

SPIRITUALITY AS A COMPONENT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AMONG SELECTED NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

A Dissertation
by
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ABSTRACT

SPIRITUALITY AS A COMPONENT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG SELECTED NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS (December 2012)

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In a 2006 executive summary, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reports America's community colleges will experience an 84% turnover in chief executives within ten years. Well-prepared individuals will be needed to fill vacant positions, which proffers the question: just what is a well-prepared leader?

This study examined the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership among North Carolina community college presidents. The qualitative study was set within an interpretive approach, as the researcher was the primary instrument for data gathering and evaluation. Eight North Carolina community college presidents were purposefully selected, observed, and interviewed with the intent of investigating the relationship their spirituality has to their leadership style, what activities have guided the development of their spirituality and leadership, and how they mentor followers.

The data collected suggest that these study presidents rely heavily on their spirituality to support and guide the leadership process. Evident from the observations and

interviews was the strong influence of mentoring in the leadership development of the presidents and a concerted effort on their part to employ transformational leadership traits in mentoring followers. Additionally, linkages could be found between the study participants' leadership traits and the AACCC suggested competencies for community college presidents. These items were analyzed in the context of transformational leadership theory and practice; implications about the findings and suggestions for further research are also presented.

DEDICATION

to my parents

Charles Wesley and Ruby Ruth Huie Matthews

teachers, mentors, and friends

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Chapter One - Introduction

“The gifts of authorship, love, power, and significance work only when they are freely given and freely received. Leaders cannot give what they do not have or lead to places they’ve never been” (Bolman & Deal, 2001, p. 106). Across the world, people and organizations desire effective leadership. Many generations have devoted much effort to identifying the characteristics of an able and effective leader. Even the story of Gilgamesh, one of the earliest known human writings, accentuates leadership traits by describing Gilgamesh as “trusted by his companions” and “Mighty net, protector of his people” (Kovacs, 1989, p. 4). Much current literature consider leaders to be effective if they are capable of developing and maintaining an understanding of their inner self or spirituality before attempting to perform the act of leadership (Astin, 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2001; Chatterjee & Krishnan, 2007; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Fairholm, 2001; Hartsfield, 2004; Palmer, 2000; Walker & McPhail, 2009). But what is effective leadership? What is spirituality? How are these two concepts interconnected, and why are these topics important to community colleges? Seeking to better understand the relationship between leadership and spirituality is the reason I proposed to investigate how North Carolina community college presidents’ inner knowing or spirituality augments their leadership style, specifically those presidents who profess to employ transformational leadership in their work setting.

Context - Effective Leadership and Spirituality

Before narrowing the focus to one particular leadership style or theory of leadership, an awareness of how effective leadership is conceptualized within the scholarly community is necessary. Northouse (2001) defines leadership as a process whereby an individual

influences a group of individuals or followers to achieve a goal. The key word in the description is influence. According to Northouse, without influence leadership does not exist. As a verb, influence is defined by Webster's (2012) as affect or change. Therefore, if the individuals or followers are not affected or changed leadership has not occurred. Likewise, Fullan (2003) uses change to describe leadership. He submits that the "litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things" (p. 9). However, simply defining leadership as change leaves open the opportunity for negative outcomes to be considered as leadership.

Stewart (2006) cautions that we cannot assume change is always in the direction of improvement. Authors often take the definition of leadership a step further by stipulating that the consequence of the change process should produce a benefit to the entity being led and not be detrimental to the public good, or be only to the benefit of the individual in the position of authority (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns, 2010/1978). Additionally, researchers employ terms such as *effective leadership* or *authentic leadership* to distinguish acts of leadership being discussed and researched from ineffective or improper leadership as practiced by individuals who harbor malintentions. Thus for effective, authentic or effective leadership to have occurred, positive change within an organization and/or followers must be evident.

Spirituality as a topic of importance in United States higher education circles has experienced a renaissance in recent years. A brief internet search produces thousands of research articles, books, and complete issues of journals written on the topic of spirituality in higher education and more specifically on how spirituality or inner knowing affects leadership. Hoppe (2005) asserts spirituality provides leaders with a "true north" direction

and that, if lacking, the leader “can become misguided and misdirected” (p.88). Palmer (2000) maintains we should strive for authentic leadership “found not in external arrangements but in the human heart” (p. 76). After completing an empirical review of spirituality and leadership literature, Dent, Higgins, and Wharff (2005) postulate plying the act of leadership without a firm ethical and moral grounding can lead to the “dark side” of leadership with the leaders taking credit for others’ ideas while also blaming others for failure (p. 642). Adding to our understanding of the relationship between leadership and spirituality may support and inform the development of future leaders and in turn strengthen the organizations they lead.

Debates - Community College Leaders Needed

Community colleges continually face the challenge of identifying and employing well-prepared leaders. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reports, in a 2006 executive summary, that 84% of American community college chief executive officers participating in the Career Lifestyle Survey planned to retire within ten years (Vaughn & Wiseman, 2007). The results of the 2006 survey suggest that community colleges in the United States will experience a significant loss of leadership over the next ten years and that institutions will need well-prepared individuals to fill the void. Stewart (2006) states, “Preparing leaders to successfully function within a context of change and uncertainty is paramount” (p. 22). Adding to our knowledge base and gaining an understanding of the traits and abilities that well prepared leaders should possess was a purpose of this study.

At the rate suggested by the AACC, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) would have 48 presidential vacancies in its 58 community colleges within the next 10 years. The NCCCS supports the development of future leaders for its community colleges

through the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program (NCCCLP). The NCCCLP (2010) has as one of its goals to “Strengthen the leadership skill of community college employees at all levels” (p. 1). Collecting information from North Carolina community college presidents and the NCCCLP may provide valuable insights into how leadership skills might be strengthened.

When discussing the importance of higher education leadership development programs, Piland and Wolf (2003) assert: “we believe that the challenge of providing developmental programming for community college leaders is among the two or three most important issues facing the enterprise” (p. 3). Understanding the leadership process, identifying competencies necessary for successful leadership, and supporting and/or developing leadership programs are vital steps in the process of developing future leaders. Observing and interviewing current community college presidents may add to our knowledge of the leadership process, the spirituality connection, and discovering the experiences which presidents deemed most important to their evolution as a leader, subsequently aiding in the advancement of leadership development practices.

Meaning to the Researcher

In the spring of 2006, I read Palmer’s (2000) *Let Your Life Speak* and became captivated by the statement “A good leader is intensely aware of the interplay of inner shadow and light, lest the act of leadership do more harm than good” (p. 78). At the time, I was dealing with a particularly challenging organizational dilemma at my place of employment and the statement caused me to reframe the situation, cope with my own self-doubts and, in the process, resolve to become a better administrator, leader, and person. Relying on a long held belief in life-long learning, summarized in my e-mail signature quote

attributed to James Thurber “It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers,” I embarked on a journey to better understand the leadership process. This journey led me to the concept of transformational leadership and the role that spirituality may play in the manner of applying this particular leadership model.

Transformational leaders involve followers in developing a shared vision by employing exceptional communication skills and the leadership skills of followers through teaching and coaching (Bass & Riggo, 2010). Spirituality guides leaders into doing the right thing, building trust and respect, and having the inner strength to weather difficult situations. Attending a Society of Friends or Quaker Meeting all of my life has given me the opportunity to experience these principles. Quakers believe in the value of each member’s opinion, consensus building, and the growth of the individual. *Yea* or *nay* votes are not taken in Quaker meetings, rather when the clerk of the convening group senses that everyone’s concerns have been heard he/she will ask for an approval and the membership responds with *I approve*. If the clerk does not sense that the members have reached a consensus he/she may set aside a call for approval until a later meeting (North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2004). Transformational leaders employ strategies to generate decisions within the organizations they lead in a similar manner by allowing for open discussion of topics, valuing the opinions of followers, and supporting the growth of individuals within the organization.

Purpose Statement

Malm (2008) employed a qualitative ethnomethodological research technique to interview six Maryland community college presidents to better understand how their leadership styles aided in meeting institutional challenges and facilitating change. While not

specifically mentioning spirituality and transformational leadership, his report of the presidents' responses contained terminology consistent with these two concepts. Descriptors of the presidents' perceptions of leadership included "integrity, honesty, congruency between actions and words, consistency, trustworthiness, self-understanding, values, visibility, communication, courage, enthusiasm, passion, commitment, humor, approachability, empathy, and innate abilities" (p. 625). Dent et al. (2005) uses many of the same terms to define spirituality. Malm (2008) cautioned that his research was not generalizable to other community college systems and suggested that studies of community college presidents from other states may prove beneficial and add to our knowledge of leadership processes. Conducting interviews and observations of North Carolina community college presidents regarding their leadership and spirituality could add to our understanding of the practice of leadership.

The primary purpose of this study is to better understand the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership by observing and interviewing community college presidents purposefully selected from the North Carolina Community College System. . . . Secondly, the study design included exploring the activities and events that had supported the development of each president's leadership aptitude.

Research Questions

Leadership literature (Astin, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Chickering et al., 2006; Malm, 2008; Stewart, 2006; Tisdell, 2001; Walker & McPhail, 2009) indicates a relationship between authentic leadership and spirituality. In a study of six Maryland community college presidents, Malm (2008) submitted that study participants used spiritual terms to define leadership and suggested the relationship between leadership and spirituality deserves further

examination. The present study was designed so that I could observe and interview eight North Carolina community college presidents to investigate the relationship between their spirituality and leadership style, specifically those presidents who self report transformation leadership characteristics.

Research questions for this investigation into the relationship between transformational leadership and spirituality were:

- How does the president view his/her spirituality in the context of leadership style?
- How do the presidents' use of spirituality and the transformation leadership model align with AACC competencies and current literature?
- What activities and educational experiences have aided in the development of presidents' spirituality and leadership styles?
- What evidence exists of specific formal spirituality and leadership development activities at the institution created or supported by the president?

Methodology

While quantitative methods (Hartsfield, 2004; Judge & Piccolo, 2004) are effective in investigating the attributes of transformational leaders, qualitative research methodology provides appropriate procedures for the study of the relationship between transformational leadership and spirituality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) and were employed in this study. The qualitative data gathering techniques of observation and interviewing offer the opportunity to deeply explore values and ideals held by research participants while simultaneously allowing for valid, reliable, and cohesive interpretations to immerse from the data. An interpretive approach (Glense, 2011; Maxwell, 2005) was

applied to the data collected as I, the researcher, served as the primary instrument of data compilation and evaluation.

Significance of the Study

Albert Einstein is credited with the statement “The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them” (Moncur & Moncur, 2011). Some authors of leadership literature (Bohm, 1996; Palmer, 2000; Wheatley, 2006, 2007) profess that the problems our society face require new forms of leadership which incorporate creating shared visions, consensus building, excellent communication skills, valuing the input of others, and acting in a moral and ethical manner. These same attributes may be found in the descriptors the AACCC (2005) uses to describe its six competencies for community college leaders and the terms are also common to transformational leadership component depictions (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Combined with the resurgence of spirituality as a topic of discussion in higher education leadership, studying leadership in practice can aid in clarifying the impact and importance of these attributes on the process of effective leadership.

Community college presidents are constantly confronting budgetary constraints, reduced financial aid, and underprepared students while at the same time attempting to meet greater expectations for student preparedness. Additional challenges include undocumented students, advances in technology, and new modes of instructional delivery (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Addressing these issues will require cooperative efforts of individuals within the community college as well as the development and use of partnerships exterior to the college. Effective leadership will be critical to the success of the community college mission.

Studying the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership among North Carolina community college presidents should add to our knowledge of the phenomenon and perhaps clarify how the term *effective leadership* manifests itself in practice. While a survey of the literature produces several articles postulating a connection between spirituality and leadership (Astin, 2004; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Hafner, & Capper, 2005; Hoppe, 2005), there appears to be a lack of actual research on the connection, especially in the community college setting. Malm (2008), upon completing a study of leadership approaches of Maryland community college presidents, stressed that additional research is needed to augment our knowledge of the leadership process.

Leadership is a constantly evolving subject to which continual study in context and practice is necessary. Effective leaders can take followers to a place of “hidden wholeness” because the leaders have come to understand their inner selves and can show others how to understand themselves (Palmer, 2000, p. 81). Without a comprehension of who we are and what our organizations’ identities are, we cannot develop responses to problems which are credible, viable, and attainable.

Definitions

Transformational leadership. Northouse (2001) cites references specifying there have been as many as sixty-five different classification systems of leadership developed in the previous fifty years. Transformational leadership is one of the systems which appears to have developed a following within the leadership research community. Northouse writes that over 200 research projects, theses, and dissertations have been conducted on the leadership style while Bommer, Rubin, and Baldwin (2004) assert that, with over 20 years of compiled research evidence, “there is little doubt that transformational leadership behavior (TLB) is

related to a wide variety of positive individual and organizational outcomes” (p. 195).

Transformational leadership is a style which has broad appeal across disciplines and cultures (Astin, 2004; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Chatterjee & Krishnan, 2007; Dantley, 2003).

Conceptualized in 1978 by Burns and further developed by Bass, the transformational leadership model has leaders stimulating and inspiring followers to achieve astonishing outcomes and developing their own leadership capacity (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Stewart (2006) identifies the transformational leader as a person who “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 9). Valdez (2004) links transformational leadership to change by stating that “Transformational leadership can be thought of as a set of behaviors of individuals who accomplish change” (p. 3). The transformational leader invites followers to actively participate in the process of change.

Transformational leadership may be broken down into four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2010). An instrument, titled Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), has been developed, and analytical studies conducted by a number of researchers have aided in the construction of these components. The four components provide structure to the leadership model and allow for the identification of the style in the actions of leaders.

Within the component of idealized influence, transformational leaders conduct themselves in ways that build admiration, respect, and trust among their followers. Followers believe that leaders will do the right thing (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Fullan (2003) asserts that a leader will not panic when things go wrong. Sternberg (2005) also views this component as a part of the leader’s ability to take sensible risks and balance varying interests.

Transformational leaders aid the development of an organization's sense of mission. Amey (2005) emphasizes the importance of this aptitude by stating, "The more shared values are internalized, the less need there is for authoritarian leadership" (p. 698). Collins (2001) frames a sense of mission as the "hedgehog concept" and states that leaders are constantly reminding followers of the need to stay focused on the organization's true purpose (p. 95). Creating a network of shared values links the organization, leader, and followers together and allows the various parties within the organization to move as one.

The inspirational motivation component has transformational leaders behaving in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work (Bass & Riggio, 2010). A leader with a high inspirational motivation component could be considered a charismatic or inspirational leader. Exceptional communication skills are also an important element of the inspirational motivation component. Effective leaders must be able to clearly articulate an encouraging future and possess excellent listening skills. Northouse (2001) asserts "People are attracted to transformational leadership because it makes sense to them" (p. 184). Transformational leaders look for the best in people and encourage them to put their talents on display, which may lead to greater follower self-confidence and personal growth.

As part of the institution, community college administrators and faculty need to acquire new lenses for critically assessing work, the college and its mission, goal attainment, and their role in the organizational function (Amey, 2005). The intellectual stimulation component has transformational leaders stimulating "their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old problems in new ways" (Bass & Riggio, 2010, p. 78). Kegan and Lahey (2001) and Bolman and Deal

(2001) provide guidance in the methods leaders may learn to challenge their own assumptions and reframe situations as well as leading followers through these same processes. The transformational leader desiring to create an environment of intellectual stimulation will support creativity and never publicly criticize a follower. Multiple viewpoints and ideas strengthen an organization's chances for success. Wheatley (2006) states, "An organization rich with many interpretations develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done" (p. 67). The openness of the intellectual stimulation component creates a "transcendence and spiritual dimension" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 188). Leaders engaging in intellectual stimulation cultivate a safe environment for challenging assumptions, considering alternate viewpoints, and developing new solutions.

The transformational leader practicing individualized consideration pays attention to each follower and spends time teaching and coaching (Bass & Riggio, 2010). The follower is seen by the leader as a whole person rather than just an employee and provides the follower with opportunities for growth. Parks (2005) states that good coaching allows followers to understand what they need to see and be or to "hear the song beneath the words" (pp. 101-102). The ability to articulate opportunities for growth without demeaning or demoralizing the follower is an important skill for the transformational leader to master.

Supporting and knitting the four components together is a leader's spirituality. Many proponents of transformational leadership support the belief that leaders must develop their inner selves in order to be effective. Chickering et al. (2006) emphasize that effective leaders are made, not born, bring others to a shared vision, and empower followers through their spirituality and authenticity. Northouse (2001) contends that transformational leadership is set apart from other leadership models because it "places a strong emphasis on followers'

needs, values, and morals” (p. 184). Authentic transformational leadership has a high moral and ethical dimension grounded in spirituality (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). As such, continuing to conduct research on the relationship between transformational leadership and spirituality in order to further understand the phenomenon is worth our time and energy.

Quakerism and transformational leadership. Quakers believe that “God has endowed each person with gifts which are to be developed and exercised to the extent of one’s ability” (NCYMF, 2004, p. 59). Additionally, all members of a meeting have equal voice and responsibility in the operation of the meeting. Consensus building through “unhurried and sympathetic consideration to all proposals and expressions of opinion” provides members the opportunity to share their thoughts in an open and safe environment (p. 60). The leader applying transformational principles seeks to create a shared vision for the organization and give followers the opportunity for growth (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Followers are encouraged by the leader to openly share views and explore growth opportunities. Time and patience may be needed to fully realize the dividends of these investments in followers (Collins, 2001). Quakers and transformational leaders have the forbearance to allow the process to produce positive results.

