all who

entered the front office. NC1, also a parent of a student, reported satisfaction that the school

staff was, in large part, Christian. NC2 reported that she would not specifically talk religion with

students, but reported that her "personal religious views surely come out in her classroom." NC3

had a Bible on her computer in her area and reported that "all of the nurses in the district do this

because healing is also spiritual." NC3 also passed out literature regarding church events for

students to attend at her local congregation. NC4 did not function in a capacity where he had a

lot of contact with students, but stated that he "completely supports the strong religious vibe

present within the school." NC5 had a Bible verse displayed and at least 17 books with varying

religious themes on the shelves in her area that was utilized by students. There were also Bibles,

religiously oriented books, and religious videos displayed that were offered to children to

borrow. NC5 reported that she censored books with inappropriate content by "blacking out

sections when I find them or when students bring it to my attention." NC5 reported that there

were clearly Christian overtones in her classroom, but also stated that she did not push too hard

for fear of creating problems. All of these actions were fully endorsed by P.

Presentation of the results and analysis of the data were presented in Chapter 4. Chapter

4 also reviewed participant information and emergent themes. Chapter 5 provides discussion on

the data analysis of the emergent themes, speculated and unanticipated. Secondly, Chapter 5

details the limitations of this study, provides implications, outlines ideas for future research,

closing with a conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Limitations, Implications, Future Research, and Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to look at the religious spirituality of a public school leader and to ascertain if it had any influence on the school. This was attempted by studying one school where religious spirituality was known to be present in the school leader.

Chapter 4 presented and analyzed findings from interviews with the school leader, five certified teachers, and five non-certified staff at the school where the study occurred. Chapter 4 also detailed the demographics of the school and the community that this school resides in and information about the school and the community that this school resides in that was gathered through observation and documentation of artifacts in the school environment and community. Finally, Chapter 4 discussed emergent themes, speculated and unanticipated.

Chapter 5 provides discussion on the data analysis of the emergent themes, speculated and unanticipated. Secondly, Chapter 5 details the limitations of this study, provides implications, outlines ideas for future research, closing with a conclusion.

 "All a person thinks and feels enters into everything he does, and all he does is involved in everything he thinks and feels…spirituality is intrinsic in everything that we do; our acts embody our spirituality" (Block, 2004, p. 287). Halford (1998) defines spirituality as an attitude or a way of life that recognizes something we might call spirit. Spirituality involves a quest for answers to life's most meaningful questions. Halford goes on to say, "Religion is a specific way

of exercising that spirituality and usually requires an institutional affiliation" (p. 29). This is often exercised through a variety of moral codes and values, rules for living, faith in a higher being, and religious artifacts. Religious spirituality would then be defined as an attitude or way of life in which an individual seeks out a process for finding meaning in life through a plan or design.

Macaulay and Barrs (1978) argue that this spirituality cannot be separated from the individual. Basically, if a person is spiritual, he or she will be spiritual in all that he or she does. Decisions will be made at work or school that will be based on a moral framework. Being in a secular environment will not automatically secularize the spiritual individual. Palmer (1998) makes a similar point and argues for the value of bringing spirituality into teaching and learning. "As long as we take ourselves into the classroom, we take our spirituality with us" (p. 10). Palmer argues that students need to look at spiritual matters just as much as math, science, and reading. "When we bring forth the spirituality of teaching and learning, we help students honor life's most meaningful questions" (p. 6).

"Leadership is spiritually grounded" (West-Burnham, 1997, p. 238). West-Burnham states that what a school leader believes in and how he or she translates his or her beliefs into action will affect actions and authenticity of those actions in the school setting and further explains that school leaders require moral confidence "to act in a way that is consistent with an ethical system and is consistent over time" (p. 238). This spirituality or moral confidence will lead the school leader to make consistent, moral, and sustainable decisions over time that can be argued, justified, and understood (West-Burnham, 1997). Hence, the religiosity or spiritual world view of the leader seemingly directs decisions.

Stern (2002) argues that there is a link between leadership and spirituality or spiritual development. Bird et al. (2005) discussed "the association between religiosity and student leadership" (p. 227) and found that the religiosity of the leader does indeed affect leadership style, frame, and orientation.