Spirituality.

Our lives are like the reverse side of a great tapestry. From the back, all we can see are the knots, the imperfections, some bumps, some smears of color. It all looks random and chaotic. Only from the front side of the tapestry is it possible to see how it all fits together. From the front you can see that every stitch and every knot forms an integral part of a vast, magnificent picture. In life, for the most part, we only see the back of the tapestry. (Hendrie, 2011, para. 1)

What we wish others to see of ourselves is the front side of the tapestry, the colorful, meaningful images of who we want others to believe we are. Yet it is the threads of experience and the knotty, chaotic, jumbled journey of life we travel collecting these threads which gives form and support to what we display. Our true spirituality resides on the back side of the tapestry, a unique creation, ever present yet rarely directly visible, but always supporting who we are and how we respond to others.

Many authors have acknowledged difficulty generating a succinct definition of spirituality as it relates to leadership. Speck (2005) lists nine distinct definitions found in works published between 2000 and 2003. Chickering et al. (2006) relate they have encountered similar difficulties in describing inner knowing when conducting workshops due to the diverse terms used by and the multitude of backgrounds of participants. Speck and Hoppe (2007) state, “the definitional problem regarding spirituality is the greatest difficulty theorists face in attempting to develop a viable research program for investigating spirituality” (p. 281). This descriptive dilemma necessitates that literature or research on spirituality include the author’s operational definition of the subject and be broad enough to include a variety of individual stories while specific enough to identify spirituality in action.

Separate from religion. Gilley (2005) states:

Therefore, it is important for our purpose here to choose a definition of spirituality that treats the concept as a separate and unique human attribute, realizing that most religious people also consider themselves to be spiritual but that not all spiritual people consider themselves to be religious. (p. 95)

Creating a characterization of spirituality which may or may not include a religious component reinforces the objective of developing an inclusive definition of spirituality.

In their essay conceptualized from research and writing on spirituality and leadership, Hafner and Capper (2005) posit that there is a broad spectrum of definitions based in large part on the authors' own visions. Regardless of the definition employed when writing on spirituality and leadership, the authors make a distinction between spirituality and religion, and note that religion may inform or frame one's spirituality, but it is not required for a person to be considered spiritual. A spirituality separate from religion is not a new concept as origins of this thought may be traced back to the mid-1800s (Turner, 1985). In her research on spirituality in higher education, Estanek (2006) also asserts the topic is separate from religion but an individual may interrelate the two concepts. Speck (2007) states, when "Spirituality is uncoupled from religion" the focus moves to the individual (p. 24). Therefore, when defining spirituality, religion may or may not be a part of the description.

Sense of community. Hoppe (2005), acknowledging the descriptive dilemma, adopts "a nonrestrictive definition of spirituality that allows the outcome of ongoing questions: the search for depth and the meaning in our entire being" (p. 84). She considers spiritual leadership to include an inner journey in which leaders search for meaning, significance, wholeness, and connectedness in their lives. Jones (2005) employs similar terms but adds transcendence to her definition. She believes that, when in a spiritual state, people more clearly experience life by moving beyond their own psychological boundaries. Authentic leaders are constantly stepping outside themselves, examining why they have sought out leadership roles, and how the roles touch their inner being.

Often spiritual definitions include the individual's sense of community and connectedness. Dent et al. (2005) in their definitional review state, "Authors define spirituality as transformational, moral, and ethical and claim that spirituality assumes

integrity, honesty, goodness, knowing, wholeness, congruency, interconnectedness, teamwork, etc.” (p. 629). Astin (2004) contends,

Spirituality has to do with the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here – the meaning and purpose that we see in our work and our life – and our sense of connectedness to each other and to the world around us. (p. 4)

The concepts of community and connectedness are important to true transformational leaders as they attempt to create shared vision and meaning among followers.

Morals and ethics. *Moral* and *ethical* are often found as important descriptors of spirituality. Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin (2006) tie morality and ethics to spirituality and leadership and deem the relationship critical to the proper application of power. Moral and ethical growth within one’s spirituality aids in the development of the individual as an effective leader (Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2003). From an African-American critical prophetic spirituality perspective, Dantley (2003) expresses spirituality in moral and ethical terms grounded in a sense of justice and fairness. Leaders’ core values, their moral and ethical foundation, supports and informs their depth of spirituality and acts of leadership.

Summation. While the difficulty of defining spirituality is “a theme that runs throughout all the literature on spirituality in higher education” (Speck, 2007, p. 22), the foundation of any study rests on the pillars of meaning given to basic concepts examined within the study, therefore, a definition of spirituality must be offered. The definition should be broad enough to be inclusive of a multitude of worldviews while specific enough to be observable in action. The individual threads of spirituality, values, morals, ethics, religion, a

sense of community, knowing, wholeness, etc. are woven by each individual into their own unique pattern of themselves. As researchers, we strive to identify the individual threads while at the same time trying to interpret the picture, the person, we see created by the weaver, a lived life.

Accepting the duality of a spirituality definition which includes individual terms and a *big picture* view, this study was conducted under the premise that a leader's inner knowing or spirituality is comprised of an assemblage of distinct experiences, values, morals, ethics, religion, a sense of community, knowing, wholeness, etc. discernible in the words and deeds of the leader while simultaneously evident in the community of followers he/she has influence on. This assemblage, held together by the belief that there is something greater than self, guides the actions of the individual to act beyond legal or socially acceptable norms and to purposefully create environments where others can experience personal and professional growth. Additionally, the leader's spirituality is an evolving process with new threads being added and the sense of wholeness becoming clearer as he/she travels life's pathway.

Hafner and Capper (2005) contend the definition is not what but how "the 'story' of spirituality and leadership develops and becomes legitimate in the broader field of educational leadership" (p.626). Teasdale (2001) writes:

Spirituality is a way of life that affects and includes every moment of existence. It is at once a contemplative attitude, a disposition to a life of depth, and the search for ultimate meaning, direction, and belonging. The spiritual person is committed to growth as an essential, ongoing life goal. To be spiritual requires us to stand on our

own two feet while being nurtured and supported by our tradition, if we are fortunate enough to have one (p. 17).

Interpreting the ‘story’ of a leader’s spirituality is the responsibility of the researcher whose own sense of spirituality becomes a critical component of the evaluative process and must be articulated throughout the research process.

North Carolina community college presidency. The North Carolina community college system, third largest in the United States, consists of 58 colleges with service areas assigned by the North Carolina General Assembly. Each community college is governed by a 12 or more member board of trustees generally appointed for four-year terms by the governor, the local board of education, and the board of county commissioners (North Carolina Community College System, 2011b). The board of trustees conducts presidential searches and, with the approval of the North Carolina Community College (NCCC) system office and state board of trustees, selects the president. Presidential selection is considered one of the most important functions of a community college board of trustees (Plinkse & Packard, 2010).

Community college presidents, while directly reporting to the board of trustees, serve a number of other constituencies. Leaders from business, industry, and community entities along with faculty, staff, and students all have their unique sets of interests and methods of applying influence to advance their agenda. Addressing the variety of interests requires the president to juggle resources which requires a significant amount of time and energy (Jensen, Giles, & Kirklin, 2000). Walker and McPhail (2009) assert that “educational leaders often bear the brunt of all of society’s dilemmas and problems, and communities often demand that leaders fix everything” (p. 322). North Carolina’s mixture of rural and urban settings, with

great diversity of educational needs, requires the community college president to become thoroughly familiar with the service area covered by the college he/she leads.

Malm (2008) asserts community college leaders are perceived as responsive, innovative, and equipped to lead, but what constitutes a well prepared leader? The AACC endorsed and provided illustrations for six competencies believed to be important for the success of the community college leader. The competencies are organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism. The AACC acknowledged the contributions of over 150 individuals with ties to higher education into the development of the competencies and illustrations. The AACC also put forward the supposition that leadership could be learned and that “While it can be enhanced immeasurably by natural aptitude and experience, supporting leaders with exposure to theory, concepts, case guided experiences , and other practical information and learning methodologies is essential” (AACC, 2005, p. 2). It is imperative that the higher education community continue to research and identify best practices in leadership. Eddy and VanDerLinden (2006) assert the best time to nurture expanding conceptions of what it means to be a leader is during the leadership training process. Rich theoretical immersion, guided exercises, and practical illustrations taken from practitioners’ experiences would be viable components of leadership education programs. I believed this study had the capability to add to this discourse.

Cohen and Brawer (2003) characterize the community college as nontraditional. Community colleges, especially in North Carolina, serve a variety of constituents with each constituency believing that the community college must conform to their needs. Balancing and addressing these competing needs require administrators who can build consensus and

motivate others to shared visions. Transformational leaders enjoy working in organizations which value collaboration and attempt to foster a workplace environment which supports the application of these concepts.

Summary

Effective leadership is a much studied, talked, and written about subject. With the potential for a number of presidential openings in the North Carolina community college system, the importance of understanding the traits needed for quality leadership and strategies for preparing individuals to fill the openings is easily recognized. The transformational leadership model, grounded with the leader's sense of inner knowing or spirituality, has garnered significant support within the leadership community to serve as the benchmark for quality leadership. Conducting research by observing and interviewing presidents currently serving in the North Carolina community college system should help to answer the questions of what effective leadership is and , how spirituality affects the leadership process, and may also add to the general discourse of leadership development.

A review of literature on transformational leadership and spirituality follows this introductory chapter. Chapter three explains the methodology and procedures used in conducting the research. Findings of the study are presented in chapter four. Chapter five includes analysis of the data in connection to the literature, limitations and implications of the study, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

The Quaker Forbush community, an unincorporated area of Yadkin County surrounding Forbush Friends Meeting, is where I have resided for all of my life. The community has a number of places where residents frequent to buy groceries and catch up on local events. As a lad I occasionally had the opportunity to tag along with my father to John Webb's store. The white, single room wood-frame building sits alongside a sharp curve of Forbush Road approximately two miles from my home. The store is no longer in operation, but when it was open the building was heated by a wood stove, and in the cold winter months the 'men folk' would gather around its warmth to swap stories and discuss the news of the day. While whittling, chewing tobacco, and displaying their prowess at hitting the spittoon, these men would engage in dialogue, learning about each other, their families, successes, failures, hopes, and dreams. These conversations provided a foundation for understanding and meaning making as I grew toward adulthood.

In this literature review, I hope to create a foundation for the study of the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership through the lenses of researchers and practitioners in the field of education as well as drawing on commentary from connected disciplines such as law, business, and sociology. By weaving together the informational thoughts of many writers, a conceptual framework basket can be created to contain the many aspects of the study while, at the same time, allowing these features to mingle and create interconnections between themselves. Let us gather around the stove and have a conversation about spirituality, transformational leadership and higher education.

The Road Ahead

This study explored the relationship of spirituality as a component of transformational leadership. The key areas of research included observing and interpreting interactions between community college presidents and their followers along with guided conversations with the presidents. Participants were purposefully selected from among currently serving North Carolina community college presidents. With the study purpose and participant pool in mind, this literature analysis contains a brief historical perspective of spirituality and transformational leadership, followed by a broad review of current literature on the topics. Further, this review includes an examination of recent North Carolina presidential search position descriptions and other literature on community college leadership qualities. This literature review concludes with a summary of the conceptual framework guiding the study.

A Brief Historical Review of Spirituality in American Higher Education

Spirituality has held a position of varying significance in American higher education beginning with the opening of the first colonial institution. Murphy (2005) traces the spiritual identity of the academy through three eras of prominence and development. From the founding of Harvard University in 1636 until just prior to the American Civil War c. 1860, higher education's purpose included an "awareness of the soul's relationship to God" and educating the individual to a "higher knowledge" (p. 23). Speck (2007) states institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Duke, now considered leaders in the liberal approach to life, were founded with the intention of supporting Christianity by producing ministers to serve congregations of believers. Chickering et al. (2006) identify values formation as a vital function of higher education institutions from the colonial period into the twentieth century. Religious, particularly Christian, roots ran deeply through institutions of American higher

education with moral underpinning and character building considered to be active functions of the academy.

According to Murphy (2005), the second era of spirituality in American higher education, from pre-Civil War until World War II, brought a shift in views of the academy as a research institution dedicated to exploring science and technology. Yet, this conversion did not occur overnight nor was the transformation complete. Speck (2007) relates a story of a public university president in the south who, only roughly 50 years ago, continued to ask the religious affiliation of interviewees for faculty positions. Beginning after World War II, the business model for education dominates the third era, with profit margins and quality management having replaced concerns for community service and academic integrity (Murphy, 2005). Murphy concludes the historical review by underscoring that the conflicting views of spirituality's role in higher education will continue to evolve as society wrestles "with issues of what constitutes knowledge, truth, education, and even the individual intellect and spirit" (p. 28). Today, a search of the terms spirituality and higher education on the amazon.com web site produces a return of approximately 120 results and research articles on the topics abound. By the sheer volume of current written material on the topic, making a claim for a renewal in the relevance of spirituality in higher education appears to be a straightforward proposition.

The Conceptualization of Transformational Leadership

In an effort to address what he considered to be a crisis of leadership, James McGregor Burns conceptualized a new approach to leadership in his book, *Leadership*. Burns (2010/1978), attempting to articulate the relationship between leadership and followership, proffered the term *transforming leadership* to contrast with transactional

leadership which occurs when one person initiates contact with another person or persons to exchange valued items. The exchange could include money for time or election votes for promises to serve in a particular manner. By comparison, transforming leadership occurs when one or more individuals “*engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 2010/1978, p. 20). Burns, drawing primarily on political and social illustrations, further advanced the characterization of transforming leadership by describing the model as a producer of effective change, a collective enterprise, morally focused, and reproducible.

Using examples from generally recognizable historical figures and events, Burns (2010/1978) constructs the model of transforming leadership on the pillars of change for the good of leader and follower, a shared venture, value driven, and learnable. For Burns, change, especially in the social sector, benefits society and legitimizes the leadership process. Leaders practicing transforming leadership involve followers in planning and implementation of activities, value input, and share rewards. Moral identities and value systems are communicated and raised with the followers gaining sufficient experience to move into leadership roles. As presented by Burns (2010/1978), the transforming leadership model advances the premise that people may evolve through the act of leadership and become “better selves” (p. 462).

Further advancement of the leadership model involved changing the name from transforming to transformational and the development of more well-defined components to illustrate the model. Four components, idealized influence (attributed and behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, have become the foundation upon which transformational leadership now rests (Bass & Riggo,

2010; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). To measure the components and to contrast a leader's transformational leadership traits against transactional and laissez-faire leadership, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed by Bass and Avolio (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008). The current 45 question MLQ 5x is designed to measure five factors of transformational leadership, three factors of transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership. The instrument also measures three leadership outcomes. Since its development, the MLQ 5x has been used extensively by researchers to study transactional and transformational leadership in a variety of organizational and cultural settings.

The Call for a New Approach to Leadership

Early perspectives on leadership focused on traits, characteristics, and skills such as physical attributes, intelligence, and charisma (Northouse, 2001). However, the past half century has seen a change in the viewpoint on the type of leadership needed for organizations to thrive in a world which has become more interconnected through technology. Burns (2010/1978) describes the state of leadership across the world as a "crisis", with mediocrity and irresponsibility abounding (p. 1). He went on to declare, with the preponderance of information available about the lives of leaders and 130 separate definitions of leadership indicating a lack of consensus on the subject, we know too much about our leaders and too little about effective leadership. Similarly, Wheatley (2006) calls for a new type of leadership. She maintains, "In this chaotic world we need leaders. But we don't need bosses. We need leaders to help us develop the clear identity that lights the dark moments of confusion" (p. 131). These concerns raise the question of what type or rather what characteristics should constitute this new leadership model.

Authors and researchers at the forefront of the call for new models of leadership underscore the need for leaders to look within themselves to summon the strength for effective leadership. Palmer (2000) exhorts people who wish to assume leadership roles to search their own heart for the reasons they desire to pursue positions of authority. While trying to make a difficult career decision, Palmer sought an inner understanding through the use of a Quaker clearness committee. During a very disciplined gathering, the clearness committee, comprised of four to six individuals whom the focus person trusts, asks the focus person brief, honest, open questions regarding his/her dilemma. Committee members do not provide feedback unless the focus person requests comments and then feedback is given without analysis. The intent of the process is to aid the focus person to listen to his/her “inner teacher” (Palmer, 2000, p. 134-137). Other non-sectarian methods for looking within one’s own self could include reconnecting with the individual’s original calling (Chickering et al., 2006) or challenging deeply embedded assumptions (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). Having the willingness and ability for introspection is a trait valued by individuals calling for new modes of leadership.

Other authors have echoed the need for self-examination and leading from an inner foundation to create effective relationships. Bolman and Deal (2001) state, “as someone once observed, follow the highway and you’ll probably arrive at a destination; follow your heart and you may leave a trail” (p. 11). They go on to explain leaders lose their way by losing touch with their souls which eventually adversely affects their followers and organizations. Fashioning an authentic, mutually beneficial, leader-follower bond is a key goal for transformational leaders with organizational strength springing from positive relationships. Wheatley (2006) remarks on developing relationships, “If power is the

capacity generated by our relationships, then we need to be attending to the *quality* of those relationships” (p. 40). Transformational leaders tend to the relationships with followers by fostering a shared vision and mission of the organization and by exhibiting concern for each individual follower. Leaders are able to hold firm through turbulent times and difficult situations by effectively maintaining and relying on their own spiritual anchor.

Additional characteristics the of the new leadership model espoused by experts in the field include a sense of self-worth and effective communication. Bolman and Deal (2001) comment on these attributes by stating, “Individuals need to see their work as meaningful and worthwhile, to feel personally accountable for the consequences of their efforts, and to get feedback that lets them know the results” (p. 112). The inspirational motivation and individualized consideration components of the transformational leadership model address these features of leadership. Transformational leaders possess exceptional communication skills and provide attention to each follower through teaching and coaching (Bass & Riggo, 2010). Offering timely, meaningful information and support aids in the creation of an environment in which followers may be successful in their work and believe they are important to the mission of the organization.

The Call for Spirituality in Higher Education

Influential higher education writers in America call for a reconsideration of the importance of spirituality within the institution and for effective leadership. Palmer and Zajonc (2010) envision the mission of higher education as not only to instill knowledge but to provide an incubator for individual meaning making. They state, “If higher education cannot deal with the messiness of real life, educated people will not be prepared to use their knowledge amid the complexities and cruelties that constantly threaten to undo civilization”

(p. 38). Effective authentic leadership is the key to the implementation of any initiative which attempts to add or underscore values, meaning making, inner knowing, or spirituality to the academy. While leaders may harbor trepidation even at the mere thought of discussing spirituality in the academy, Chickering et al. (2006) assert campus leadership as critical to spiritual growth “and the search for meaning and values as central to the mission of higher education” (p.258) and therefore the influence of leaders is essential to the success of any initiative focused on a reinfusion of spirituality in higher education.

Some writers assert that leaders from minority groups often perceive spirituality as foundational to their interaction with higher education and the world in general. Tisdell (2001) reviewed research which suggests spirituality is important to multicultural women adult educators and found spirituality came up not because the educators brought it up but the communities in which they served brought it up. Transformational leaders, operating within a code of morals and ethics or spiritual dimension, reduce power structures and allow for the growth of followers from marginalized groups (Dantley, 2003). As globalization and the blending of cultures in America continue, the inclusion of individuals from various ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds into the ranks of leadership is essential to the vitality of the academy.

Leadership as Spiritual Work

Some literature suggests leadership is spiritual work and should spring from our inner selves. Fairholm (2001) maintains to positively influence followers “leaders must appeal to them on a different level than mere physical drives. They must also connect at the level of the spirit and emotions” (p. 97). Fairholm goes on to include shared meaning, transformation, integrity, ethical values, and commitment among the elements of spirituality-focused

leadership . A leader then must understand “one's inner life reflects positively or negatively on one's leadership” which can then “serve to bring authenticity and humility to the leadership process” (Allen, Bordas, Hickman, Matusak, Sorenson, & Whitmire, 2010, p. 577). Thus, one could argue that a spirituality grounded person inherently holds the attributes of authentic and effective leadership and excluding his/her inner knowing from the leadership process is akin to running on one leg: making great strides is quite difficult and there is high probability for injury.

Palmer (2000) considers the relationship between an individual's inner knowing and the actions of leadership as a symbiotic relationship with the person's external actions aligning with the truths held in his/her inner being or living “divided no more” (p. 32). Leaders must find this place of connectedness within themselves before they assist followers to a place of “hidden wholeness” (p. 81). Likewise, Tisdell (2001) implores leaders to rely on their spiritual experiences as anchors when they interact with others lest the act of leadership pulls the leaders away from their true nature and calling. Additionally, maintaining and relying on deep spiritual roots is important for the psychological nourishment of the leader as the process of leadership is mentally and emotionally draining (Chickering et al., 2006). In the transformational leadership model, leaders provide encouragement, support, inspiration, and strength for followers to tap. Without a deep well of inner knowing to draw from the leader could wither from the strain of follower needs and expectations.

Strengths of Transformational Leadership

Researchers and writers in the field of leadership extol the virtues of transformational leadership as an effective style. Northouse (2001) presents six points to support the model.

He asserts transformational leadership has been researched extensively from a variety of viewpoints. The model has a natural attraction. The practice involves both leaders and followers providing a broader view than other models with a strong emphasis on the needs, values, and morals of followers. Northouse concludes by citing references of transformational leadership's effectiveness in a variety of situations.

Over the past 20 years a substantial body of research has been accumulated on transformational-transactional leadership dichotomy. Judge & Piccolo (2004), conducting a meta-analysis of 87 studies on transformational leadership, found "The validity of transformational leadership, in particular, seems to generalize across many situations, including when it is studied in rigorous settings" (p. 765). However, they also stated their analysis suggests, in non-business environments, transformational leadership is a more effective style than transactional or congruent reward leadership because it is not resource dependent. Business leaders tend to have greater access to tangible enticements and thus reward followers for their efforts. In non-business settings, such as education where resources are more limited and regulated, transformational leadership shows a superior influence on organizational effectiveness. Conversations with community college presidents could offer insight as to how they are able to reward followers with limited tangible resources and present viable options for future leaders to employ.

Similar to the literature advocating the importance of spirituality to higher education leaders with multicultural backgrounds, studies support the usefulness of transformational leadership in diverse settings. Hay (2006) indicates the model has shown success in an assortment of professional and cultural situations. Coleman (2003) argues transformational leadership is the best model for education because it is less hierarchical and inspires staff to a

shared vision. She continues to tout the virtues of the style by supporting the belief that transformational leadership is more closely aligned with a feminine paradigm of management. Dantley (2003) suggests the style's influence is enhanced within marginalized groups. Collectively, these inferences support the advocacy of transformational leadership as a style worthy of consideration and study within educational settings.

Authentic transformational leaders are judged to be ethical and moral in their dealings with others and thus the traits are considered additional strengths of the style. Shields and Edwards (2005) submit that leaders operating with a moral purpose are "often dismissed as soft and unmeasurable" but, by citing the work of several other prominent educators as evidence, support the notion that moral purpose is an essential part of leadership (p. 97). Commentators on the needed traits for community college leaders reinforce the need for ethical and moral leadership. As Wallin (2007) states, "It is not sufficient for the president to be a strong, well-connected, and intelligent leader; the successful president must also be an ethical leader" (p. 33). Much of the effectiveness of transformational leaders comes from the trust they engender in followers through moral actions and ethical treatment. Observing interactions between leaders and their followers may furnish evidence to support the application and effect of this facet of leadership.

Criticisms of Transformational Leadership

While transformational leadership has received much support in literature, the leadership style is not without criticisms. Northouse (2001) lists seven items of concern which include a lack of conceptual clarity, the validity of the MLQ, and the question of the style being a personality trait rather than a learned behavior. The perceived elitist nature of the style, the style suffering from a heroic leadership complex, a potential abuse of followers,

and support of the leadership style relying heavily on quantitative data from very visible leaders of organizations not in organizations stand as additional criticisms of transformational leadership. However subsequent research and further refinement of the model have addressed many of these concerns.

The validity of the transactional-transformational evaluation instrument, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), and the lack of conceptual clarity or overlap of the four components, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration stood as concerns for many critics in the field of leadership studies (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). However, Muenjohn and Armstrong (2008), using a confirmatory factor analysis approach on 138 cases, generated results which support the arguments for MLQ 5x as a valid instrument and of the distinctiveness of the four transformational leadership components. The predictive validity of the instrument is also supported by Lunenburg (2003).

Proponents of the leadership style address several criticisms, the elitist and heroic nature of transformational leadership and the potential of follower abuse, by refining the model, stressing a moral and ethical dimension, and making a distinction between authentic and pseudo-transformational leadership. A number of writers and researchers support the notion for the potential of transformational leaders to lose sight of collective success and become enamored with organizational achievements to the point the leaders believe they are the primary reason for the accomplishments (Dent et al., 2005; Hay, 2006; Kinkead, 2006). A firm moral and ethical grounding can aid in overcoming the temptation of the “dark side” of leadership (Dent et al., 2005, p.642). Looking inward, objectively challenging motives, and maintaining a spiritual focus helps transformational leaders avoid the pitfalls of egotism.

Palmer (2008) considers the inward/outward nature of authentic leadership a powerful and essential paradox to be explored and nurtured. How senior administrators strike a balance between their inner and outer personas to facilitate the leadership process is an aspect of the present study.

Kelloway and Barling (2000) conducted research on transformational leadership within the banking industry, asking the questions: can transformational leadership be taught and does it make any difference in organizational outcomes? They concluded that leaders' transformational leadership skills ratings, as scored by their followers, were higher for individuals who attended training sessions. Additionally, credit card and personal loan sales increased at bank branch locations where the manager had been trained in transformational leadership. This research supports Parks' (2005) assertion that leadership can be taught and thus studying how leadership traits are learned may advance our training programs.

While some qualitative research has been conducted (Malm, 2008; Walker & McPhail, 2009), this study may help to address criticisms of transformational leadership research relying too heavily on quantitative data to support the model. Certainly the community college president is highly visible; however the intent of the study was to investigate the relationship between leader and followers, the presidents' perceptions of how spirituality informs his/her actions, and how to foster the growth of leadership skills. An additional aim of the study was to focus on the president in the institution, interacting with followers, generating consensus among groups with varying interests, rather than of the institution as a symbol of authority.

Concerns About Spirituality's Inclusion in Higher Education

The reemergence of spirituality in higher education discourse has garnered much support but not without apprehension. Speck (2007) raises three critiques regarding the inclusion of spirituality as a matter of conversation and inclusion in higher education. His first concern centers on how individual spirituality, depending on personal inclinations, might give rise to community. Secondly, he asks how tolerance may occur when some individuals hold to a devout truth which provides no opportunity for diverse levels or manifestations of spirituality to emerge. Finally, what relationship should or does exist between social-political activity, legal issues, and spirituality? The application of transformational leadership may address these concerns.

Transformational leaders provide individualized consideration to followers and maintain an environment of openness and inclusion within the organizations they lead (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Followers are allowed to express themselves in appropriate manners and their opinions are respected by the leader. Conversations conducted in a dialogic format, where participants are not trying to convince or persuade but rather inform, allow for the possibility of a shared meaning and a sense of community to develop (Bohm, 1996). Exposure to multiple viewpoints on spirituality or inner knowing facilitate introspection and personal growth. Through transformational leadership, followers may continue to hold to their convictions while developing an appreciation for the devotions of others.

Academic leaders must be attentive to their legal responsibilities. Lowery (2005) examines spirituality, higher education, and law, providing a constitutional approach to and an understanding of spirituality's proper place in higher education. He uses specific litigated cases to illustrate the balancing act educators must master when considering an

individual's right to the freedom of religion verses the ban against the establishment of religion by governmental entities. Lowery also proffers the argument that recent seemingly contrasting court decisions send mixed messages to higher education administrators lending no simple answers to vexing problems associated with spirituality, student rights, and institutional responsibility. Administrators must balance the need to respect individual rights while simultaneously taking care not to favor religion and violate the Establishment clause of the United States Constitution. Again, the practice of transformational leadership and more specifically individualized consideration will aid the leader in providing for follower need while meeting legal obligations. Investigating how presidents create openness and inclusion at their institutions could provide useful information for aspiring leaders.

Change, Transformational Leadership, and Spirituality – Making Connections

A number of authors have connected spirituality to transformational leadership. Astin (2004) states two aspects of spirituality, values and connectedness, are important to the application of transformational leadership. Hartsfield (2004), relying on data collected from MLQ and Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) surveys completed by leaders in a large United States corporation, contends that a person in tune with his/her own inner self would be more likely to succeed as a transformational leader. Spirituality is credited in playing a large role in the transformative efforts of marginalized groups (Tisdell, 2001). Stewart (2006) makes the connection of spirituality and transformational leadership by suggesting that “leaders evolve from a structure of motivation, values, and goals” (p. 9). These authors bring a variety of perspectives to the relationship between transformational leadership and spirituality and provide support for the continued study among practitioners to better understand the connection.

Dantley (2003) reframes the relationship by suggesting critical spirituality, a combination of critical theory and spirituality might enhance the research of transformational leadership in education. He states that leaders must have the “moral courage” to “grapple with” difficult issues (p.11). This moral courage is a blending of the knowledge, lived experiences, morals, and ethics by which the person feels compelled to apply to life’s circumstances. Palmer (2000) asserts that persons applying moral courage have decided to live an authentic life, not acting in ways which are contrary to the convictions they hold deeply.

Evans (2009) suggests all organizations are caught in a paradox he portrays as the “changestability dilemma” (p. 63) where the organizations wish to change while staying the same. He explains much organizational literature and practices have been written and developed to assist management in either managing change or supporting stability but not being prepared to act in whichever direction necessary. However, with the properly created environment, Evans believes organizations can remain stable or change as needed. He states:

When led from a place of inspiration, people can feel safe enough to choose the proper direction. They can know when to be rigorously focused on the stability and when to relax and move in a direction and more appropriate direction. (p.64)

Evans supports spirituality grounded transformational leadership as a model of leadership which can inspire followers and create safe places from which to remain stable or affect change.

Community colleges, deeply rooted in the fabric of their service areas yet needing to act quickly to meet the educational demands of students, are often caught in the change vs. stability dilemma. Shifting local workforce needs necessitate the reduction and/or

elimination of time-honored programs and the shifting of resources to the development of new programs. The longstanding programs have faculty, staff, graduates and supporters who are closely wedded to programs and may hinder change. The community college president, while honoring the college's core philosophy, tradition, and history, must create environments in which stakeholders feel comfortable expressing themselves and are open to differing viewpoints. Literature (Astin, 2004; Dantley, 2003) suggests presidents operating within a transformational leadership model grounded in spirituality or inner knowing can successfully create these environments.

Recent Presidential Searches

Language in recent North Carolina community college presidential search profiles reveals that community college boards of trustees wish to hire individuals who possess traits synonymous with transformational leadership and spirituality (Brunswick Community College, 2010; Guilford Community College, 2010; Piedmont Community College, 2010; Stanley Community College, 2011; Surry Community College, 2011). The terms or phrases inspire, motivate, collaborate, instill a vision, ethical, and communicator appear in at least four of the five profiles. A comprehensive review of the profiles indicates a desire on the part of the trustees to select persons who have the capacity to effectively interact with a variety of constituencies and build consensus on shared visions for the community colleges. The boards also specify that candidates should demonstrate the capacity to lead through ethical honest behavior resulting in "a high level of trust within the college and the greater community" (Guilford Community College, 2010). A survey of transformational leadership and spirituality literature provides linkages between the concepts and desired presidential capabilities.

Plinske and Packard (2010), using a Delphi technique, identified community college trustee perceptions of desired traits and qualifications for presidential candidates. The Delphi technique is a three-phase process of collecting data, ranking the data, and receiving feedback on the rankings from a group of experts from the field under study. While transformational leadership and spirituality were not specifically mentioned by name, consensus was reached by participants that components such as good moral character, vision, good listener, people-person, self-aware, and ability to establish trust were important to the success of community college presidents. While not exclusive to the definitions, these descriptors are often found in the literature defining transformational leadership and spirituality.

Based on this literature, there appears to be a gap in our knowledge of a connection between transformational leadership and spirituality, particularly as pertaining to the community college presidency. An objective of this study was to investigate this connection.

Conceptual Framework

Maxwell (2005) characterizes a study's conceptual framework as a "model of what is out there that you plan to study" which ultimately informs the design, goals, questions, and analysis of the work (p. 33-37). Providing form, foundation, and boundaries for the study while at the same time permitting flexibility to explore unforeseen opportunities for discovery, the conceptual framework is constructed from historical and current literature and the researcher's experiential knowledge. Models describing the relationship between leadership and spirituality (Astin, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Chickering et al., 2006; Stewart, 2006; Tisdell, 2001; Walker & McPhail, 2009) are used as the basis for this framework.

The foundational supposition for this study is that transformational leadership principles, as articulated by Bass and Riggio (2010), when coupled with spirituality (Astin, 2004; Dantley, 2003; Hartsfield, 2004; Stewart, 2006), allow presidents to effectively lead their institutions. Additionally, transformational leadership and spirituality align with suggested AACCC (2005) presidential leadership competencies. Furthermore, the conceptual framework rests on the belief that the president's spirituality, comprised of the individual's sense of wholeness, values, morals, ethics, religion, and community, may be recognized in the president's self-analysis via survey instruments, the interactions with followers, and through interviews with the presidents.

Spirituality or inner knowing is important to transformational leaders to support their work and maintain a healthy understanding of self-worth so the process of leadership or change will be effective and beneficial to all involved. Spirituality provides the foundation for and anchors the four 'I's of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (see Figure 2.1). The moral courage necessary to successfully address difficult situations is a product of the leader's spirituality.

Individuals may draw on a number of activities to develop leadership and spirituality including formal training and lived experiences. Held formal religious convictions may aid in the development of leadership and spirituality, but are not required; yet the leader does hold a belief that there is something greater than self at work in the world. This belief holds the tenets of spirituality, morals, ethics, values, life's purpose, wisdom, intuition, and inner meaning, together to form a cohesive functional unit. Within this framework, the

foundational support spirituality provides to the transformational leader is vital to the success of the organization and followers being led.

This study is set within a paradigm of interpretivism where “reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing” (Glesne, 2011, p. 8). The researcher investigated and interpreted the relationship between the individual constructs of spirituality and transformational leadership held by North Carolina community college presidents with the supposition that the presidents employ their spirituality to support their work as effective change agents, whether consciously or unconsciously.