The literature review sited multiple studies indicating that this religious spirituality is good for students (i.e. correlates with less risky behavior, higher academic performance, etc.). Specifically regarding assets related to spirituality, religion, and religious spirituality, there has been a great deal of research. "Religiously committed urban children performed better on most academic measures than their non- religious counterparts, even when controlling for SES, race, and gender" (Jeynes, 2003, p. 44). "Religiosity was found to be a strong predictor of women's involvement in HIV-related risky behaviors, with the greatest risk reported by women who were the least religious" (Elifson et al., 2003, p. 47). An Australian study by Abbott-Chapman and Denholm (2001) found that people with greater amounts of religious belief and commitment clearly show inhibitions towards risk taking behavior.   Lifshitz and Glaubman (2002) found "that religious students are more willing than non-religious students to consider the inclusion of people with four types of disabilities and have a greater sense of efficacy for dealing with all types of disabilities" (p. 405). Dunn (2005) found a relationship between high levels of religiosity and low levels of poor alcohol drinking habits and smoking.

Kessler (1998) suggests that adolescents are on a quest to find answers to the profound questions in life. It could be argued that these questions can rarely be answered without using philosophical, religious, or spiritual language. Kessler (1998) states that open discourse related to this quest regarding the meaning of life should be encouraged and "can be supported by encouraging spirituality in classrooms" (p. 49).

Making spiritual experiences "available to every student could be an effective strategy for preventing violence and other social pathologies" (Kessler, 1998, p. 159). Kessler (1998) argues that "such experiences not only nourish students' spiritual development, they also help them transcend prejudice, increase academic motivation, improve focus and cooperation, foster creativity, and keep more kids in school" (p. 159). It might be suggested that the school leader and the specific community standards could have a lot to do with how these aforementioned ideas of spirituality in the classroom come to fruition.

Suhor (1998) suggests that teaching religion does not need to be extreme right or left; religion and spirituality are naturally present in many areas of study and can be a rich addition to classroom studies. Scherer (1998) agrees and suggests that schools already emphasize a number of spiritual values: commitment to truth, commitment to accuracy, commitment to responsibility, timeliness, humility, respect, cooperation, helping others, justice, and understanding. Scherer (1998) also states that most teachers agree that religion can be successfully taught in schools, but "we cannot advocate one religious view no matter how sincerely we hold it" (p. 19). In essence, teachers need not be afraid to teach religion if the content is pertinent to the subject matter and free of judgment and bias.

Why study religious spirituality within school leadership? First, the research suggests that it affects decision making. Thompson (2005) suggests that religiously spiritual qualities, like compassion, persistence, and sacrifice all play a major role in the work of the school leader. Reiss (2000) found that more religious people valued honor more, place a much lower value on vengeance, value raising a family more highly, and place a higher value on order. Osmo and Landau (2003) studied the impact religiosity had on social workers and decisions they made. "The religiosity of religious social workers may influence their ethical decision making in

situations with religious connotations" (p. 359). So, a leader's religious leanings affect the decisions made on behalf of the school (Osmo & Landau, 2003). Secondly, spirituality affects why people choose to be teachers, actual teaching strategies, and educational goals (Block, 2004). Leaders are examples to all students and staff under his or her charge (Sokolow, 2005). Sokolow (2005) goes on to suggest, "As leaders, we are role models for the expansion of goodness in ourselves and in the world" (p. 23). Therefore, school leaders ought to take seriously what example is portrayed and modeled to all of the mindful and watching eyes of the students, parents, and staff. Finally, it appears that one's religious spirituality may affect general health and wellbeing in a positive manner and lessen risky behavior.

Themes

Five themes emerged from the study: a) The school leader's personal religious spirituality is evident and invoked daily in his everyday professional tasks (e.g., vocabulary, managing style), b) The school leader's personal religious spirituality guides decisions making in the school environment in multiple areas (i.e. curriculum, programming, employee hiring), c) The community has given the school leader de facto permission to let his personal religious spirituality be invoked in everyday tasks and used as a guide in daily decision making in the school, d) The school leader has an intentional ignorance of the law and policy that appears to be encouraged by his superiors, and e) The religious spirituality of the staff is evident and invoked daily in his or her everyday professional tasks (e.g., vocabulary, managing style) and encouraged by their leader.

This researcher suspected that themes surrounding the school leader's personal religious spirituality and the community's religious spirituality would emerge. However, some

unanticipated themes related to the spiritual religiosity of the staff and the seeming lack of

knowledge of school policy by P and his staff also emerged.

Personal religious spirituality invoked daily in the school leader's everyday tasks.

The personal religious spirituality of the school leader was evident and invoked daily in the

school leader's everyday tasks. P regularly prayed with his staff, and prayer with students was

not discouraged. P clearly identified with Macaulay and Barrs's (1978) assertion that spirituality

cannot be separated from the individual. P's religious spirituality was present in all that he does.

Seemingly, every decision he made in the school setting was based on a moral framework.