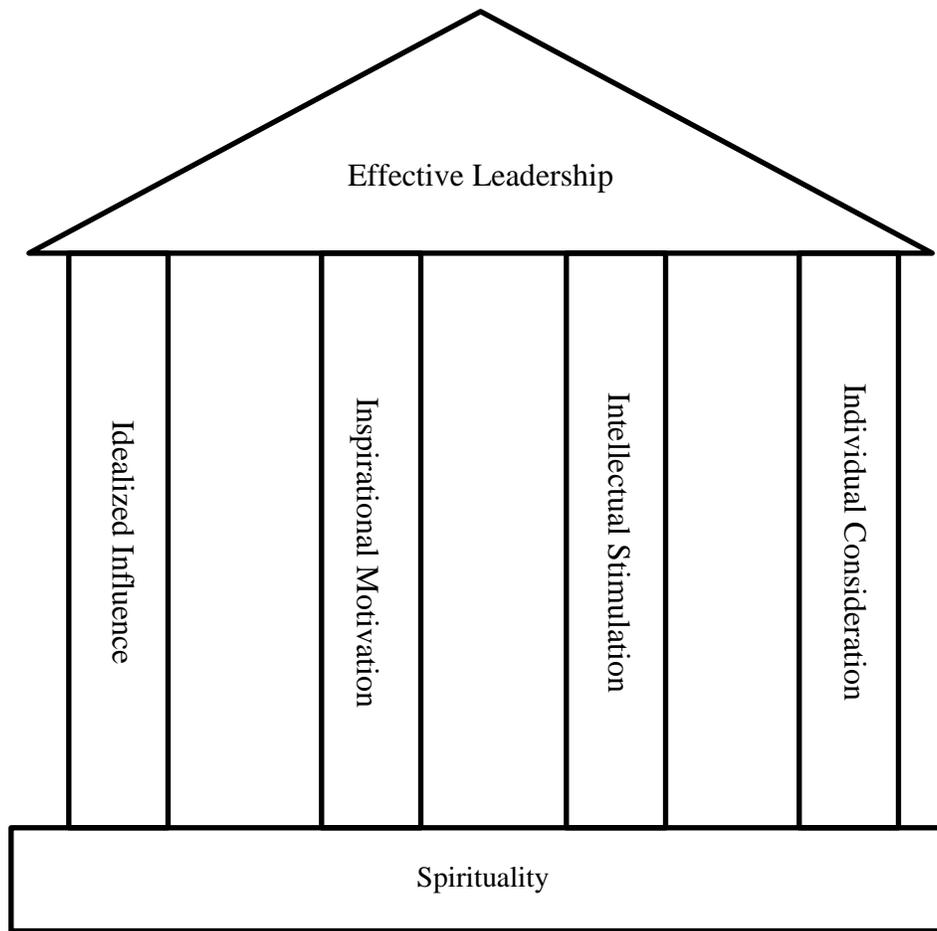


Figure 2.1. Spirituality, transformational leadership and effective leadership - spirituality anchoring the four “I”s of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2010) which in turn support effective leadership under which the organization may flourish.

Chapter Three – Methodology

This chapter details the methodology and processes used to collect and analyze study data, the appropriateness of the processes, and the measures taken to support validity and trustworthiness of the data. Additional objectives of the chapter are to revisit the research question, discuss the paradigm in which the research is situated, explore the role of the researcher, and address issues of ethics and validity.

Research Questions

Writers and researchers of leadership (Astin, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Chickering et al., 2006; Malm, 2008; Stewart, 2006; Tisdell, 2001; Walker & McPhail, 2009) postulate a relationship between authentic leadership and spirituality, especially when leaders operate within a transformational leadership model. Literature suggests spirituality undergirds the leadership process. Malm's (2008) study of six Maryland community college presidents indicated that the study participants expressed an essence of leadership, which included elements of spirituality and suggested additional studies in other states to provide comparisons to his work. In this interpretive study I observed and interviewed eight community college presidents purposefully selected from the North Carolina Community College System in order to investigate the relationship between their spirituality and leadership style. Additionally, I explored activities and events which supported the development of the presidents' leadership abilities.

The research questions were:

- How does the president view his/her spirituality in the context of leadership style?

- How do the presidents' use of spirituality and the transformation leadership model align with AACCC competencies and current literature?
- What activities and educational experiences have aided in the development of presidents' spirituality and leadership styles?
- What evidence exists of specific formal spirituality and leadership development activities at the institution created or supported by the president?

Methodology

While studies (Hartsfield, 2004; Judge & Piccolo, 2004) have been conducted which rely on quantitative methods to investigate attributes of transformational leaders through the use of questionnaires and surveys, investigating the relationship or application of spirituality within transformational leadership in practice may also be accomplished through the use of qualitative research methods. Purposefully selecting individuals, directly observing and questioning the selectees to validate their use of transformational leadership and spirituality skills, and to subsequently identify the experiences and/or educational activities which aided in their development as leaders, can be an effective method of data collection. As I observed and questioned the study participants, unforeseen prospects for discovery could have arisen which could not be investigated unless I, the researcher, had the opportunity to ask well-timed and well-crafted follow-up questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state, "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 3). Observing presidents in the practice of their craft turns their world into a collection of data, accumulated from natural settings, the researcher may "make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). The fundamental objective of this interpretive study was to better understand how

North Carolina community college presidents make meaning of their spirituality as it relates to the leadership they provide to the institutions they lead and how this information can be used to improve leadership development. The phenomenon of spirituality as a component of effective transformational leadership is an emerging concept and, for this study, was investigated by observing and interviewing eight community college presidents. Qualitative research methods, such as observations and interviews, offered the flexibility to examine and probe for the deep meanings held by research participants while at the same time providing sufficient structure to maintain the cohesion of any inferences which emerged from the data.

A qualitative approach to the investigation of spirituality and transformational leadership also allowed the data collected and analyzed to include artifacts, encounters, and conversations. Maxwell (2005) states, “the data in a qualitative study can include virtually anything that you see, hear, or that is otherwise communicated to you while conducting the study” (p.79). Nonverbal communication, curricula vitae, and office adornments are just some of the items which can provide insights into leadership characteristics and components of an individual’s spirituality and were included in data collected and analyzed. Inclusion of varied information provided greater clarity and validity to conclusions drawn from the data. Multiple methods and data sources support research triangulation and allow the researcher to validate claims (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011).

Paradigm – Interpretive Approach

The best description among the various qualitative research approaches for the study of the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership is interpretive as I, the researcher, was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Maxwell (2005) stresses that in an interpretive study the researcher is making meaning of the various types of

data collected about the phenomenon under consideration. Glesne (2011) states the goal of the interpretivist is one “of understanding human ideas, actions, and interactions” (p. 8). Additionally, Schram (2006) offers “Interpretivists operate from a belief that all constructs are equally important and valid” (p. 45). He also asserts that the researcher must define and apply a critical lens to the study. The data was collected and interpreted through my lens of values and concept definitions.

When intending to collect and interpret data from the perspectives of actors in a community setting, it follows that the researcher should interact with individuals in context (Glesne, 2011). In order to interpret and observe transformation leadership in action, a portion of the data collected came from observing presidents in a meeting with followers. Well planned and effectively conducted meetings align with traits of the transformational leader, specifically individualized consideration and inspirational motivation (Bass & Riggo, 2010; Chan, 2003). By observing presidents in their work environment and subsequently interviewing them, the study format fit within the description of the interpretive process outlined by Creswell (2007, 2009).

Glesne (2011) also describes interpretivism as a phenomenological approach as occurrences are studied in context. Creswell (2007) adds that the intent of phenomenological research is to discover the essence of the lived experience and to combine data with the intent of developing a composite description of the phenomenon. This study contains phenomenological overtones, as the study focused on the interrelationship between spirituality and leadership and how community college presidents experience and use the interrelationship in their spheres of influence. . The plan of this study to observe and interview eight community college presidents was intended to substantiate a supportive

relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership. If the study's supposition is supported by the data collected, subsequent investigations using more in depth approaches could be warranted.

Research Design

The general outline of this qualitative study was to first purposefully select eight presidents to participate in observations and interviews by asking all of the 58 North Carolina community college presidents to complete a Likert-type survey comprised of portions of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Appendix A) and the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI, Appendix B). The request to complete the survey (Appendix C) was sent to the presidents via their college e-mail addresses with a link to the survey instrument available on Survey Monkey.

The survey instrument was comprised of statements directly related to transformational leadership and spirituality. MLQ items # 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, and 36 measure transformational leadership. SISRI items # 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19, 20, 22, and 23 rate spirituality without a connection to religious topics.

Respondents rated the items on a five-point scale from zero being not at all true of them to four being very true or frequent. Survey respondents were divided into four groups based on the 2011-12 North Carolina community college institution size used to establish president salary grades (North Carolina Community College System, 2011a). The institution sizes are based on full-time equivalent student values (Appendix D). The two highest scoring respondents from each institution size level were asked to participate in the observation and interview phase of the study (Appendix E). If a president declined to

participate, the next highest scoring respondent from the same institution size category was asked to participate until two presidents from each size category agreed to continue in the study. Selecting two presidents from each size category provided study participants with wide ranging backgrounds and experiences.

North Carolina community colleges are assigned specific service areas, primarily based upon county boundaries, and are governed by boards of trustees chosen from the service area by boards of county commissioners, boards of education, and the governor. The boards of trustees then choose the president for the community college and in the postings of presidential openings language such as *senior administrative experience required* may be found. Therefore, a presidential candidate would have previous, and in most cases, considerable leadership experience. Once selected, presidents must then juggle a multitude of interests in order to effectively provide educational opportunities for the students who attend their institutions.

My decision to target North Carolina community college presidents was based on the assumption that they would have a variety of quality leadership experiences, a well-defined leadership style, a set of guiding principles, and a degree of understanding of the relationship between their inner selves and their leadership effectiveness. The American Association of Community Colleges promotes six competencies believed to be important for the success of a community college leader. The six competencies are creating shared visions, effective communication, acting ethically and morally, developing productive relationships, and enhance teamwork (AACC, 2005). These competencies align nicely with the components of transformational leadership and spirituality.

Participation in the study was totally voluntary and I attempted to supply the presidents with a compelling argument for the importance of and their value to the success of the study. I sent a well-crafted letter of introduction (Appendix C), via e-mail, emphasizing the need for a greater understanding of the connection between spirituality and leadership, which was central to the success in convincing the presidents to give the time and access the study required. Information from the AACCC on retirement rates of community college presidents and suggested competencies for community college leaders was valuable supportive information to strengthen the argument for the significance of their participation in the study.

Data Collection Methods

The observation and interview phase of the study comprised the primary data collection portion of the study. In this phase, I planned on first observing the president in a meeting in which the president is interacting with followers and then conducting an interview with the president. Observing the interaction between leader and follower and identifying instances where the leader exhibits transformational leadership and spirituality constituted the major focus of the meeting observation. The specific content of the meeting was not as important as the interactions between participants so written analysis and reporting only referenced items discussed in a generic way. The observe first then interview approach allowed me, as the researcher, to view leader/follower interactions prior the interview and formulate interview follow-up questions to further investigate specific interactions, which generated quality data.

While observing the meetings, I attempted to capture the environment or climate of the meeting as well as the subtle communication elements such as body language and tones

of voice of meeting attendees which can be indicators of the leader-follower dynamic. A post-observation memo or digital recording of my thoughts of the meetings proved valuable, as it is difficult to record all data at the time of occurrence. Rich thick description, persistence, and triangulation added to the depth and validity of the observations (Glesne, 2011). On two occasions I was unable to observe a formal meeting between a president and a group of followers due to changes in meeting time and the confidential nature of the meeting. I was also unable to meet with one president in a face-to-face interview and instead conducted an e-mail interview. In these cases an additional question regarding meetings was added to the interview question list (Appendix F).

I employed a form (Appendix G) with components of transformational leadership and spirituality listed to standardize the data collection and assist in coding. Interview questions, based on transformational leadership and spirituality literature were prepared (Appendix F). Formulating and asking follow-up questions, emerging from the initial conversations, was important to the data collection process. I obtained permission to audio record the interview sessions and later transcribed the sessions to improve data collection. As with the observation, a post-event memo or digital recording allowed for the collection of thoughts and data not documented at the time of the interview.

Community college presidents fall under Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) elite category as leaders who are experts in their field and as such should be accustomed to being asked their opinions and thoughts. I conducted each face-to-face interview in the office of the president to get a feel for the work environment the president had created for her/himself. Additionally, I established a post-interview contact protocol with study participants in order

to ask follow-up questions as needed. Options for additional data gathering were important and these options included e-mail or telephone conversations.

Role of Researcher

Within an interpretivist paradigm the role of the researcher is to make an interpretation of the data collected based on their own experiences and backgrounds (Creswell, 2007). The experiential lenses through which the researcher collects and interprets the data are a critical component of the study. Clearly articulating and situating the researcher in the study adds validity to any insights gained from the work.

During my career as an educator, I have worked for approximately ten different immediate supervisors, principals, deans, vice presidents, and presidents, each with their own unique leadership styles and personalities. In developing my leadership skills, I have attempted to glean what I considered to be the best practices of these leaders and weave these methods into my work. While studying leadership styles, I have discovered that the administrators I enjoyed working with the most were those who employed transformational leadership processes. Having worked in the North Carolina community college system for over seventeen years and studying the presidential leadership competencies endorsed by the AACC, I now believe that transformational leadership can be effective in the community college setting, apply the method in my areas of influence, and look for evidence of transformational leadership in other administrators.

My spirituality has been and continues to be largely influenced by the Christian church, the denomination Society of Friends or Quaker, and specifically Forbush Friends Meeting which I have belonged to since birth. Quakers have long held beliefs that the opinions of all members are important and should be heard. Decisions are made through

consensus building with no votes taken. Rather, when the convening clerk believes the group has come to a consensus he/she asks for an approval of the item in question and the membership responds by stating *I approve* (NCYMF, 2004). Special attention is paid to the growth of all members and development of their abilities. Opportunities for service in all areas of the denomination, pastor, elder, clerk, and committee membership are available to meeting members regardless of sex or race. I have served as an elder, clerk, and as a member of multiple committees and have much practice in consensus building.

While I am careful to not overtly profess or endorse a Christian belief in the work setting lest I run afoul of governmental regulations, whenever possible I apply the Quaker principles of personal growth, inclusion, and consensus building to leadership opportunities. I am drawn to the transformational leadership model because these Quaker principles may be found within the model and work experiences suggest the model is effective. Additionally, other components of my spirituality, ethics, morals, and a sense of community, reinforce and guide my actions and have often carried me through difficult situations. While conducting research for this study, identifying these particular leadership characteristics may come more naturally for me and I took care to not overlook other leadership models, positional, transactional, laissez-faire, etc., used by the presidents I observed.

Data Analysis

For qualitative research Creswell (2009) states, “The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data” (p. 183). Data collected from my study was in the form of transcribed interviews, observations, and questionnaires from eight community college presidents. Analyzing the data began with identifying evidence of transformational leadership traits and spirituality within the data. For a pilot study I conducted in the fall of

2010, I developed a list of terms, or codes, which describe the four components, or 'I's, of transformational leadership, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Appendix G). The list also includes spirituality descriptors. I gleaned these terms from a variety of articles written on the transformational leadership and spirituality both individually and collectively (Bass & Riggio, 2010; Chickering et al, 2006; Speck, 2005).

I applied the coded terms to the data in the form of numbers from 1 to 19 and then highlighted the codes using five different colored highlighters which correspond to the four 'I's of transformational leadership and spirituality. As themes emerged, I placed data on individual theme charts subdivided into each of the five main components (Appendix H). Each piece of evidence was labeled to identify which participant and from what type of setting or artifact the data came from. I also kept a log or set of memos-to-self to capture thoughts of data analysis as suggested by data analysis literature (Maxwell, 2005) and began developing a sense of the whole of the data (Creswell, 2009).

I reread the material several times to allow for new insights and connections to emerge. New theme charts were created as additional understandings became apparent. Rereading the material over a period of time also allowed me to watch for contradictions in previous analysis. Connections between participants are strengthened when similar statements can be identified. Rereading data, especially transcripts, allowed for these connections to surface.

Ethics

Acting ethically to maintain the integrity of the study should be a primary goal of the researcher from the beginning of the project. Writers of qualitative research literature list

several items for the researcher to consider as he/she plans the study, collects and analyzes the data, and reports results. Issues to consider include, and are not limited to, informed consent, deception, confidentiality, researcher sharing of personal experiences with participants, accurately reporting data, and security of recorded material (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

Protecting study participants and developing trust were important considerations for this study. I maintained the confidentiality of study participants by developing a set of pseudonyms which were applied to data collected. These pseudonyms were used throughout the data analysis and reporting process. Other identifying information, such as college names and locations, were altered or eliminated. Eliminating or altering the specific details of topics discussed in meetings observed was done and all raw data materials were maintained in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. If required, dissertation committee members reviewed raw data. The participant consent form (Appendix I), which was signed prior to conducting observations and interviews, contained an explanation of the steps taken within the study to protect confidentiality. Participants could elect to withdraw from the study at any time. Other research requirements set forth by the Appalachian State University Institutional Review Board were met to comply with the Board's approval of the research study.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Inclusion of varied information may provide greater clarity and validity to conclusions drawn from the data. Multiple methods and data sources support research triangulation and allow the researcher to validate claims (Creswell, 2009). Glense (2011) encourages the researcher to cultivate multiple data collection methods and critically evaluate

analytical interpretations to support trustworthiness of any inferences made. By obtaining data through three distinct data collection events, pre-participant selection surveys, meeting observations, and participant interviews, multiple viewpoints from which to observe the leadership process were available and the validity and trustworthiness of the study were supported.