Being in a secular environment did not automatically secularize him.

According to P, one of his major roles in the school was to encourage strong

student/teacher relationships, due to the fact that he saw his and the teacher's job as having

eternal impact. P allowed for clergy programs in the school, allowed for character building Bible

studies to occur in his building, allowed for religiously themed Christmas programming, and

allowed for and encourages religiously themed books, wall hangings, and discussions to occur

within the school setting. Religiously oriented afterschool programming was encouraged and

advertised with P's blessing. C4 suggested that P encouraged staff to be open with their faith.

However, P and a number of the staff and teachers interviewed agreed that the current

trend seemed to be moving away from favoring the current religious culture of conservative

evangelical Christianity that had been cultivated in their school. This brand of Christianity could

be defined simply as holding closely to the ways of the early New Testament church (i.e.,

conservative) and sharing that faith (i.e., evangelism). C4 even implied that staff was more

afraid as of late to be open with their own personal religious spirituality for fear of getting in

trouble with the community or the law. C5 noted that there were a lot of Christian overtones in

the building, but also noted that there used to be a lot more religiously oriented options available in the past.

Though P and most of his staff would argue that the conservative evangelical Christian tone in the school had lessened over the years, it must be noted that the overall tone was likely more religiously spiritual in nature than most schools in the state, region, or nation. P and his staff promoted their conservative evangelical Christian beliefs without fear or negative ramifications.

Most of the laws discussed in the literature review (e.g., teaching of evolution, the promotion of religion, prayer in schools) were broken daily at P's school with very little fear or negative ramifications. C2 even reported that she would be willing to lose her job for sharing her faith with students if need be, but C4 did note that some staff felt less able to share their faith in recent years. However, the level at which the staff was able to share their faith went far and beyond the scope of the law.

P even noted that he was willing to push the envelope with full knowledge of the fact that he might have to step back if challenged. He took the attitude that everything was legal until challenged. He rested in the fact that the all powerful challenge had, for the most part, been nonexistent up to this point and hoped that it would continue to be nonexistent. He had full support from his staff, his superiors, and the community it seemed.

School leader's personal religious spirituality guides decisions making. P pointed out that he was very open about his conservative evangelical Christian faith during his interview for his current job; he felt that this was seen positively by the interview committee. P's faith was in line with that of the district standard; P even noted that he would be more inclined to hire a staff

member who held to Christian principles versus someone who did not. NC1 reported that Christians definitely had an edge in being hired in this school.

It was evident that P's personal religious spirituality guided decision making in the school environment in multiple areas. P encouraged teachers to use the chalk boards to communicate moral wisdom and scripture when appropriate. P reported that teachers were welcomed to have Biblically themed quotes, papers, wall hangings, calendars, and figurines in their rooms.

Regarding curriculum, P reported that he encouraged that creation be taught alongside evolution. As curriculum director he did just that; he purchased creation curriculum and shared that information with his science teachers when he was curriculum director in the district.

P's support allowed teachers to act on their spiritually religious convictions to share their faith and be open about said faith. The lack of overt disagreement from the community and the seeming support from P and his superiors clearly allowed the staff to push their own religiously spiritual agenda.

A question arose. What if someone wanted to argue against the school's overt proselytizing? P answered the question clearly by indicating that he would back down if pushed or challenged. He was well aware that many of the actions occurring in the school went against established law. He knew that the Establishment Clause was being breeched and would back down if forced.

De facto permission given to the school leader to let religious spirituality guide. P saw the community being 100% behind his efforts. P reported that the community knew what went on in the school related to religiously spiritual matters and that the community was okay with it and supported it. However, some staff members and teachers felt that this seeming

support was not necessary an authentic endorsement. C1 commented that those in the community might not be completely aware of their rights. C3 and C5 felt that the community's seeming endorsement might be more due to indifference and not wholehearted support. C4 and NC2 reported that they were not sure that the community actually knew exactly what went on in the school. Needless to say, the community does support the religious spirituality that was present in the school, whether this support was intended or just a de facto endorsement.

School leader has an intentional ignorance of the law and policy. An unanticipated theme that became clear was related to P's intentional ignorance of the law and policy. When asked about specific board policies related to equal access, prayer, science curriculum, Christmas programming, and other similar items related to religiously spiritual matters, P reported that he intentionally did not make himself aware of policies related to these matters. P also reported that the school board felt the same way, did not ask questions, and looked the other way when it came to religiously themed matters in the school building. The one time that P mentioned policy related to religiously themed happenings in the school was when he hypothesized what he would do if challenged by someone.

Teachers and staff had similar responses. All 10 of the teachers and staff interviewed reported that they were not sure of the actual policies related to equal access, prayer, science curriculum, Christmas programming, and other similar items related to religiously spiritual matters. All teachers and staff interviewed also reported that they were aware of religiously spiritual happenings in the building, stated that they were okay with it, and supported P in his support of such matters. Even NC2 and NC4 reported agreement. These were the only two staff members that deviated slightly from the typical evangelical conservative Christianity that was clearly present in the building. NC2 reported that she attended a more liberal Protestant church,

but reported agreement with the overt proselytizing that appeared to occur school-wide. NC4 did not attend church due to a bad experience, but reported complete allegiance to P and the way that he ran things at the school.

The intentional ignorance spoken of above was very telling. After interviewing 11 members of the staff at this school, every one of the interviewees responded to questions about policy with complete unawareness.

Staff religious spirituality is evident, invoked daily, and encouraged by their leader. Another unanticipated theme related to the evidence of the religious spirituality of the staff. This researcher expected to see and capture the evidence of P's religious spirituality being invoked daily in the school setting. However, the religious spirituality of the staff was also evident and encouraged by P. School staff was encouraged to follow P's religiously spiritual lead. Essentially, the staff was given the liberty to promote spiritually religious activities and ideas in the school environment by P. P was very deliberate in continuing to push these religiously spiritual ideals. He was quite aware that what was occurring would not hold up if litigated and attempted to push as much as he could without pushing too hard. The staff appeared to do the same.

C1 tried to focus on being compassionate, loving, and relational due to the fact that he felt that he might be the only Bible that some students read. C2 realized that what she did affected others, and wanted to do things that were pleasing to God; she would be willing to lose her job for sharing her faith with students if need be. C3 noted that she shared her personal religious beliefs in class in a covert manner. C4 had a prayer posted in her room, believed that it was important that she set a Christian example, and stated that she shared her faith, ministers, and evangelizes in her classroom with students when the opportunity arose, but also reported that

staff was afraid to be as open with their own personal religious spirituality as of late for fear of

getting in trouble with the community or the law. C5 had a Christian author's quotation

displayed in her classroom and reported that her relationship with Jesus Christ and her decision

to do His will lent itself to showing love to her students and treating them well. C5 also stated

disappointment in the fact that religiously spiritual opportunities available to students had

lessened over the years. NC1 had a religious figurine at her work area that was visible to all who

entered the front office. NC1, also a parent of a student, reported satisfaction that the school

staff was, in large part, Christian. NC2 reported that she would not specifically talk religion with

students, but reported that her personal religious views surely come out in her classroom. NC3

had a Bible on her computer in her area and reported that all of the nurses in the district did this

because healing was also spiritual. NC3 also passed out literature regarding church events for

students to attend at her local congregation. NC4 did not function in a capacity where he had a

lot of contact with students, but stated complete support of the seemingly strong religiously

spiritual vibe present within the school. NC5 had a Bible verse displayed and at least 17 books

with varying religious themes on the shelves in her area that was utilized by students. There

were also Bibles, religiously oriented books, and religious videos displayed that were offered to

children to borrow. NC5 reported that there were clearly Christian overtones in her classroom,

but also stated that she did not push too hard for fear of creating problems. All of these actions

were fully endorsed by P.

Limitations

Because of the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher understood that the data

results did not envelop all experiences that school leaders might encounter. Even though

multiple data collection methods were attempted (i.e., interviewing with a school leader who was

known to be religiously spiritual and some of his staff, observation in the school and community, and documentation of noticeable artifacts related to religious spirituality) to establish validity, the human factor created clear limitations to the study. Five are listed.

Interviews with the school principal and his staff were conducted in private conference rooms or classrooms. Though the information gathered in these interviews was kept confidential and the interviews were conducted privately, they were conducted in the building during school hours and when the interviewee's peers were present in the building. The interviewee's peers who happened by the conference room or classroom while the interviews were being conducted were well aware that the interviewee was participating in the research. It was possible that the interviewee's answers could have been affected by their peers presence and knowledge of the fact that their peer were quite possibly aware that the interviewee was interviewing with the researcher.

Many of the interview questions for the staff and teachers sought answers to potentially controversial information related to matters of religious spirituality. Also, many of the questions sought information about the direct supervisor of the staff and teachers being interviewed. Though the interviews were conducted in private and the information collected was kept confidential, interviewee answers may have been affected by this. Answers may have been modified to appear more agreeable with what they thought would be the answers of the school leader.