Schram (2006) provides practical considerations for the trustworthiness of a study through three steps: consequences of presence, selective experience, and engaged subjectivity (p.133). Consequences of presence refers to the effect of the researcher's presence in the setting and how the researcher is able to establish the integrity of the work. Discernment of what data are relevant and worthy of inclusion in findings describes the process of selective experience. Engaged subjectivity is concerned with the monitoring of the researcher's subjectivity on the study and its findings. These three steps were addressed by being open and honest with study participants, initially collecting as much data as possible through digital recordings and detailed notes, and conducting multiple reviews of the data during the coding process.

Weaving Schram's considerations throughout the study supported the integrity of the work and strengthened interpretations. Validity, trustworthiness, and integrity are not terms to be considered at one or two points in the study but are concepts which must define the manner in which the work is conducted. Posing the same questions in a consistent manner facilitated the collection of usable and suitable data. Taking care to triangulate analysis of data and citing specific details of observations and statements made by participants reinforced the soundness of inferences made. Applying consistency in coding data, rereading

transcripts, and revisiting any potential researcher bias added to the trustworthiness of the study and occurred throughout the analysis process.

Summary

Researchers should choose methods and design procedures appropriate to the study questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2011). A qualitative approach is appropriate for the purpose of studying the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership among North Carolina community college presidents. By conducting a well-designed ethically grounded interpretive study, data which can add to our knowledge of the spirituality/leadership dynamic was obtained. The next section of this work is designed to introduce the data within emergent themes and subthemes.

Chapter Four –Findings

What does spirituality supported leadership look like? How do we recognize it? How does a leader's spirituality influence their leadership style? This study was designed to investigate the transformational leadership style (Bass & Riggo, 2010; Burns, 2010/1978; Northouse, 2001) and how spirituality affects the style. North Carolina community college presidents were chosen as the study group in an attempt to recognize the relationship between spirituality and transformational leadership within practicing senior administrators. Additionally, this study was designed to extend the work of Malm (2008) which suggested that spirituality may be found in the leadership processes of community college presidents.

Research questions posed at the beginning of this investigation into the relationship between transformational leadership and spirituality are:

- How does the president view his/her spirituality in the context of leadership style?
- How do the presidents' use of spirituality and the transformation leadership model align with AACC competencies and current literature?
- What activities and educational experiences have aided in the development of presidents' spirituality and leadership styles?
- What evidence exists of specific formal spirituality and leadership development activities at the institution created or supported by the president?

These questions were investigated using qualitative research methods from an interpretive approach (Glenese, 2011; Maxwell, 2005) as the approach seemed appropriate for the task, allowing the researcher to personally explore spirituality and leadership with each study participant.

Study participants were purposefully selected from responses to a self-reporting questionnaire and then observed and interviewed at their community college. Interviews were designed to obtain descriptions of the presidents' journey to their current positions, their own spiritual and leadership progression, and their current views on leadership development. This process is consistent with Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) function of the interview as a tool to aid in the interpretation of a phenomenon. Additional data was collected from observing the presidents as they interacted with others and written material produced by the presidents.

Participants – Eight North Carolina Community College Presidents

Selection. North Carolina's 58 community colleges are divided into four presidential salary levels based on the colleges' full-time equivalent (FTE) by the North Carolina Community College Board of Trustees (Appendix D). Presidents were sent a request to complete a questionnaire describing their leadership and spirituality. Thirty presidents replied that they would complete the questionnaire and 24, or 41.3% of the total system presidents, were actually returned via SurveyMonkey. Two presidents, who completed and returned the questionnaire, were selected from each salary level and asked to participate in the interview and observation portion of the study for a total of eight participants. In the highest salary level only two presidents responded, therefore they were asked and consented to participate in the study. Each of the other three salary levels had more than two respondents so preference of selection was given to the top two scoring respondents. Due to availability issues, a president not scoring in the top two of a salary level was asked and consented to participate in the study. This president's questionnaire score was however higher than scores

of presidents from other salary levels participating in the interview and observation phase of the study.

Table 1

Interviewee Information

Presidential pseudonym	Salary divisions based on FTE (4 being the largest)	Tenure at college (in years)
Madison	3	17
Monroe	1	3
Taylor	3	6
Pierce	4	20
Grant	2	3
Arthur	4	4
Taft	1	2
Hoover	2	Less than 1

In most cases interviews and observations were conducted with the president on the same day. One president was not available for a face-to-face interview, so interview questions were answered via e-mail. In two other instances, due to the sensitive nature of the meeting agenda items under discussion, a meeting observation was not possible; therefore an interview question was added related to the presidents' use of meeting time in order to obtain data without actually observing a meeting.

A brief synopsis of the interview group and general impressions. The presidents participating in the study represented community colleges from all geographic regions of the state; Drs. Monroe, Grant, and Arthur from the coastal region, Drs. Pierce and Hoover from the piedmont region, and Drs. Madison, Taylor, and Taft from the mountain region. Drs. Pierce and Arthur lead institutions situated in large urban areas of North Carolina while Drs. Madison, Taylor, and Grant's service area contained a moderate size municipality. Drs. Monroe, Taft, and Hoover are presidents of institutions in rural areas of North Carolina.

Each participant had an earned doctoral degree and held, at a minimum, a least one vice president position prior to becoming president at their current location, with three participants having previous presidential experience, all outside of North Carolina. Their length of tenure as president ranged from five months to over 20 years. Women and minorities were underrepresented, compared to North Carolina community college system percentages of 29.3% and 6.9% respectively, as only one female president, Dr. Grant, and no minorities were in the participant pool. However, including women and minorities was not a criterion of the selection process.

Most of the participants did not begin their careers as educators but came to education from a variety of occupations. Dr. Monroe worked as a welder, Dr. Hoover in technology, and Dr. Arthur as a business administrator. Drs. Madison and Hoover worked in the North Carolina state prison system. Military service, either active duty or as reservists, was a part of Drs. Monroe, Arthur, and Hoover's background.

Offices of the presidents were neat, professional, and inviting. Most were large enough to accommodate a small round table with two or three chairs, designed to create a less formal meeting space. In a couple of instances, the presidents commented that they try to down play the aura of their office and reduce the apprehension of visitors. One president, as part of a recent renovation, created a complete meeting room adjacent to his office furnished with living room style chairs, a coffee table, and artwork along with several pictures of students in classrooms. The attire of the presidents ranged from casual to formal, typically dependent on the day's activities.

The presidents were very open, engaging, and willing to share information about their leadership styles and spirituality. I detected a hint of surprise from a few of the presidents

that someone was actually investigating the relationship between leadership and spirituality, and in most cases the interviewees expressed joy and appreciation to be asked their opinions on the topics. At no time did I sense that my presence at meetings created discomfort for any other person present. In most instances other staff, faculty, trustees, and foundation members I met warmly welcomed me to their college, asked about my work, and shared confirmatory sentiments concerning the president.

Results – Leading from Within

As the data were analyzed through a coding process using 19 terms or short statements (Appendix G) describing the four components of transformational leadership, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, along with spirituality, four general themes emerged. These themes, leadership, communicating, preparation for leading, and spirituality in leadership loosely correspond to previously proposed research questions. Additional interesting suppositions emerged when these general themes were further analyzed and subdivided into subthemes.

Table 2

Theme Chart

Main theme	Subtheme
Leadership	Defining their style Visioning Tough decisions
Communicating	Connecting with others Image of the president and the institution Ethic of caring
Preparation for leading	Mentors The anti-mentor Additional leadership preparation thoughts
Spirituality in leadership	Often affected Diversity Family

Leadership – Styles, Visioning, and Tough Decisions

Northouse (2001) contends that for leadership to exist the leader must assert influence within the organization being led, while Fullan (2003) more specifically suggests that leadership rallies people to a shared mission. Transformational leaders develop relationships with followers to move both the organization and followers toward positive change. As Dr. Madison asserted,

I think you have to have the respect of those who are going to follow you or they won't. They won't have a desire to follow you, they won't have a desire to do those things which in turn help them and help the organization, which in turn means part of the attribute is selflessness on the part of the leader and not selfishness because selflessness is, I think from my perspective, an indication of the organization. So what the person is doing is trying to lead people to make sure that the organization is healthy.

The presidents I interviewed used a variety of terms, phrases and illustrations to portray leadership. These descriptions are condensed into a definition of their styles.

Defining their style. When asked to describe their leadership styles, the presidents generally refrained from using formal terminology one might find in literature on the subject such as *trait, situational, transactional, transformational, path-goal*, etc. (Northouse, 2001). Instead they tended to use an assortment of descriptors including *coach, effective communicator, relationship builder, consensus maker, vision developer, and modeler of behavior*. Additionally, they expounded upon the need to build strong trusting relationships with faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders by conducting business ethically and treating people honestly and fairly within an environment of mutual respect.

These beliefs were illustrated in an assortment of ways by the presidents. Dr. Grant required that renovations to the college's board of trustee meeting room, used not only by the trustees but a number of college committees, include a round table. Grant stated, "I wanted a round table in the boardroom and it is fabulous because no one is sitting at the head of the table, we are all equal players." Several presidents stressed the relationship building aspect of leadership by sharing examples of positive results good rapport with followers can produce. When asked to pick one item in his office which represents leadership and or spirituality, Dr. Taft pointed to a framed display of law enforcement badges and proudly explained he received the display in appreciation for his efforts in the successful completion of a community safety expansion project in another state. He emphasized the main reason for project's realization was the relationships forged between a collection of diverse groups and he learned from the experience that energy expended in developing associations is never wasted.

Several presidents remarked that an effective leader has a healthy sense of dissatisfaction and shares these feelings with others in a constructive manner. The leader coaches followers by acknowledging their successes, challenging them to do more, and giving them the freedom to do their jobs. Dr. Taylor further expanded on the coaching metaphor by remarking that when honest mistakes occur the leader does not condemn but rather teaches and monitors future actions to support success.

These accounts of leadership in action align with transformational leadership components (Bass & Riggo, 2010) and the competencies of leaders articulated by AACC (2005). Especially prevalent are the idealized influence and individualized consideration components and organizational strategy and collaboration competencies. These leaders work to build trust and shared admiration, pay attention to followers and provide nurturing as needed. Dr. Pierce commented he attempts to “hire good people, set the example, trust them, and get out of the way.” Furthermore, they encourage networking within and outside of the college, create environments conducive to cooperation, and share success. These presidents also expressed a need to be real to their followers and not harbor hidden agendas. As Dr. Arthur commented, “there should be no question who I am.”

Visioning. For the study participants, visioning is a shared activity. While the college community many look to the president to initiate the process, the wise leader realizes that a vision built from multiple perspectives stands a greater chance of success and will better serve the community. Dr. Arthur articulated the value of a shared vision when he stated “...it becomes owned by someone other than yourself. When it becomes owned by your college, your board, and so forth, then you are able to move it forward.” The ability to create a shared vision appears to be important to community college trustees as the attribute

may be found in presidential search profiles (Brunswick Community College, 2010; Guilford Community College, 2010; Piedmont Community College, 2010; Stanley Community College, 2011; Surry Community College, 2011). Visioning was evident in most of the meetings attended as part of my research.

A noteworthy illustration of visioning occurred during my visit with Dr. Taylor. We had completed a tour of the campus and arrived at his leadership team meeting after the meeting had started. Dr. Taylor allowed the roundtable discussion to continue to its conclusion at which time he shared a few pleasantries and then began to share with the group a concern that he had regarding completion rates at their institution. He explained to the group that as far as he was concerned the methodology by which the rates were calculated was unimportant and that if the rates were computed in some other fashion and increased the results two, three, or four times, the rates would still be unacceptable.

His assessment of the situation seemed to be agreed upon by all in attendance. Therefore, he very quickly established a vision of improvement for one aspect of the institution. He went on to explain to the group that he did not have the answers to the issue. He did not have a roadmap to better student achievement, but he confidently affirmed that there was sufficient expertise sitting in the room to develop and implement a set of strategies to achieve the goal. No numeric value was set at this meeting for an acceptable completion rate for the institution, but it was clearly articulated by the president that the current rate was unacceptable and he wished to move the college in a direction that has the college producing completion rates that are not just adequate but exemplary. The staff seemed to understand and accept the challenge and I did not detect any complaints or perceive of any negative body

language. Dr. Taylor reinforced his position by complimenting each person in the room and expressing confidence that together they could be successful.

Encapsulated within this one five minute conversation, Dr. Taylor exhibited his values and life's purpose along with several transformational leadership traits including but not limited to building respect, motivating and inspiring followers, and reframing situations. His firm but up-beat tone set an initial course for the journey and clearly expressed his belief that each segment of the college had some role to play in the fulfillment of the vision. Similar opinions were expressed in meetings and interviews. Dr. Pierce stated he believed vision springs from the passion and purpose of the institution. Other presidents remarked that the leader is a mover of ideas and that the process of creating a vision takes time.

Tough decisions. Most presidents stated that leading was easy when everything is going well. They believe the greatest indicators of leadership abilities are responses to difficult situations, especially matters dealing with personnel. The presidents stressed that the relationships you build, based on trust and respect, are vital to weathering difficult times which will come regardless of how well the college is functioning. Dr. Hoover commented, "A portion of my job, and I laugh, is answering for other people's actions or the things that you had nothing to do with which you have to go solve." Transformational leaders do not panic, take the time to listen, and do the right thing (Bass & Riggo, 2010). Spiritually grounded leaders also anchor themselves by consistently applying their code of ethics, morals, and values to challenging situations (Kezar et al., 2006). Several presidents also stressed the need to address difficulties in a timely manner which aids in fostering trust with followers.

Dr. Arthur modeled this behavior while dealing with personnel issues during my visit. In two separate meetings, a leadership team meeting and a trustee meeting, the non-renewal of an employee and splitting/decreasing responsibilities of a currently employed vice president were discussed. Neither person being impacted was mentioned directly by name. In the case of non-renewal, Dr. Arthur explained that the employee was given multiple opportunities to improve and had failed to meet clearly defined objectives. With the employee having his responsibilities and title reduced, the president indicated that the change was needed to better the institution by focusing the current employee's work in his area of expertise and that the change in no way should be a condemnation of his product of work. Handling personnel with dignity sends powerful messages to other faculty, staff, and college supporters that the leader cares for the person and will do the right thing; traits synonymous with transformational leadership.

Dr. Hoover related a different type of dilemma a leader faces when legal responsibilities conflict with religious convictions. As a vice president, he had the duty to evaluate the application of a community college club which focused on alternate lifestyles. All required application criteria had been met and he had the task of signing the approval form. The religious denomination he belongs to teaches that such lifestyles are inappropriate. Dr. Hoover explained that in this case his legal responsibility superseded his personal religious beliefs, so he chose to allow the formation of the club. Coworkers were somewhat amazed that he allowed the formation of the club and he explained to the coworkers that while he may not condone the lifestyle he had a responsibility to uphold the laws that the college operated under and to ensure that the college does not run afoul of the law. He reframed the situation by asking his coworkers if they would like to apply the same logic to

the group of students who formed a club committed to studying Christian scriptures and deepening their Christian spiritual convictions. Dr. Hoover applied ethical and moral principles to challenge his own assumptions and those of his co-workers, and at the same time was able to separate denominational tenets for his community college leadership role.

Dilemmas faced by Dr. Arthur and Dr. Hoover are present throughout a leader's career. Navigating through the murky waters takes wisdom, a keen sense of where the dangers are, and the help of a trusting crew. The participants of this study professed that even with the best of intentions and assistance they do not always say the right things or make the correct decisions and pray their blunders are not so great that their actions sink the ship.

Communicating – Making Connections, Image, and Caring

All interviewees acknowledged the need for a leader to develop excellent communication skills and foster good communication with stakeholders both internal and external to the college. Yet they admit these needs are easier to recognize than to achieve. Dr. Madison stated that even with all of the “electronic crap” we have today the flow of information throughout the community college family is often less than desirable. The presidents described an assortment of strategies, both verbal and non-verbal, they employ to foster good communication.

Connecting with others. As previously stated, the presidents emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining strong relationships within the college's sphere of influence and they identified communication skills in various forms as the tools for building these relationships. Dr. Arthur displayed effective communication skills as he stopped to talk to two young ladies and a small child as we walked from his office to a trustee meeting. The

encounter seemed natural and unforced with pleasant words exchanged by all involved. The young ladies seemed to recognize Dr. Arthur and did not appear to harbor any apprehension in the encounter. Later Dr. Arthur stopped to converse with members of the college's law enforcement staff in a similar manner. The officers were in the process of moving into new office space, so their conversation turned into a mini show-and-tell. In both instances, Dr. Arthur modeled individualized consideration by attending to and being present with followers.

Several presidents underscored the importance of nonverbal communication. Eye contact, pleasant facial expressions, turning off communication devices, not setting behind the desk, and making the effort to walk across a room to shake a hand are important to show individual consideration to followers. Dr. Monroe detailed his attempts to communicate effectively through eye contact and break down the "wall" which separates the president from other people in the community.

I have eight things to do in a five-thing day and I really try not to walk past someone without stopping or slowing down long enough to make eye contact and if I greet them even if it's only for 30 seconds I need to be present.