This study looked at one religiously spiritual school leader and this leader's influence on his school. Observation and interviews with this leader and his staff brought forth a great deal of information specifically related to this case, but such a small sample cannot permit generalizations (Patton, 2002). This was research conducted at one school in one community

with one leader in Indiana. Future research could be beneficial and is discussed further in this document.

It was quite possible that the scope (gender, ethnicity, age) of the individuals interviewed may appear homogeneous and unbalanced. A high majority of the interview participants (73%) were female. All of the interview participants were Caucasian. The range of years of experience of the interviewees was from one year to 23. The mean and median years of experience were respectfully 9 and 10. There were no minority voices represented, but there were no minority staff members within the school setting. An unusually high percentage of the interviewees were women. However, a high percentage of the overall staff population of the school was female. The experience of a majority of the staff interviewed was within three years of either the mean or median.

Lastly, this researcher revealed that he would clearly be considered religiously spiritual. Though, this researcher intended to be unbiased and fair, his personal leanings were thought to potentially be able to interfere with the results. Despite attempts to establish validity, reliability, and limit researcher bias, the personal religiously spiritual leanings of the researcher may have seeped in, and bias may be present.

Implications

The review of literature revealed that religious spirituality was recognized and accepted as an important dimension of life, and is exercised frequently across the American demographic. Macaulay and Barrs (1978) point out clearly that spirituality cannot be separated from the individual. Persons express their spirituality in many settings including the workplace, the Church, and the classroom. In the context of education, spirituality in general and religious spirituality in particular were often instrumental in helping students define themselves both as

private and public persons. It has been argued persuasively in the literature, that the best interests of our public school students would be improperly served by neglecting their spirituality.

Does the religious spirituality of the school leader affect which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased? Essentially, does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence the school?

The answer to both questions would have to be affirmative. In the school where this study occurred, the school leader clearly had control over all programs in the school. The school board gave the blessing to allow for the character/religious education courses, but the school leader decided whether and how it was to be implemented. For example, the school leader would have clear grounds to disallow clergy into the building to speak with students at lunch, but chose not to. He would have clear grounds to disallow the overt Christian character program, but chose not to.

As stated earlier, the leader's intentional ignorance of the law and policy allowed him to interpret the policies and laws as he saw fit. P noted that he was willing to push the envelope with full knowledge of the fact that he may have to step back if challenged. He took on the attitude that everything was legal until challenged. He rested in the fact that the all powerful challenge had been nonexistent up to this point and hoped that it continued to be nonexistent. He had full support from his staff, his superiors, and the community it seemed.

Regarding curriculum, P reported that he encouraged that creation be taught alongside evolution. As curriculum director he did just that; he purchased creation curriculum and shared that information with his science teachers when he was curriculum director in the district.

Every one of the teachers and staff interviewed agreed that student/teacher relationships were good. C1 implied that the teachers at this school excelled in that area. C2, C5, and NC1 pointed out that these strong relationships were even more evident due to the close-knit, small community. Student morale was perceived as good by P and a bulk of his teachers and staff that were interviewed.

The literature showed that religious spirituality was generally seen as a positive attribute in people and that religiously spiritual people statistically had a better quality of life (i.e., better health, fewer risk taking behaviors). This school staff presented religious and/or spiritual material to students, and P had an enormous role in potentially allowing religious spirituality to flourish or not based on decisions he made for his school based on his knowledge of policy and law, his personal religious spirituality, and community standards; thus, potentially enhancing the lives of students.

Future Research

This research intended to determine if the religious spirituality of the school leader affected which after school programs are encouraged to flourish, which religious teachings are allowed through the doors (e.g., Campus Life, Young Life, community church youth groups, clergy programs), which classes are taught, what religious expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased. Essentially, does the religious spirituality of a school leader influence

the school? It was determined that the religious spirituality of the school leader can and does

influence the school. This study was a qualitative study using a case study strategy in order to

explore, in depth, a predetermined school where religious spirituality was known to be present in

the school leader.   Generalization of the results would be inappropriate. However, the results

from this study can be used to press on with future related research.

This research shows that a school leader can and does have influence over the school

when it comes to decision making regarding programs that are encouraged to flourish, religious

teachings that are allowed through the doors, which classes are taught, what religious

expressions are considered appropriate, how current law is interpreted related to religious

spirituality, overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth

opportunities for students, or which textbooks are purchased.

Future qualitative research might look more deeply into the concept of community

support of religious, spiritual, or religiously spiritual activities in the school or the impact

religion, spirituality, or religious spirituality have on schools and leadership. Though, this study

was qualitative in nature, there can be seen very clear quantitative implications for future study.

Future quantitative research might possibly look at correlations between school leader religion,

spirituality, or religious spirituality and student achievement, correlations between school leader

religion, spirituality, or religious spirituality and risky behavior levels in students, or correlations

between school leader religion, spirituality, or religious spirituality and student morale.

Other options for future research might include looking at student achievement, risky

behavior levels in students, or student morale in schools where the school leader is known to be

religious, spiritual, or religiously spiritual and comparing it with schools where the school leader

is known not to be religious, spiritual, or religiously spiritual. Research could look more deeply

into the similarities and differences in relationships to religion, spirituality, and religious

spirituality in general. Research could be conducted and compared in relationship to rural,

urban, and suburban schools. Research could be conducted looking at differences in different

areas of the country.

Conclusion

The religious spirituality of the school leader and his staff was evident and invoked daily

and helps guide decision making in the school environment. Both the school leader and his staff

showed an intentional ignorance of the law and policy regarding religiously spiritual matters,

which appeared to be supported by the board and their superiors. The community had given the

school permission to let their personal religious spirituality be invoked in everyday tasks and

used as a guide in daily decision making in the school, whether intentionally or in an

unintentional manner.

Implications for communities. This last point seemed to be a critical piece of the

puzzle. It was evident that the spiritually religious leanings of P and his staff were invoked daily

and helped guide decision making, but it seemed equally evident that this would lessen or be

stifled all together if the community intentionally chose to stop it. P even reported that he would

only back down if challenged. As long as the community continued to support this, whether

intentionally or in an unintentional manner, P and his staff would continue with their status quo.

This community had been existent for approximately 150 years. This school had been a

part of this community for over 90 years. And, for almost 65 of those years, this community had

supported the conservative evangelical Christianity that was taught in the school's character

building class and was promoted by P and his staff. Multiple generations of families had

attended or do attend this school. Until there is a large turnover in population, it is unlikely that

P and his staff are going to be challenged to change. In fact the population in the community is dropping according to P. This might imply that people are moving out, but not necessarily moving in.

Implications for staff. The fear that some staff spoke of was directly related to an adjoining community that was recently dealing with a law suit related to teaching religiously themed curriculum at the school. For example, C4 reported that she believed that it was important that she set a Christian example and stated that she shared her faith, ministered, and evangelized in her classroom with students when the opportunity arose. However, she also reported that staff was afraid to be as open with their own personal religious spirituality as of late for fear of getting in trouble with the community or the law. She was speaking directly to that adjoining community's situation. However, C4 and her colleagues seemed to have nothing to fear at this time, because the community did not seem to be moving in that direction.

Implications for the teaching community and leaders. McDowell (2008) argued that the teaching community is more fearful than it needs to be when it comes to religious spirituality in schools and that the school leader has a lot of control in how religious laws are interpreted. Similarly, Halford (1998) suggests that educators ought not be afraid to address issues of faith and spirit; they just need to do it in an objective, educational fashion without proselytizing. Adkins (1989) argues that spirituality is a major part of the lives of people in the world today, and education would be smart to be a part of the revival of spirit seen in culture today. However, the religious spirituality that the above authors speak of is different than the more proselytizing version that seems to be present and accepted at the school being studied. Though, this proselytizing is not necessarily mandated, it is encouraged.

On one hand, P appears to take on a transactional approach to leadership by avoiding

making decisions (i.e., intentional ignorance of law and policy) and intervening only when

pushed (Bass, 1990). However, a transformational leadership style can also be seen in P's

providing vision and a sense of mission for his staff, in how he elevates the interests of the staff,

in how he generates a purpose or mission, in how he looks beyond his own self-interests, and in

his coaching, advising, and inspiring of his staff (Bass, 1990). Bass points out that

transformational leaders are often charismatic, but P would not fall into that category. Though P

can clearly be seen as religiously spiritual, his leadership style appears to be a blending of more

than one style. It is difficult to determine if leadership style and religious spirituality impact one

another. This might be yet another area for future research.

Most can agree and the research shows that spirituality, religion, and religious spirituality

bring out positivity in all people, children and adults alike. Palmer (1998) goes a step further and

argues that students need to look at spiritual matters just as much as math, science, and reading.

"When we bring forth the spirituality of teaching and learning, we help students honor life's

most meaningful questions" (p. 6).