Others stated that words without appropriate body language can actually have a negative impact on the connection making process as the follower may feel unappreciated and neglected. The presidents made similar comments regarding engagement of the person whether in individual conversations or group settings and underscored the importance of being present in the moment to form lasting bonds with followers.

Dr. Taft displayed effective communication skills by *working the room* prior to the start of the college's foundation meeting. Approximately fifteen minutes before the meeting

was scheduled to begin, he interrupted our conversation stating he wanted to greet members as they arrive. In the pre-meeting period, he chatted pleasantly with foundation members about their gardens, family, and other events in their lives. The casual atmosphere created prior to the meeting carried over into the formal session with everyone sitting casually, interjecting personal anecdotes, and taking the opportunity to avail themselves of the provided refreshments throughout the time spent together.

Citing the diversity and remoteness of the college's multiple county service area; Dr. Taft asserted the he had to make extra efforts to connect with stakeholders. He mentioned activities such as golf outings and cookouts which may seem like fluff but were extremely important to his efforts to connect with the people of the area. These types of activities allow the leader to get to know followers and individuals with close ties to the institution and share values hopes and dreams in a more informal environment than in the leader's office or during an official meeting were the main focus is on covering agenda items.

Dr. Grant uses electronic means to communicate in a distinctive way. A practice she uses to connect with the whole college community is to periodically post short messages on the college's website emphasizing successes and passing along congratulatory notes to individuals or programs which have excelled in some way. There is no particular time table for the communiqués, she just writes them as the opportunities arise. Not only does Dr. Grant pass only important information, she is able to give attention to followers and items she sees as important to the institution. She also employs larger font type, boldface words, and other methods to accentuate the details.

Image of the president and the institution. A few presidents cited image as an important consideration in connecting with followers and the community as a whole. Dr.

Madison was concerned with the negative repercussions from an error in judgment or comments taken out of context could have on the institution. He acknowledged the care he takes in commenting on issues because once he states an opinion in public people often perceive that he is speaking for the college as a whole. He also commented that a president must avoid even the slightest indiscretion because the headline in the local paper not just give the president's name but read "President of Local Community College Cited for ...". These views align with AACC's emphasis on professionalism (AACC, 2005).

Transformational leaders may use their charisma to inspire followers. Dr. Taylor remarked that it is important for people to believe that you are on the top of your game and that public appearances, giving speeches, and generally being seen at public functions are important to the image of the leader and the college. When speaking at public functions, Dr. Arthur prefers not to write out a speech, but rather list a few points on a note card as a guide for his comments. He believes that "speaking from the heart" is a much more effective way to confidently communicate a personal message to followers and stakeholders. Dr. Monroe enjoys telling the "good stories" of the institution so individuals have a positive image of the college and he encourages his vice presidents to share accomplishments in a similar manner.

Ethic of caring. The presidents exhibited an ethic of caring for others in word and deed with four of them specifically mentioning the importance of valuing the person. Dr. Arthur mentioned the respect he has for his administrative assistant whom he described as having overcome much to be in the position she was in. He appeared to become emotional when making the statement and stopped short of relating the circumstances of her challenges. I had talked to her in setting up my visit and noted her cheerful voice and caring way she worked with me. She seemed to be an extension of Dr. Arthur. Earnestly communicating to

followers and others connected to the college that not only are they of value to the institution, but that the leader cares for them and is interested in them sends a powerful message to these individuals that they mean more to the leader than a position filled.

Leaders also exhibit care for followers by sharing successes and valuing their time. Several times during our conversations, Dr. Arthur talked of the importance of “celebrating successes” and most interviewees related that they look for ways to recognize the efforts of college faculty and staff. Dr. Madison and Dr. Taylor mentioned that being president involves the loss of personal time, which raises their recognition of time management and thus they try not to waste other people’s time with frivolous meetings and unproductive tasks.

Dr. Grant has created two different types of social gatherings to demonstrate an ethic of care within her college. The first gathering focuses on student social development. As a member of the local symphony committee, she is able to treat students to a night of musical education. Coupled with a somewhat formal dinner at her home, she is creates an opportunity to expose students to experiences otherwise unavailable to them. For faculty and staff, Dr. Grant has established a book club in which members read a book selected by or suggested to her and then meets at her home and discusses the book with a selection of wine and cheeses for refreshments. Book club membership is rotated so that all faculty and staff have an opportunity to participate. These activities illustrate ways that leaders can learn more about individuals in the community college family and communicate to followers that they are important to the leader.

Preparation for Leading – Mentor and Apprentice

In preparing for interviews I read information, biographies, curricula vita, etc. posted on each college's website introducing their presidents. Somewhere among the information I was able to find that each president had an earned doctorate and in some cases other earned degrees were listed as well. When inquiring about preparation for leadership in the interviews, the presidents talked very little about formal training, but spoke at length extolling the virtues of their mentors and the importance the mentorship had on their career development. Usually the mentor was a president that the interviewee had worked for, however in a few cases the person having the greatest influence held a lower level post within a community college.

Mentors. Parenthetically, three of the interviewees shared a mentor/apprentice relationship where two interviewees had worked for and eventually served as an executive vice president for the third interviewee. The subordinate interviewees spoke with admiration and gratitude toward their mentor and the opportunities for professional growth presented to them. These opportunities included overseeing leadership team and trustee meetings, presenting the local budget request to the board of county commissioners, attending regional and state presidents' meetings, and representing the college at a number of other public functions. These assignments were not haphazardly given just when the mentor had a conflict, but the mentor stated that he tried to select occasions he believed the subordinates were prepared for and would stretch and strengthen their leadership abilities.

A specific example of a task given to one of the subordinates was to represent the college at a gathering of presidents whose colleges were a part of an alliance with a University of North Carolina System institution. The meeting, a mainly relationship building

affair, was scheduled to be held in conjunction with a football game in the Chancellor's box of the senior institution. The subordinate was not particularly fond of football, but quickly found that his attendance was designed to allow him to practice his relationship building skills and make new acquaintances. The meeting proved to be even more beneficial than imagined, because by having a conversation with then North Carolina Community College System President Martin Lancaster concerning educational doctoral programs in the state, he was called by representatives of a doctoral program, applied to the program, and was subsequently admitted.

The mentor interviewee stated that much of his follower development strategy is grounded in his own experiences as a subordinate. Early in his career, he was given the opportunity to serve as an interim president at another institution. While filling the position, his initial position was held open for him to return to. This "taste of the presidency" was not the type of experience he could receive by serving in any position at the first college he worked for. The mentor, in a truly transformational leadership style, now feels obligated to give his subordinates closely related experiences and uses the events to teach, coach, and promote personal growth. The mentor currently has three former subordinates serving as North Carolina community college presidents and stated that he believed his current executive vice president would someday be selected for a presidency somewhere in the state.

The anti-mentor. Several interviewees recounted undesirable experiences with immediate supervisors or higher ranking administrators which strongly influenced their current leadership style. These narratives included encounters with administrators who were rude, dictatorial, biased, and disinterested in their work. Dr. Monroe stated that he decided to move into an administrative degree program because his direct report was inept and very

“old-school.” Dr. Monroe saw an opportunity to make a greater difference in the students’ lives by obtaining a Master’s degree, eventually taking a division chair position, and over the course of a few years ascending to a presidency. Time spent with the so-called inept administrator influenced Dr. Monroe’s values and life’s purpose which in turn prepared him for progressively higher leadership roles.

Additional leadership preparation thoughts. Interviewees spoke of mentors who, coached, advised, and inspired them. Dr. Grant was considering leaving education to take a job in a business field because she felt “burnt out.” Her mentor “coached her” by accentuating the lives she had touched by being an educator which helped her through the depressed state she was in. Dr. Hoover was advised by his mentor to not apply for a presidency citing the need for more experience and that the presidency would not be a “good fit” for him. In both cases, the interviewees came to recognize and appreciate the wisdom of their mentors. Dr. Arthur was inspired by the statement of a mentor “all jobs done well deserve the respect and dignity that it defines.” He uses the statement to prepare himself when difficult personnel situations arise.

Many of the presidents mentioned the professional and personal satisfaction they take in mentoring followers. Dr. Grant stated she enjoyed looking for potential new leaders and fostering their development. Listing a great number of people who aided him along his journey to his current position, Dr. Hoover hopes to return the favor by mentoring followers from his recent appointment as president. Interviewees specified that while mentoring may not be a part of their job description, they felt an obligation to the profession to be good advisors to their followers.

Spirituality in Leadership – Often affected, Diversity, and Family

Throughout the interviews traces of the presidents' spirituality could be spotted. Subtle glimpses and bold statements created images of their inner knowing and the foundation of their leadership styles. Almost every interviewee mentioned the application of the Golden Rule, do unto others, as you would have them do unto you, as an important part of their core values. Dr. Madison had a small trivet-sized plaque on his desk with the statement etched on its face which he identified as the item in his office which best spoke to his spirituality and leadership. Others cited the rule as a guiding principle in their decision making process and an example of their faith.

One interesting aspect of the interviews concerned religious affiliations. Six of the eight presidents identified themselves as Christians. I am somewhat acquainted with one of the six, so I knew the Christian denomination he identified with and he referenced it during the interview. Of the other five, at no time during the interview did they mention a denomination, even when commenting on church attendance or when I indicated that I was a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Instead of affiliations, they stressed their beliefs in and application of fairness, honesty, trustworthiness, valuing the person, and moral behavior. Two interviewees disclosed that while at various points in their life they associated themselves with an organized religion, they claim no connection with any particular religion but rather defined themselves as spiritual beings.

Often affected. The two presidents who did not claim a current bond to a particular religion attended Christian churches in their youth. During young adulthood they began to question denominational teachings and eventually dissociated themselves with any recognized church. One of the presidents did briefly explore other non-Christian religions in

connection with a significant other. Both presidents expressed great reverence for the faiths of others. As Dr. Monroe explained, “What works for me may not work for you but I respect your faith.”

Other interviewees related different forms of spiritual development. Dr. Hoover had a college friend who instilled in him the need to vote. During one North Carolina election cycle where there was a heated battle for a senatorial seat for which he and his friend had a conversation about voting, and Dr. Hoover explained to his friend that he was rather cynical about the whole election process in the United States and that he had not voted in the most recent election. His friend, who was from South Africa, commented that he noticed only small percentages of people had voted in the United States, explained he believed voting was one of the most important things a citizen can do, and he would die for the right to vote in his country. This conversation resonated with Dr. Hoover, caused him to re-evaluate his values, and he has since not missed an opportunity to vote.

Dr. Taylor became disillusioned with religion and God for a time due to the untimely death of a good friend. He has since reframed his anger and feels that his faith is now moved to a much higher level than before. Dr. Madison considers himself a “vessel, which needs filling weekly” and cherishes the opportunity to attend church services. Dr. Grant encapsulated professional development when she asserted, “So I think your leadership and spirituality evolve as you do as a person because they are interconnected.”

Diversity. Dealing with diversity within the family unit underscored spiritual values for some of the presidents. Dr. Hoover expounded on a situation in his family where one member of the family had come out as being gay and several members of his family were concerned about what his reaction would be and were actually surprised at his response to the

announcement. He ardently voiced his disapproval of the lifestyle however he realized that becoming angry at and condemning the family member would close the door of reconciliation and redemption. He also stated that earlier in his life he would not have taken such stances but his spirituality and understanding of people and the need to leave doors open has evolved to the point where he is able to modify his reaction and response to such situations. This change helps him deal with differences of opinion in the workplace. In this situation, Dr. Hoover's transformational leadership skills and spirituality are in full display.

Dr. Arthur, who proclaimed that, "he may be the one fired for being a Christian" confided that he has a Muslim brother-in-law. He stated the relationship has deepened his respect of other faiths and helps him to connect with faculty, staff, and students. Dr. Monroe and Dr. Taylor mentioned but did not elaborate on similar circumstances. A characteristic of transformational leadership is giving attention to followers and having a set of values which include respecting different races, nationalities, sexual orientations, and faiths. Statements made by the presidents in interviews support the conclusion that these leaders practice inclusion and respect of different opinions, creeds, races, and faiths.

Family. Several presidents mentioned family considerations when defining their spirituality. A motivation to do well and to not let his daughter down fuels Dr. Monroe's life purpose. He received custody of his daughter when he divorced his first wife and he raised her by himself. In the process, he conceded that she actually raised him. While trying to complete his doctoral work, Dr. Monroe considered withdrawing from the program on a couple of occasions but reconsidered when thinking of admonitions he had given his daughter to never give up. Other life purpose motivators include Dr. Grant desiring to make

her mother proud, Dr. Taylor seeing his children making right decisions, and Dr. Arthur having his granddaughter come to his office for reading time.

Specific Responses to Research Questions

Data collected from the observations and interviews appears to have yielded a sufficient amount of information to answer research questions. Reviews of responses from interviewees produced the following answers to research questions proposed at the beginning of this research.

Presidents' view of spirituality and leadership style. How did these presidents view his/her spirituality in the context of their leadership style? These presidents view their spirituality as an integral component of the leadership process. Spirituality serves as a foundation for everyday activities and supports them in difficult times. They apply values and wisdom, evolved through formal education and practical experiences, to develop relationships and motivate followers to better themselves. The interviewees act ethically and morally to involve significant stakeholders in the process of creating a shared vision for the institution and then finding the resources to turn vision into reality. To these presidents, in their professional lives, leadership and spirituality are symbiotic; one cannot thrive without the other.

Align with AACC competencies and current literature. How do the presidents' use of spirituality and the transformation leadership model align with AACC competencies and current literature? The AACC(2005) promotes six competencies for needed for community college leader success. These competencies are organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism. The AACC uses a number of illustrations to provide examples of the

leadership competencies. Within these illustrations are found many of the descriptors of transformational leadership and spirituality identified during this study's observations and interviews.

The study participants encourage teamwork and professional growth to promote the long-term health of their institutions. Individualized consideration is an integral element in the presidents' organizational strategy. Ethical use of resources, both fiscal and human, through relationship building, accountability, and professional development help to build admiration, respect, and trust within the organization and the community. Communication is a well-refined skill for these presidents, employing a variety of strategies to deliver their messages. The presidents maintain open channels of communication, listen intently, and encourage followers to participate in the visioning process.

Additionally, the interviewees collaborate internally and externally to further the success of students and the community college mission. They challenge their own assumptions and reframe situations to collectively find solutions in an ever-changing world. The presidents stated that they are mindful that they are very visible members of the community and act accordingly. They are perceived by the community as the face of their institution and, as such, must advocate for the institution in a professional and authentic manner, wielding power and influence in ethically and morally. These presidents profess to set high standards for themselves and good examples for followers to emulate.

Activities and educational experiences. What activities and educational experiences have aided in the development of presidents' spirituality and leadership styles? The presidents articulated an appreciation of formal education and an earned doctoral degree, but place a great value on their mentoring experiences and have also come to value the anti-

mentor as a contrast to effective leadership. They constantly recall and rely upon their varied *real world* experiences when leading. The interviewees spoke almost worshipfully of their mentors and the professional growth opportunities the mentor provided. These opportunities, facilitating meetings, representing the college in the absence of the president, serving as an interim president, broadened the study participants' understanding of leadership and further developed their skills. In some instances, the experiences provided by the mentor fortified the presidents' resolve to become community college presidents.

Leadership development activities. What evidence exists of specific formal spirituality and leadership development activities at the institution created or supported by the president? The study participants offer a variety of opportunities for follower growth. From Dr. Grant's book club and round meeting table to Dr. Arthur allowing his vice presidents to make presentations to trustees, the interviewees illustrated and expressed a desire to see their followers become leaders in their own right and in some cases the presidents have had one or more former vice presidents to be selected to serve as presidents at other North Carolina community colleges. They support followers' efforts to earn formal degrees, yet it is the less formal but conscious efforts the presidents make to create an environment for professional and personal growth which seems to have the greatest impact on followers. Dr. Taylor and I were late for a leadership team meeting which a vice president was leading but ceded the role to Dr. Taylor as we walked in. Afterward, Dr. Taylor stated, "they know to carry on without me." These presidents take every occasion to teach, coach, and exhibit trust in followers.

Summary

The interviewees expressed an overall joy in seeing others, both students and followers, succeed in their endeavors and become better selves. They take great satisfaction in knowing that they help to create situations where human potential can be realized. The presidents' further described their life's purpose as a sacred calling. In describing his path to community college presidency, Dr. Arthur shared,

I believe it is a calling and it is one that you cannot take lightly. Now I don't think you need to get so wrapped up in yourself that you can't get anything done but I think you ought to celebrate every single day that you have an opportunity to come in and be a part of an enterprise that helps people from all stages of life along whatever journey or pathway they choose to follow and we cannot dictate it to them but we can sure influence it.

His statement summarizes the outlooks of leadership held by the eight interviewees. This review of presidential interviews and observations has uncovered evidence of transformational leadership and spirituality. Found within their words and deeds are examples of their spiritual selves supporting and informing their leadership actions. As Dr. Pierce declared, "No good CEO can expect to accomplish meaningful things without being grounded in faith and optimism." Also apparent in interview statements is the importance these presidents place on their roles as mentors.

The next section of this work will take a more in depth look at the data collected in relation to literature, explore gaps which may be addressed by the findings, and examine the accuracy of the conceptual framework. Additionally, limitations of the study, further research opportunities, and implications will be discussed.