Some would argue that not teaching spirituality in schools to be inappropriate and even

dangerous. Palmer (1998) states:

I have seen the price we pay for a system of education so fearful of things spiritual

that it fails to address the real issues of our lives – dispensing facts at the expense of

meaning, information at the expense of wisdom. (p. 6)

Palmer goes on to point out that "the price is a school system that alienates and dulls us, that

graduates young people who have had no mentoring in the questions that both enliven and vex

the human spirit" (p. 6). Palmer speaks of the individual human quest for connectedness and

things larger than self, of mystery, and life's purpose and meaning. Learning to engage in deeper thoughts and conversations and being able to discuss the deep spiritual questions of life regarding suffering, hope, and death without embarrassment are ideas that can be taught at school. Palmer claims that if teachers merely focus on dispensing facts and information and refuse or forgo these deeper spiritual principles, then students lose the opportunity to better learn the general concept of learning how to think.

The religious spirituality of the individual does not lay dormant when said individual enters the public school doors, and the literature review has shown that religious spirituality in the lives of individuals is inherent, wants to come out, and appears to have a positive impact. This study has shown that the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school by allowing for religiously spiritual opportunities and growth. This in turn has the possibly of enhancing the lives of students, allowing for opportunities for growth in young people in the area of their own religious spirituality and shows the real impact of how the religious spirituality of a school leader can impact the school.

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APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

(Date)

Dear School Leader:

RE: Qualitative Research Interview

My name is Timothy St. Peters. I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations at Indiana State University. I am contacting you in hopes that you will agree to participate in a qualitative study looking at the religious spirituality of a public school principal and the role it plays in the school environment.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview wherein you will be asked to answer questions and respond to scenarios designed to assess your religious spirituality and possible influences that it may have on decisions regarding the school. This interview will occur in person and will be audio-taped to aid in transcription. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. I also ask that I be able to observe the school environment periodically over a six to eight week period. This should involve approximately six to eight days of observation and data gathering.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Please contact me, Timothy St. Peters at (260) 402-4479 or tstpeters@eacs.k12.in.us in the next week if you would be interested in participating.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or email the IRB at irb@instate.edu. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research participant with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with ISU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I know that your lives are busy as it is, but I would be greatly appreciative of your assistance as I work toward completing the requirements of my Ph.D. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Timothy St. Peters   Bradly V. Balch, Ph.D
Doctoral Student at   Dean, College of Education
Indiana State University   Indiana State University

APPENDIX B: CONSENT OF PRINCIPAL TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Religious Spirituality of an Indiana Public School Leader and its Influence on the School

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Timothy St. Peters, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations at Indiana State University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this qualitative study is to look at the religious spirituality of the school principal and the role it plays in the school environment.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
1. Participate in an interview wherein you will be asked to answer questions and respond to scenarios designed to assess your religious spirituality and possible influences that it may have on decisions in the school. This interview will be audio-taped to aid in transcription and will last approximately one hour.

Risks of Participation
As with most research, and especially research involving specific groups of participants where the research is tape recorded, there is a potential risk of breach of confidentiality. Every measure will be taken to avoid this potential risk. Since many of the questions to be asked will revolve around personal views regarding religious spirituality and specific activities that occur that may be deemed inappropriate by some individuals, you should be reminded that confidentiality will be maintained. Interviews will occur in a secure room within the school building at your convenience. Since the interviews will occur in the school building, others in the building could likely know that you are participating in this research.

Benefits of Participation
While there are no direct benefits provided for participation, the information gathered from this study will help further the understanding of how decisions are made by public school leaders regarding the affect personal religious spirituality has on decision making in the school setting.

Confidentiality
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways:
- You are asked not to identify yourself by name or school district on the audio-taped interview. Information will be reported in aggregated form. Data will not be linked with individuals or individual school districts at any time.

- A code will be assigned to each participant. A hard copy master list of participants and codes will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the home office of the researcher, Timothy St. Peters.
- During transcription and analysis by the Principal Investigator, Timothy St. Peters, data will be identified by code.
- Tapes will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the home office of Tim St. Peters. These tapes will be kept for three years following completion of the research and then destroyed.
- The only people having access to the data will be Tim St. Peters and his dissertation committee chairperson, Dr. Brad Balch.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact the principal investigator:

Timothy St. Peters	Bradly V. Balch
Co-Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator
(260) 402-4479	(812) 237-2919
tstpeters@eacs.k12.in.us	bbalch@isugw.indstate.edu

Rights of Research Participants

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or email the IRB at irb@instate.edu. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research participant with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with ISU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Principal	Signature of Principal	Date

APPENDIX C: CONSENT OF STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Religious Spirituality of an Indiana Public School Leader and its Influence on the School

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Timothy St. Peters, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations at Indiana State University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to look at the religious spirituality of your school principal and the role it plays in the school environment.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

2. Participate in an interview wherein you will be asked to answer questions and respond to scenarios designed to assess your and your school principal's religious spirituality and possible influences that it may have on decisions in the school. This interview will be audio-taped to aid in transcription and will last approximately one hour.

Risks of Participation

As with most research, and especially research involving specific groups of participants where the research is tape recorded, there is a potential risk of breach of confidentiality. Every measure will be taken to avoid this potential risk. Since many of the questions to be asked will revolve around personal views regarding religious spirituality, specific activities that occur that may be deemed inappropriate by some individuals, and personal feelings about your direct supervisor, you should be reminded that confidentiality will be maintained. Interviews will occur in a secure room within the school building at the interviewee's convenience. Since the interviews will occur in the school building, others in the building could likely know that you are participating in this research.

Benefits of Participation

While there are no direct benefits provided for participation, the information gathered from this study will help further the understanding of how decisions are made by public school leaders regarding the affect personal religious spirituality has on decision making in the school setting.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways:

- You are asked not to identify yourself by name or school district on the audio-taped interview. Information will be reported in aggregated form. Data will not be linked with individuals or individual school districts at any time.
- A code will be assigned to each participant. A hard copy master list of participants and codes will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the home office of the researcher, Timothy St. Peters.
- During transcription and analysis by the Principal Investigator, Timothy St. Peters, data will be identified by code.
- Tapes will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the home office of Tim St. Peters. These tapes will be kept for three years following completion of the research and then destroyed.
- The only people having access to the data will be Tim St. Peters and his dissertation committee chairperson, Dr. Brad Balch.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you volunteer, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also feel free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact the principal investigator:

Timothy St. Peters   Bradly V. Balch
Co-Principal Investigator   Co-Principal Investigator
(260) 402-4479   (812) 237-2919
tstpeters@eacs.k12.in.us   bbalch@isugw.indstate.edu

Rights of Research Participants

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or email the IRB at irb@instate.edu. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research participant with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with ISU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____   _____
Printed Name of Participant   Signature of Participant   Date

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS AND SCENARIOS

Questions

1. What is your current religious affiliation? Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? Explain.

2. How often do you attend religious gatherings in a typical week?

3. How often do you pray in a typical week?

4. Do you give money regularly to a religious organization?

5. Describe overall student morale, teacher/student personal relationships, moral growth opportunities for students.

6. Describe the policies that are in place in your district directly related to religious and/or spiritual matters related to equal access (i.e. who is allowed to rent/utilize the facility during non-curricular hours), prayer, religious studies, religious expression, general science curriculum, general programming like Christmas Programs, and curriculum...

7. Describe how the local community influences school decisions directly related to religious/spiritual matters related to equal access (i.e. who is allowed to rent/utilize the facility during non-curricular hours), prayer, religious studies, religious expression, general science curriculum, general programming like Christmas Programs, and curriculum...

8. Describe if your own personal religious/spiritual views influence decisions directly related to religious/spiritual matters related to equal access (i.e. who is allowed to rent/utilize the facility during non-curricular hours), prayer, religious studies, religious expression, general science curriculum, general programming like Christmas Programs, and curriculum...

Scenarios

1. A local youth pastor has requested permission to come into the school during the lunch hour to have lunch with and interact with students from his church's youth group. (Refer to p. 14, Chapter 2)

2. The school nurse comes to you and seeks permission to allow some students to come into the school building to have a Bible study and pray before school starts. The school nurse states that she will be responsible for unlocking the main door and the classroom door for the students. She also commits to supervising the student led Bible study and prayer. (Refer to p. 12, Chapter 2)

3. Your guidance counselor wears a cross necklace and has posters in his office that quotes from the Bible. When talking with students, his language is often times fraught with traditional Christian speak (God bless, I'll be praying for you…). A parent calls into complain and asks that he use more neutral language, not wear his cross necklace, and take down the Biblically referenced poster in his office. (Refer to p. 14, Chapter 2)

4. A science teacher chooses to teach from the approved biology curriculum when teaching the section on evolution. However, this teacher takes a few minutes on the first day the lesson is to begin to address intelligent design. During this brief lesson,

the science teacher explains that there is controversy related to intelligent design due to the fact that intelligent design implies that there is an infinite creator. He also reminds students that evolution is merely a theory and not hardened fact. (Refer to p. 14, Chapter 2)

5. A respected social studies teacher asks if she can conduct a course on religious studies. The content of the course would look at different world religions, would ask students to critique these world religions using critical thinking skills, and would attempt to encourage students to discuss personal religious beliefs. The teacher would function as a facilitator, and the class would primarily be open discussion. (Refer to p. 12, Chapter 2)