Chapter Five – Analysis

Spirituality's connection to effective leadership has recently become a focus of study in higher education (Chickering et al., 2006; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). This study was constructed to investigate this connection amidst practicing North Carolina community college presidents in an attempt to identify the threads of relationships between the presidents' spirituality or inner knowing and their application of transformational leadership tenets. Furthermore, the study's conceptual framework is based on the belief that spirituality is a vital factor in the effective application of transformational leadership components and a leader's spirituality may be recognized in self-analysis, observations of interactions with followers, and interviews.

Transformational leadership has been conceptualized by Bass and Riggio (2010) using the four components of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration. Each of the components is further defined in greater detail using terms which are listed in Appendix G. For this study, spirituality was defined as an amalgamation of values, morals, ethics, religion, sense of community, wholeness, and experiences noticeable in actions of the leader. This amalgamation is held together by the belief that there is something greater than self which guides the individual to act beyond societal norms or legal requirements. The leader persistently creates environments where followers can grow personally and professionally. The following analysis section examines transformational leadership, spirituality, and the connections between them found during the data gathering process in relation to previously introduced literature.

Analysis

Malm (2008) investigated how the leadership styles of six Maryland community college presidents facilitated institutional change and aided them in successfully meeting the challenges they constantly encounter. His account of the presidents' responses included language consistent with transformational leadership and spirituality, but did not expressly reference the terms. Following Malm's suggestion for further research, eight presidents were purposefully selected using a leadership and spirituality questionnaire (Appendix A & B) to explore spirituality's connection to leadership through observations and interviews. The analysis of the data follows the format of themes identified and used in the previous chapter.

Leadership

Defining their style. Bass and Riggio (2010) portrayed transformational leadership using four elements: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. For this study's coding purposes, the four elements were further described using terms (Appendix G) found in transformational leadership literature (Amey, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Valdez, 2004). Although the interviewees may not have specifically defined themselves as transformational leaders, they exhibited and professed to practice the elements and terms listed. The presidents proffered an aim to advance the college and better serve students by developing the talents of their followers.

Burns' (2010/1978) transforming model has people evolving through the act of leadership. The leader first cultivates trust and respect by treating followers in an equitable, caring, and professional manner. Then the leader is able to teach and coach followers to higher levels of performance. While they occasionally have direct contact with students, the

interviewed presidents realize that they must promote growth in college faculty and front-line staff, the individuals having the most immediate interaction with the constituents they serve. Every president acknowledged that the advancement and management of the college's human resources was an important facet of their work, but is difficult to achieve without fostering a constructive relationship with followers, fitting the admonition of Wheatley (2006) for leaders to attend to the quality of their relationships. Of the four transformational leadership elements, the terms describing idealized influence and individualized consideration seemed to be most important in rapport development and were quite evident in the observations and interviews.

Chickering et al. (2006) suggest that spirituality is important in defining and sustaining the leader. Several interviewees commented they often feel as if they are on an island, personal relationships are tricky to maintain, and time for self is limited. Relying on the spiritual dimension of life's purpose and being involved in activities which reconnect them with their original calling help to recharge them and follows Palmer's (2000) direction for leaders to find their purpose from within. Dr. Grant's book club, Dr. Taft's barbeques, and Dr. Arthur's celebrations give the presidents an opportunity to interact with faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders in less stressful situations, and to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Taking the time to inventory successes helps to mitigate trying situations which, as Dr. Hoover avowed, are often not of their making. Leaders participating in self-renewal activities also set an example of wholeness and self-actualization for followers to emulate.

Visioning. The five presidential search profiles (Brunswick Community College, 2010; Guilford Community College, 2010; Piedmont Community College, 2010; Stanley Community College, 2011; Surry Community College, 2011) examined as part of the

literature review for this study referenced the ability to develop a shared vision as an important attribute for candidates to possess. Applying the elements of transformational leadership allows the leaders to facilitate the development of a shared vision within an organization (Coleman, 2003). The abilities to effectively communicate, motivate and inspire, reframe situations, and support creativity are tools used by presidents to mold a shared vision from individual aspirations of various community college stakeholders.

The AACC (2005) identifies the visioning process as a vital component of the collaboration competency for effective leadership. Dr. Taft's work to pull together a community college with a multi-county service area into a shared vision of facility growth is an excellent illustration of the process. After first evaluating the college's current situation, needs, and desires, he began to paint, in broad strokes, a picture of what the college could become. Then he allowed stakeholders, from all college areas, to provide details and in doing so the blueprint for success became everyone's plan. During the meeting I observed, Dr. Taft announced that a substantial gift had been received to not just enable project success, but to expand its scope due in large part to the collaborative efforts of stakeholders from all three counties of the college's service area.

Visioning processes were evident with other presidents as well. Dr. Monroe mentioned consensus building as a method to create agreement on a direction for the college. Palmer (2000) and Wheatley (2006) describe consensus building as a process requiring open communication, a suspension of assumptions, and sense of inner knowing. Throughout the interviews, good listening skills were stressed and thinking outside the norm was extolled. Several interviewees stated that understanding themselves and others is the first step in the

visioning journey. Regardless of the route taken to arrive at a vision for the institution, the transformational leader does not travel alone.

Tough decisions. Palmer (2000), Bolman and Deal (2001), and Kegan and Lahey (2001) submit that leaders need to rely on their inner knowing to support the decision-making process. Dr. Madison stated that he relied on the application of the Golden Rule, do unto others, as you would have them do unto you, found inscribed on a small plaque on his desk, and other values to make tough decisions. Other presidents related how they rely on their spirituality to carry them through difficult times and were not self-conscious about how people view their spiritual stance. From the observations and interviews it seems clear that the presidents' spirituality is an integral component of their leadership personas, relying on it to guide them in their daily activities and through trying situations.

The majority of the presidents indicated challenging personnel decisions caused them the most anguish, yet the decisions must be made in a timely manner lest the situation fester and sicken the entire organization. While the presidents indicate a high level of care for followers, they are not afraid to rid the organization of unproductive faculty and staff. These comments follow the Bass and Riggo (2010) description of the transformational leader as a person who does not panic, does the right thing, and is thoughtful of followers. Grounding decisions in a set of well-established values lends authenticity to the decision-making process (Allen et al., 2010). Acting promptly and professionally sends a strong message to followers and demonstrates the transformational leadership component of idealized influence through composed decisive actions and by cultivating respect. Spiritual dimensions of morality, intuition, and wisdom support the leaders' actions (Fairholm, 2001). The symbiotic relationship (Palmer, 2000) between leadership and spirituality anchors the presidents during

demanding episodes, gives the institution stability, and followers an exemplary example to emulate.

Communicating

Connecting with others. Excellent communication skills are fundamental assets of the transformational leaders (Bass & Riggo, 2010). They also challenge their own assumptions. Wise and intuitive leaders recognize their limitations summarized by the statement of Dr. Taylor, “I don’t have all of the answers.” A keen sense of inner knowing provides the leader with the self-assurance to share governance processes and visioning development practices. In two observations, I witnessed presidents welcoming open dialogue within their leadership team to evaluate personnel decisions and institutional improvement objectives. Openness and thoughtful deliberation strengthen choices made and allow for joint ownership, all made possible by leaders who recognizes their own weaknesses, listen openly to different points of view, and are willing to let others fill the voids.

While community colleges often resist change, they must adapt to meet the needs of the area they serve. This “changeability dilemma” creates a paradox which the president must address (Evans, 2009, p. 63). Stakeholder expectations are high and the need for particular educational programs rise and fall. The process of leading change can incorporate all aspects of the transformational model and spirituality.

Preparing for change by building sound relationships based on trust and respect, challenging assumptions, and establishing effective means of communication are essential to meeting community needs. Wheatley (2006) states that effective leadership requires input from multiple sources. When change becomes necessary, leaders must rely upon their

wisdom and values along with the experiences and ideas of followers to act decisively and appropriately. Interviewees expressed these opinions and were adamant that the question is not if change will come but are they, their followers, and the institution are prepared and have the courage to make the changes necessary to flourish. Building strong inter-personal connections create networks of understanding and support sufficient to withstand the storms of change.

Image of the president and the institution. Seven criticisms of the transformational leadership model were summarized by Northouse (2001). One of these criticisms, a supposed elitist character of the style, may be addressed by the data collected in this study. The interviewed presidents did not give any indication that they considered themselves elite or heroes. Dr. Grant commented that she made conscious efforts to demystify her office so that faculty, staff, and students would feel comfortable visiting with her, and Dr. Taft engaged foundation members in conversations about his gardening challenges and asked for advice. Other presidents indicated that they do concern themselves with their image and try to engage others in such a way as to be presidential but at the same time not appearing better than the individuals they are interacting with. Dr. Taylor stated that he attempts to strike a balance between president and *ordinary Joe* by being on “top of his game, speaking from the heart, and sharing successes.”

Leadership anchored to a spiritual perspective uses the leader’s inner knowing to avoid the pitfalls of elitism and heroic complexes (Palmer, 2000). Based on observations and discussions, the presidents seemed to rely on their spirituality to keep their feet on the ground while still reaching for the stars.

Ethic of caring. Leaders engender trust through the ethical and moral treatment of followers. Summarized in the transformational leadership model component of idealized influence as doing the right thing (Bass & Riggo, 2010), ethics and morals are used as descriptors of spiritual definitions in literature (Kezar et al., 2006; Sanders et al., 2003). Threads of ethical and moral behaviors were witnessed in meetings and espoused in interviews with the study participants to the point that it is nearly impossible to separate the behaviors from the events in which they occurred. When followers see these behaviors continually and consistently exhibited by their leader in a variety of circumstances they begin to have faith that the leader will act responsibly in challenging situations.

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) contend that authentic transformational leadership has a high moral and ethical dimension grounded in spirituality. The presidents participating in this study have a highly developed value system which includes devotion to the betterment of others. They have created environments for success at their respective colleges, providing optimum conditions for follower growth by offering support, constructive feedback, and meaningful encouragement.

Preparation for leading

Mentors. Transformational leadership is driven by the leader-follower relationship (Bass & Riggio, 2010; Burns, 2010/1978). Wheatley (2006) asserts that negative organizational energy is created when leaders attempt to force followers into improved outcomes and our institutions would be better served by leaders who strive to build constructive associations. The study participants supported both assertions by sharing accounts of positive and negative mentoring experiences. The presidents spoke glowingly of

superiors they had worked for who paid attention to them, provided them with opportunities for growth, and respected their opinions.

Parks (2005) contends that each person has within them the capacity to lead and practicing the craft is important to developing the ability. The study participants lauded the virtues of quality mentorship. They spoke fondly of the opportunities to develop leadership skills given to them by their mentors and explained how they attempt to provide similar experiences to their subordinates. One interviewee has three former vice presidents who have become North Carolina community college presidents and believes his current executive vice president will someday be selected for a presidency. Two other presidents have vice presidents who are finalists in presidential searches. The interviewees consider mentoring a vital part of leadership development and enjoy their role as a mentor.

Anti-mentor. Conversely, the interviewees who experienced poor mentorship from leaders referred to their former supervisors with distain and vowed to never treat subordinates in a like manner. Reframing situations is a trait of the transformational leader (Bass & Riggo, 2010). The contradiction in leadership styles of the mentor vs. anti-mentor provides the leaders with a comparison by which to judge themselves. Palmer (2008) considers the paradoxes in life to be powerful learning tools. The anti-mentor as a developer of leaders is a leadership development paradox which should not be dismissed as unimportant.

Additional leadership preparation thoughts. One of the seven criticisms of transformational leadership articulated by Northouse (2001) is that the style is more personality trait rather than a learned behavior; however, Parks (2005) contends that leadership can be learned. Palmer (2000) and Kegan and Lahey (2001) urge individuals

desiring to shoulder leadership roles to search within themselves, challenge their own assumptions, and expose hidden biases. The process allows the leader to sharpen their skills and inner knowing. The interviewees confessed that they did not start out to become community college leaders but developed the necessary skills through formal education and real life developmental experiences and they believe that many of their followers could become exceptional in a similar manner.

Spirituality in Leadership

Often affected. Teasdale (2001) contents “Spirituality is a way of life that affects and includes every moment of existence” (p.17). The study participants articulated similar sentiments regarding their spiritual journeys. Drs. Monroe, Taylor, and Grant described the most pronounced fluctuations in the depth of their spirituality through failed marriages, the contemplation of career changes, and the death of close friends. Palmer uses his own journey through depression to describe the journey to find one’s hidden wholeness. From this point of deep inner knowing the person is better able to lead others because the leader can understand and appreciate the follower as a person. The presidents interviewed for this study conveyed an understanding of and respect for the spiritual evolution of their followers because the presidents continue to evolve themselves.

Diversity. Community college service area constituencies are composed of all races, ages, creeds, and walks of life (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Community college presidents hold personal beliefs while also having legal responsibilities to uphold and the integrity of the institution to maintain. The study participants concede that their individual convictions sometimes conflict with lawful duties. Drs. Arthur and Hoover related specific instances in which their responsibilities to legally represent their institutions by supporting marginalized

groups outweighed personal beliefs. Exercising spiritual tenets gives rise to tolerance of differences which in turn promotes a sense of community. Honoring all peoples through inclusive actions establishes positive examples for others to follow. Transformational leaders practicing individualized consideration give attention to and value each follower regardless of their differences (Bass & Riggo, 2010). The interviewees communicated and demonstrated an ability to embrace diversity.

Family. Murphy (2005), in an historical review of spirituality in higher education, asserted society is conflicted over spirituality's function in educational organizations. However, participants in this study presented no uncertainty regarding spirituality's role in their leadership activities. Each, to varying degrees, indicated their spirituality has positively influenced their leadership. Drs. Madison, Monroe, Taylor, Grant, and Hoover explained that much of their spirituality, values, wisdom, and life's purpose was derived through family connections and interactions. When considering a leader's spirituality and leadership, the influence of family cannot be overlooked.

Addressing the Gaps

Debates abound in literature regarding the definition of effective leadership (Stewart, 2006) and spirituality's inclusion in higher education (Speck, 2007). These gaps, specifically how spirituality affects leadership and effective leadership development practices, were addressed by this study through observations and interviews of practicing leaders. The presidents indicated that they believed in applying their spiritual selves to the leadership process in order to provide value-based, ethical, and moral leadership to the institutions they serve. While not specifically identifying themselves as transformational leaders, the

presidents exhibited and expressed a desire to apply transformational leadership tenets in an effort to lead effectively.

Northouse (2001) identified seven criticisms of transformation leadership. Four of these criticisms, a supposed elitist character of the style, the style being perceived as heroic in nature, the potential abuse of followers, and the style being a personality trait rather than a learned behavior were addressed by the data collected in this study. The data collected suggests that the criticisms may not be justified.

This study adds to our understanding of the transformational leadership, spirituality, and the connection between the two by detecting leadership and spirituality in action. Study participants clearly indicated their spirituality supported their leadership activities which supports Palmer's (2000) contention that leaders must understand themselves and assist followers to come to a place of "hidden wholeness" (p. 81). The study findings extend Malm's (2008) suggestion that particular leadership traits facilitate change in community colleges and, for the participants in this study, traits consistent with transformational leadership and spirituality are important to the change process.

Piland and Wolf (2003) submit that one of the top issues of higher education is providing quality leadership development programs. Participants shared their belief in the value of quality mentoring for leadership development. They passionately related stories of their experiences which molded them into the leaders they had become and praised the mentors who had the foresight and wisdom to provide them with excellent opportunities for growth. The presidents expressed a desire to involve their followers in similar activities.

In summary, the study has added to our understanding of the leadership process, specifically the transformational leadership model. Additionally, the study participants

indicate there is a strong relationship between their spirituality and leadership style, which supports the contention that inclusion of spirituality in higher education is important, and should be included in leadership preparation programs.

Limitations

While the participation selection process was designed to include presidents from all college sizes in the North Carolina system by selecting two presidents from each of the four presidential salary levels (Appendix D), there was no process employed to insure the inclusion of women and minorities. The demographics of the interviewees included only one female and no minorities. Dantley (2003) suggests transformational leadership is enhanced in marginalized groups and Tisdell (2001) credits spirituality as an important influencer of transformative efforts within similar demographic sets. However, no inferences regarding the benefits of transformational leadership and spirituality for marginalized groups can be made from the data collected in this study. Inclusion of participants from marginalized groups may provide richer data and allow for broader inferences.

Transformational leadership is a relationship dependent style. While followers were included to some extent in observations, data collection was primarily focused on the views of the leaders. Interviewing or surveying followers could enhance analysis; however obtaining accurate data could be difficult due to the reluctance of followers to report negative or critical information about superiors or the desire to harm the reputation of the leader by exaggerating or falsifying responses. When including followers in a study safeguards should be put in place to protect anonymity and guard against unprofessional intentions.

Participants, knowing the study topic, may have embellished their responses for reasons unknown to the researcher. A study design which masked the topic could address

this limitation. Additional observations, follow-up interviews, and the inclusion of follower data could help to validate participant responses.

Researcher bias is a concern in an interpretive study. A blind approach with one researcher selecting the participants and a second researcher observing and interviewing the participants would help to eliminate the second researcher from having knowledge of the participant self-assessment. Adding participants who indicated on their self assessments that they did not consider themselves to be transformational leaders or highly spiritual to the observation and interview group, and then evaluating their data along with the original participant group, could provide a contrast in the data and add to the validation of the work. Applying additional interviews with different researchers would provide an opportunity to cross check data. Independent coding by multiple researchers and blending analysis could produce more well defined themes.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this investigation, that the application of transformational leadership principles (Bass & Riggo, 2010) supported by spiritual elements (Astin, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Chickering et al., 2006; Stewart, 2006; Tisdell, 2001; Walker & McPhail, 2009) allows presidents to lead effectively, was operative and fitting for this study. The participants reported that they rely on their inner knowing, spirituality, and in some cases religious tenets to guide their decision making processes, build powerful relationships, create shared visions, and carry them through difficult circumstances. Evidence found in observations of leaders with followers provided the strongest evidence for the use of spirituality components, ethics, morals, ethic of caring, in the leadership process.

The use of an interpretive approach to data analysis was appropriate as I, the researcher, was able to use terms gleaned from literature along with my own experiences to identify themes and make meaning of the information gathered from the observations and interviews.

Implications

Individuals and groups involved in community college governance and leadership preparation may find the findings and examinations of this study relevant. These individuals and groups include current and aspiring leaders, leadership preparation programs, and community college trustees.

Current and aspiring leaders. Information found within this study may be used by current and aspiring leaders to evaluate their value systems and leadership competences. Through self-assessment, completing and scoring the MLQ and spirituality questionnaire, these individuals may be able to practice intellectual stimulation by challenging their own assumptions, subsequently becoming better leaders. Current leaders may increase their understanding and value of mentoring, and discover methods to enhance their mentoring skills by better understanding the process. Aspiring leaders may come to appreciate the worth of and seek out a superior who stretches and strengthens their leadership abilities by allowing the aspiring leaders to chair committees, represent the institution in meaningful situations, and lending opinions to the handling of difficult situations.

Leadership preparation programs. Programs designed to develop leaders, seminars, individual courses, and degree programs, generally blend theory with practical experiences. This study evaluates the transformational leadership and spirituality in practice and provides evidence for the usefulness of the concepts. With the degree of importance the

interviewees placed on their mentoring experiences, leadership preparation programs should review activities dealing with active experiences, assess their rigor, and determine the effectiveness of the endeavors. Equally important, leadership programs should identify, develop, and employ spiritual inventories. These inventories could aid administrators in analyzing their personal spiritual development and its relationship to the efficacy of their leadership style throughout their careers. Individual courses might include a shadowing day with a president at an institution other than where the student works. Dr. Arthur was gracious enough to allow me to spend an entire day with him and attend meetings with his cabinet and board of trustees. The day stands as an example of the types of quality activities which would benefit aspiring leaders. Degree programs should assess internships to insure quality experiences.

Dr. Madison's experience as an interim president may be modeled to allow individuals aspiring to become presidents a high quality learning opportunity. He was released from duties at College A (current employer) to serve as interim president for a year at College B while the college conducted a deliberate and proper presidential search. By mutual agreement of the two colleges, he was not to be considered for the presidency and the position he previously held at College A was held open for his return. He continued to be paid by College A with College B reimbursing A for his services. North Carolina Community colleges occasionally need interim presidents while searches are conducted. With the assistance of the North Carolina Community College System office, an interim president/development program similar to Dr. Madison's should be considered.

Community college trustees. Trustees, when engaged in a presidential search process, may use the information in this study to assist in evaluating candidates. Presidential

search profiles often include language consistent with transformational leadership and spirituality (Brunswick Community College, 2010; Guilford Community College, 2010; Piedmont Community College, 2010; Stanley Community College, 2011; Surry Community College, 2011). Interviewers may wish to design questions, similar to those used in this study, to help them recognize candidates' inner knowing, leadership traits, and experiences. Understanding that spirituality informs and supports leadership could aid in accurately identifying how the candidate would function as a leader of the institution.

Further Research

Limitations of the study provide opportunities for additional research. The participant selection process did not make the inclusion of women and minorities a priority. Conducting a study which includes participants from marginalized groups may reinforce findings and address a study constraint. The methodological design of this study was crafted to look at transformational leadership and spirituality from the perspective of the leader; hence a limited amount of follower data was collected. Designing a study which collects data from followers' perspectives could help to strengthen analysis. Looking at a problem from multiple perspectives provides affirmation and clarity to inferences.

Effective mentoring was identified as a theme in the findings section. A study designed to more thoroughly investigate the mentoring activities of leaders, from the perspective of the mentored, could help to identify the most effective mentoring practices. Once identified, these practices could be incorporated in leadership development programs and shared with individuals wishing to become better mentors.

Emerging from the mentoring theme was the notable phenomenon of one study participant having three subordinates ascend to their own presidency, two of whom were

also in the group of interviewees. Designing and performing an in depth case study of these individuals, or other similar mentor-apprentice groups, may provide a deeper understanding of the leader-follower dynamic and the processes of effective mentoring. Well-crafted interviews followed by a group discussion with the mentor and apprentices present intriguing possibilities for discovery.

Final Thoughts

The introduction for this study began with the assertion of Bolman and Deal (2001) that “The gifts of authorship, love, power, and significance work only when they are freely given and freely received. Leaders cannot give what they do not have or lead to places they’ve never been” (p. 106). Findings of this study support the supposition that the transformational leadership model, supported by the leader’s spirituality, correspond to Bolman and Deal’s statement.

Authentic transformational leaders desire to give of themselves, to inspire, motivate, and teach followers. They challenge their own assumptions, value other opinions, and guide the development of shared visions within the organizations they lead. Exceptional leaders are able to accomplish these feats because they understand themselves and are able to live as Palmer (2000) stated “divided no more” (p. 32). This investigation found that, for the study participants, their spirituality supports and directs their leadership activities.

For me, this study has reinforced my belief that an individual’s spirituality is an essential ingredient for the fulfillment of leadership potential. Without a well-developed understanding of one’s inner knowing the attempts of a person to provide leadership within an organization can go astray and exemplify Palmer’s (2000) cautionary statement for the potential of the leader to “do more harm than good” (p. 78). Leadership development

organizations and mentors must recognize the need to include individual spiritual examination and maturation as a part of their instructive practices. To not do so would be akin to constructing a dwelling without an adequate foundation; the home is destined to fall with the occupants at risk of serious injury.

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Appendix A: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Sample

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Leader Form

My Name _____ Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____ Leader ID# _____

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. **If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.**

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word “others” may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all **Once in a while** **Sometimes** **Fairly often** **Frequently, if not always**
0 1 2 3 4

- 1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts..... 0 1 2 3 4
- 2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate0 1 2 3 4
- 3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious0 1 2 3 4
- 4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations.....0 1 2 3 4
from standards
- 5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise.....0 1 2 3 4



To whom it may concern,

Wayne C. Matthews

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Authors: ***Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass***

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for his/her thesis research.

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

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Sincerely,

Robert Most
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Appendix B: Spirituality Survey – SISRI-24

SISRI-24

Age? (in years) _____

Sex? (circle one) Male Female

The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory © 2008 D. King

The following statements are designed to measure various behaviours, thought processes, and mental characteristics. Read each statement carefully and choose which **one** of the five possible responses best reflects you by circling the corresponding number. If you are not sure, or if a statement does not seem to apply to you, choose the answer that seems the best. Please answer honestly and make responses based on how you actually are rather than how you would like to be. The five possible responses are:

0 – Not at all true of me | 1 – Not very true of me | 2 – Somewhat true of me | 3 – Very true of me | 4 – Completely true of me

For each item, circle the **one** response that most accurately describes **you**.

1. I have often questioned or pondered the nature of reality. 0 1 2 3 4
2. I recognize aspects of myself that are deeper than my physical body. 0 1 2 3 4
3. I have spent time contemplating the purpose or reason for my existence. 0 1 2 3 4
4. I am able to enter higher states of consciousness or awareness. 0 1 2 3 4
5. I am able to deeply contemplate what happens after death. 0 1 2 3 4
6. It is *difficult* for me to sense anything other than the physical and material. 0 1 2 3 4
7. My ability to find meaning and purpose in life helps me adapt to stressful situations. 0 1 2 3 4
8. I can control when I enter higher states of consciousness or awareness. 0 1 2 3 4
9. I have developed my own theories about such things as life, death, reality, and existence. 0 1 2 3 4
10. I am aware of a deeper connection between myself and other people. 0 1 2 3 4
11. I am able to define a purpose or reason for my life. 0 1 2 3 4
12. I am able to move freely between levels of consciousness or awareness. 0 1 2 3 4
13. I frequently contemplate the meaning of events in my life. 0 1 2 3 4
14. I define myself by my deeper, non-physical self. 0 1 2 3 4
15. When I experience a failure, I am still able to find meaning in it. 0 1 2 3 4
16. I often see issues and choices more clearly while in higher states of consciousness/awareness. 0 1 2 3 4
17. I have often contemplated the relationship between human beings and the rest of the universe. 0 1 2 3 4
18. I am highly aware of the nonmaterial aspects of life. 0 1 2 3 4
19. I am able to make decisions according to my purpose in life. 0 1 2 3 4
20. I recognize qualities in people which are more meaningful than their body, personality, or emotions. 0 1 2 3 4
21. I have deeply contemplated whether or not there is some greater power or force (e.g., god, goddess, divine being, higher energy, etc.). 0 1 2 3 4
22. Recognizing the nonmaterial aspects of life helps me feel centered. 0 1 2 3 4

23. I am able to find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences. 0 1 2 3 4

24. I have developed my own techniques for entering higher states of consciousness or awareness 0 1 2 3 4

Permissions for Use

Use of the SISRI is unrestricted so long as it is for academic, educational, or research purposes. Unlimited duplication of this scale is allowed with full author acknowledgement only. Alterations and/or modifications of any kind are strictly prohibited without author permission. The author would appreciate a summary of findings from any research which utilizes the SISRI. Contact details are below.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.dbking.net/spiritualintelligence>

Appendix C: Survey Cover Letter Sent as an E-mail

Dear [President's Name]:

As partial completion of research collection for my dissertation on spirituality as a component of transformational leadership, I am conducting a survey of North Carolina community college presidents. The American Association of Community Colleges reports that eighty-four percent of presidents responding to their career survey plan to retire within the next ten years. Our community college system is in constant need of well-prepared individuals to fill leadership positions. A better understanding of emerging leadership theory is an important step in insuring this need is met.

The survey should only take approximately 15 minutes of your time. The link to the survey is (individual survey link).

Upon completion of the survey, you may be asked to participate in a second phase of the study which will include a one-hour interview.

I appreciate your assistance with my dissertation research. I may be reached at 336-468-7817 or via e-mail at wm73770@appstate.edu if you have questions or concerns regarding my research.

Sincerely,

Wayne C. Matthews
Doctoral Student

Appendix D: North Carolina Community College Presidential Salaries

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM PRESIDENTS'
SALARY SCHEDULE
FY 2011-12

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE (STEPS)	Grade			
	1 0-2749	2 2750-4499	3 4500-7499	4 7500-UP
0	\$102,576	\$109,608	\$117,120	\$125,148
1	104,616	111,804	119,472	127,656
2	106,728	114,036	121,860	130,200
3	108,876	116,316	124,296	132,816
4	111,036	118,644	126,780	135,480
5	113,256	121,008	129,312	138,180
6	115,524	123,432	131,892	140,940
7	117,840	125,904	134,544	143,748
8	120,192	128,412	137,232	146,62
9	122,580	130,992	139,980	149,580
10	125,040	133,608	142,764	152,556
11	127,548	136,284	145,632	155,616
12	130,104	139,008	148,536	158,724
13	132,696	141,780	151,524	161,904
14	135,348	144,636	154,548	165,132
15	138,060	147,528	157,644	168,444
16	140,808	150,480	160,800	171,816
17	143,628	153,480	164,016	175,248
18	146,508	156,540	167,280	178,764
19	149,436	159,672	170,628	182,328
20	152,424	162,864	174,036	185,976
NUMBER OF COLLEGES IN GRADE	18	19	12	9

Appendix E: Observation and Interview Request Cover Letter Sent as an E-mail

Dear [President's Name]:

For the second part of data collection for my dissertation on transformational leadership and spirituality, I intend to interview and observe eight North Carolina community college presidents. During the observations of and interviews with the presidents, I will be looking to identify transformational leadership traits, components of spirituality, and educational experiences which were important in the development of these qualities. I plan on observing presidents during a meeting with followers/subordinates and then to conduct one interview session of approximately one hour.

I respectfully request that you consent to be a participant in the second part of the study. Other than the amount of time expended, I do not believe that anyone will be placed at any risk during the observations or interviews. The participants will be under no obligation to respond to any question which they deem "off limits." I do not plan on disclosing the names of participants or the colleges I am visiting. I, or the president who I am visiting, will explain my purpose in attending the meeting and reassure attendees that confidentiality and anonymity will be respected.

I do request that I be allowed to record the meeting and interview session through note taking and audio recording. Notes and audio recordings will be kept in a secure location and not shared with others unless required by university policy. Participants may receive a copy of the final dissertation via e-mail. Requests for a copy of the dissertation and any questions you may have should be made to me at 336-468-7817 or wm73770@appstate.edu.

I would like to thank you for your consideration of my request. Please reply to this e-mail with your response to my request.

Again, I thank you for your time and consideration,

Wayne C. Matthews
Doctoral Student

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Describe your leadership style.

I would like to better understand your journey to your current position. What led you to become an administrator? Was there a singular turning point, event, or person which influenced your decision?

What attributes do you consider most important for a person to master to be an effective leader?

I have read several presidential search announcements and noticed that the ability to *create a vision* is an important trait boards of trustees require. How do you *create a vision*?

You are a CEO of a large organization and employees may feel distant from their leader. Do you have any strategies to *individualize* your leadership?

Do you consider mentoring/coaching followers an important activity for a leader? If so how do you accomplish the task?

How do you define your spirituality?

How has the relationship between your spirituality/inner knowing and leadership style evolved through the time you have spent as an administrator? Was there one specific event or several occurrences which caused this evolution?

How does your spirituality/inner knowing impact your leadership? Is this something you consciously consider?

When you are faced with difficult decisions what processes do you employ to make the decision? Without violating any confidences, could you give an example?

What do you enjoy the most about your current position and why is it most enjoyable?

What do you enjoy the least about your current position?

What is one thing that you wish you were more knowledgeable of or proficient in before you accepted your current position?

How do you make meaning in your life?

What educational experiences (courses, workshops, specific activities) would you suggest be added to leadership programs to aid in developing effective leaders? (This could include degree programs, seminars, workshops.)

What has most surprised you about your current position?

Pick one item in your office and share with me its significance to your spirituality and/or leadership style.

Besides the obvious agenda items, what do you hope to accomplish in meetings and what strategies do you use to achieve these objectives?

Appendix G: Coding Sheet

Date	Location	Situation
------	----------	-----------

idealized influence

- 1 build admiration, respect, and trust
- 2 do the right thing
- 3 not panic sensible risks

inspirational motivation

- 4 motivate and inspire
- 5 charismatic or inspirational
- 6 exceptional communication skills
- 7 excellent listening skills

intellectual stimulation

- 8 challenge own assumptions
- 9 reframe situations
- 10 support creativity

individualized consideration

- 11 teaching and coaching
- 12 attention to each follower

spirituality

- 13 ethical
- 14 moral
- 15 values
- 16 life's purpose
- 17 intuition
- 18 wisdom
- 19 inner meaning/knowing

Appendix H: Theme Chart

Possible Theme

Idealized
Influence

Inspirational
Motivation

Intellectual
Stimulation

Individualized
Consideration

Spirituality

Appendix I: Observation and Interview Consent Form

I agree to participate in a dissertation research project concerning spirituality and transformational leadership being conducted by Wayne C. Matthews, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Appalachian State University. This study is scheduled for the spring of 2012 and will include the observation of meetings, audio recording, and transcriptions of recordings for use in a dissertation and possible future publication by Wayne C. Matthews. I understand that topics of spirituality and transformational leadership may be slightly difficult to discuss and therefore participation in the project is totally voluntary, and that I may end my participation in the project at any time.

I give Wayne C. Matthews ownership of the recordings and transcripts from observations and interviews and understand that all data collected will remain in Wayne's possession. I understand that quotes and information may be published with identifying material altered to protect my privacy.

I understand that if I have questions regarding this research project, I may call Wayne C. Matthews at (336) 468-7817 or wm73770@appstate.edu. I am aware that I may also contact Appalachian State University's Office of Research Protections at (828) 262-7981 or irb@appstate.edu.

___ I agree to participate in the dissertation research being conducted by Wayne C. Matthews.

Name of Interviewer (printed)

Name of Interviewee (printed)

Signature of Interviewer

Signature of Interviewee

Date

Date

Biographical Information

Wayne Curtis Matthews was born February 21, 1957 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to Charles Wesley and Ruby Ruth Huie Matthews. Wayne grew up and continues to reside in East Bend, NC. He is married to Loretta Thompson Matthews and they have two children, Abby and Wes.

Wayne graduated from Forbush High School in 1975 and attended Appalachian State University receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in 1980, majoring in biology. He earned a Master's degree in Science Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1990 and an Educational Specialist degree from Appalachian State University in 2008. Wayne has held a North Carolina Emergency Medical Technician credential since December of 1979 and is also a Level I instructor.

During his career, Wayne has worked as a teacher in the Yadkin County school system for two years and Stokes County school system for 12 years. In 1983, Wayne was elected a member of the Yadkin County Rescue Squad where he continues to volunteer and has served in a variety of leadership roles including the office of chief for six years. In August of 1994, Wayne began working for Surry Community College as coordinator of Yadkin County Programs. He assisted in the design and ultimate construction of the Yadkin County Center of Surry Community College in Yadkinville, NC, where he currently serves as director of the center.